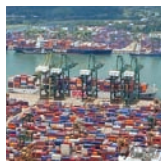
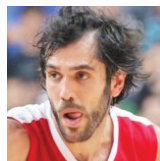




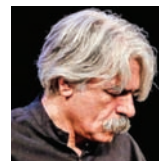
Iran has established new order in West Asia **3**



Russia to build new port for boosting trade with Iran **4**



Winning FIBA Asia Cup 2007 the benchmark for Iran: Nikkhah Bahrami **11**



Kayhan Kalhor to perform “Silence City” online, free of charge **12**

Zarif highlights need to update Iran-Russia deal

See page 2



Duma International Affairs Committee chairman meets Zarif

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ARTICLE
Mahnaz Abdi
Head of the TehranTimes
Economy Desk

TEDPIX hits record high of 2m points

Iranian stock market, which has been experiencing some unprecedented growth in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), and also during the present year, registered a new record high on Sunday.

TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is Iran's major stock exchange, surpassed two million points during the Sunday trades and through gaining 45,672 points it stood at 2,007 million, notching up another outstanding record in the current year.

The index had hit the record high of 1.5 million points on June 30, and now we see that it has climbed half a million points in just one month to hit the record high of two million.

It's a while that the capital market in Iran is unbelievably flourishing; we have been witnessing new record highs continuously posted by the 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.

Such prosperous status has really made a great shift in the Iranian people's approach of investment making, as more and more people are now making investment in this market.

Of course, the capital market itself has made great strides to attract more investors; as the result of its profitable status and also through making people more acquainted with this market.

Many factors have brought such prosperity for the capital market in the recent months, one of them is that this market is now more profitable compared to some other markets such as the markets of gold coin, foreign currency, and housing.

Such contributing factors have even brought the capital market to the frontline of success and flourishing during the coronavirus pandemic which have made damage to all economic sectors.

Last week, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dehpasand announced that the value of trades in Iran's 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. ➔4

Over \$117m approved to support corona-affected tourism businesses

TEHRAN — The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has approved a total budget of 4,920 billion rials (over \$117 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) to support businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Over 8,300 applications for receiving financial facilities have been registered and sent to the banking system and some 380 billion rials (about \$9 million) has been paid in loans so far, deputy tourism chief Vali Teymouri said on Saturday.

The applications cover businesses with as much as 36,000 people working in the tourism sector across the country, the official added.

Back in April, the government announced it will support those which are grappling with fiscal problems by offering loans with a 12-percent interest rate. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts also suggested a rescue package for tourism businesses.

The government has also allocated a 750-tril-

lion-rial (about \$18 billion) package to help low-income households and small- and medium-sized enterprises suffered by the coronavirus concerns.

Teymouri back in May elaborated on the measures taken to lessen the impact of coronavirus on the tourism sector and future measures to restore the situation, saying: “A smart travel protocol, which is aimed to reassure healthy travels, has been developed to be implemented across the country.”

“Smart travel means traveling along with strict observance of health and wellness protocols... The smart travel protocol states what considerations a hotel, agency, or tour guide should follow. It's as if accommodation units need to focus more on renting one-bedroom than two-bedroom. Or if the hotel has been closed until now, with what considerations will it start working and under what conditions will it accept passengers. These cases are detailed in the present protocol we should revise its articles using the opinion of the relevant organizations,” the official noted. ➔8

U.S. protests: American flags burned in the streets

By staff & agencies

Protesters set fires in the streets of Portland, Oregon, early Sunday, but no clashes with authorities were reported.

A U.S. flag was set on fire and police were deployed in the early hours of Saturday morning, as protests in Portland Oregon continued, AP reported.

Meanwhile, more than a thousand people showed up in downtown Portland early on Saturday to peacefully protest, about three days after the announcement that the presence of US agents there would be reduced – a deal that Oregon officials hope will continue to ease tensions as the city tries to move on from months of chaotic nightly protests.

Friday's overnight protest mimicked Thursday's, which was the first time in weeks that demonstrations ended without any major confrontations, violence or arrests.

The change in tone outside a federal courthouse that has become ground zero in clashes between demonstrators and federal agents came after the U.S. government began drawing down its forces in the liberal city under a deal between the Democratic governor, Kate Brown, and the Trump administration.

The fence that has separated protesters and U.S. agents stationed at the courthouse was decorated with balloons and upside-down American flags sewn together with “BLM” painted across.

At one point in the night a small firework was shot over the fence. As it sizzled out on its own, protesters pleaded with others to remain peaceful. Later, a few small fires were occasionally started outside the courthouse, with at least one put out by other protesters.

Unlike previous weeks, protesters were not centered mainly outside the courthouse, but scattered throughout downtown. ➔10

Harassing Iranian plane proves U.S. doesn't intend to respect intl. covenants: Lebanese lawyer

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — On July 24, two U.S. fighter jets came dangerously close to an Iranian passenger plane in Syrian airspace, forcing the pilot to change altitude quickly to avoid the collision.

The adventurous move resulted in the injury of several passengers.

It was not the first provocative measure by the U.S. administration to escalate tensions against Iran in West Asia.

Tensions between Iran and the U.S. entered a new stage after Donald Trump abandoned a multi-power agreement with Iran over Tehran's nuclear program.

Iran has repeatedly warned the American administration against provocative actions against its interests in the region.

In this regard, Haitham Abu Said, a West Asia commissioner for human rights, tells the Tehran Times that the agreement about respecting the safety and security of passenger aircraft

includes 149 articles in addition to an attachment of thirteen clauses.

“It also talks about military disputes away from everything related to the civil issues in its various forms,” Abu Said says. “Therefore, it is considered one of the most important agreements that receive the United Nations' attention, especially when there are conflicts between two or more countries, as this agreement is binding for all members of the United Nations.” ➔7

Solar energy, an advantage for Iran

With more than 300 sunny days throughout the year, Iran has an advantage for benefiting from the solar energy.

The country also has a huge potential for the expansion of solar energy infrastructure.

Currently, over 100 large-scale farms ranging from 2MW to 12MW and over 2,000 small-scale and rooftop solar power plants are operating across Iran, the number of which has noticeably been growing as Iranian households and small industries have embraced the new technology with open arms and investors also seem eager for more contribution in this area.

Solar farms account for the lion's share of electricity generation (44 percent) from renewable energy in Iran.



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Why E3 keeps silent on UN arms embargo on Iran

TEHRAN — While the dispute over the UN arms embargo on Iran looms large on the horizon, the European signatories to the Iran nuclear deal – France, Germany and the UK (E3) – continue to refuse to take a clear stance on the UN arms embargo, which put them in a dilemma that they want to avoid, an analyst tells the Tehran Times.

The E3 and the U.S. increasingly hold talks on Iran in a bid to settle their differences over a range of issues that have shaken the transatlantic alliance over the past few years. The UN arms embargo on Iran is one of these issues on which U.S. officials seek to reach an agreement with the Europeans.

To this end, U.S. Special Representative for Iran and Senior Advisor to the Secretary Brian Hook traveled to Estonia and the United Kingdom on July 28-29 for consultations with the U.S. European allies. Before the trip, the U.S. Department of State said in a statement that Hook was going to visit the UK after his visits to Tunisia, Kuwait and Qatar, but it stopped short of saying what issues he would discuss in London.

The UK Foreign Office also refused to give details about Hook's trip. It's not clear yet how many UK officials and whom the American official met in London.

Robert Wood Johnson, the U.S. ambassador to the UK, said in a tweet on July 29 that Hook was in London to hold talks about the UN arms embargo on Iran.

“Special Representative Brian Hook in London to discuss why failure to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran would make the world more dangerous,” Johnson tweeted. ➔2

As neighbors, we have to think about regional stability, Zarif tells UAE FM

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that the neighboring countries should think about stability in the region.



“Others may exploit the current situation to destabilize the region, however, we, as neighbors, should think about regional stability,” Zarif said in a meeting with United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan through video conference.

For his part, Sheikh Abdullah said his country attaches great importance to talks and cooperation between Iran and the UAE.

MI6, the coup in Iran that changed the Middle East, and the cover-up

(The Guardian) — The hidden role of a British secret service officer who led the coup that permanently altered the Middle East is to be revealed for the first time since an Observer news story was suppressed in 1985.

The report, headlined “How MI6 and CIA joined forces to plot Iran coup”, appeared in the 26 May edition but was swiftly quashed. It exposed the fact that an MI6 man, Norman Darbyshire, had run a covert and violent operation to reinstate the Shah of Iran as ruler of the country in 1953. Yet just a few days after the newspaper came out, all fresh evidence of this British operation and of Darbyshire’s identity disappeared from public debate.

“We still do not know who leaked this to the Observer originally, or why,” said film-maker Taghi Amirani this weekend, ahead of the release of his documentary, Coup 53. “We only know that any record of the interview with Darbyshire quickly disappeared and no one followed up the story. It smacks of a complete cover-up of British involvement to this day.”

The background to the 1953 coup d’etat has long been the cause of international suspicion and conjecture. Prime Minister Winston Churchill opposed the rule of the country’s first democratic leader, Mohammad Mossadegh, largely because it threatened Britain’s interests in Iran’s oil industry. Working with the CIA, who also hoped to see the Shah Reza Pahlavi back on the throne, it is now clear that MI6 did much more than agitate for Mossadegh to be overthrown.

In June, documents found in a Washington archive showed how Queen Elizabeth II’s name was mistakenly used to persuade the Shah to stay in Iran prior to the coup. Coup 53 now makes a clear case that the British were orchestrating an uprising, going as far as kidnapping, torturing and paying for protesters to go out on to the streets of Tehran.

Coup 53, released on 19 August, the 67th anniversary of the coup, follows the investigations of Anglo-Iranian director Amirani. Working with Walter Murch, the acclaimed editor of films such as The Conversation, Apocalypse Now and The English Patient, Amirani delves into the archives and interviews many of those involved.

“We knew nothing of the Darbyshire mystery, or of the mystery about that mystery, when we started making this film,” said Murch. “None of this was on our radar. Taghi discovered things as we went along. The thriller element was not part of our template, which was to look back at unseen interviews. This was the most material I have ever had to work with – 532 hours – more than double what I handled on Apocalypse Now.”

The turning point was when Amirani found key evidence in abandoned research carried out for a landmark Granada documentary series of the mid-1980s, End of Empire. A transcript of an episode about Iran originally contained an interview with Darbyshire, who spoke candidly.

“My brief was very simple,” says Darbyshire. “Go out there, don’t inform the ambassador, and use the intelligence service for any money you might need to secure the overthrow of Mossadegh by legal or quasi-legal means.” The MI6 officer goes on to explain he spent “vast sums of money, well over a million-and-a-half pounds”, adding, “I was personally giving orders and directing the street uprising.”

Yet the explosive interview footage was never broadcast. In Amirani’s film, the part of Darbyshire is played by Ralph Fiennes, who delivers lines from the censored Granada transcript. The 1985 Observer article by reporter Nigel Hawkes was published just before the Iranian episode was shown by Channel 4.

But when the programme went out, Darbyshire and his testimony were absent. A TV review a week later by Observer critic Julian Barnes made no mention of this part of the story. Amirani, Murch and the intelligence experts they have consulted now conclude the government stepped in after a private screening, preventing the producers from using the Darbyshire interview. Newspapers, including the Observer, edited at the time by Donald Treford, would also have been told to go no further with the story, using a state provision known as a D Notice.

Darbyshire worked closely with a CIA counterpart, Stephen Meade, who did appear in End of Empire. He describes his British colleague as “a very competent individual who spoke Farsi fluently as well as French”.

Perhaps the most shocking evidence in Coup 53 concerns British guilt in the kidnapping and eventual “accidental” killing of the Iranian police chief Mahmoud Afshartous. This incident deliberately provoked the unrest that led to the arrest and imprisonment of Mossadegh in August.

In the lost footage, Darbyshire claims he made “the correct psychological reading of the Persian mob character”, but that he understood that they “had the feeling they were being screwed, and rightly so, from 1920 onwards”.

Darbyshire died in 1993, and former Granada researcher Alison Rooper, who worked on End of Empire, together with her producer/director Mark Anderson, tell Amirani they have no clear memory of interviewing the MI6 officer or of what happened to the footage.

The shah, who had been living in exile in Italy, flew back to Iran, then governed by CIA- and MI6-approved General Fazlollah Zohdi. In America, the coup was known as Operation Ajax, while in Britain it was Operation Boots. The shah ruled the country until the Islamic revolution of 1979.

Tehran to host second round of talks over Ukrainian plane crash

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Ambassador to Ukraine Manouchehr Moradi has said that second round of talks over the Ukrainian plane crash in early January will be held in October in Tehran.

“The first round of negotiations between Iran and Ukraine about #ps752 issues was held in Kiev during the visit of Iranian delegation to Kiev on 30-31 July and ended with participants from Canada, Sweden & United Kingdom. Talks were constructive and fruitful. Second round to be held on Oct. 2020 in Tehran,” Moradi tweeted on Saturday.

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

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



downed near the airport.

The incident happened a few hours after

Iran fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a U.S. airbase inside Iraq in retaliation for the

Zarif highlights need to update Iran-Russia deal

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that Iran and Russia should update long-term cooperation deal to a strategic level.

During a meeting with Leonid Slutsky, chairman of the International Affairs Committee of Russia’s State Duma, Zarif said Iran attaches great importance to promoting parliamentary relations to a strategic level.

Slutsky said that his visit to Iran during the coronavirus pandemic shows the importance of relations.

Iran and Russia signed a cooperation deal 20 years ago. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who visited Moscow on July 20 said Iran plans to extend the 20-year agreement with Russia.

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

■ Ghalibaf says Tehran ready to increase parliamentary co-op with Moscow

Slutsky and Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf also held talks said on Saturday.

Ghalibaf said the Iranian parliament (Majlis) is prepared to promote parliamentary relations with Russia. The Iranian parliament speaker said both nations

need to focus on all-out relations in various fields.

Ghalibaf went on to say that Majlis is ready to accelerate joint cooperation with Russia in different fields including politics, trade, economy and culture, the Fars news agency reported.

During the talks, Ghalibaf called the meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in November 2017 a “turning point”.

Ghalibaf also lauded Iran-Russia cooperation in fighting terrorism in Syria, saying security cooperation can serve as a model for boosting joint cooperation in other fields.

Slutsky, for his part, called for maintaining cooperation among Iranian and Russian expert parliamentary committees, including political, energy and economic ones.

Both parliaments can help develop national projects and strategic cooperation, he added.

The head of the Duma committee also called for promotion of cooperation in the Caspian Sea.

In relevant remarks in June, Ghalibaf and Russian Ambassador to Iran Levan Dzghargyan underlined the need to expand mutual cooperation in different fields, especially trade relations.

During their meeting on June 22, Ghalibaf and Dzghargyan explored avenues for bolstering and reinvigorating



ties in economic and trade areas.

Ghalibaf appreciated Russia for its principled stance in the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

“The claims made in the IAEA resolution are not legal and Russia had firm stance in this regard,” he said.

The Iranian parliament speaker said undoubtedly parliamentary cooperation between the Russian State Duma and the Iranian Parliament will continue with more speed.

Iranians’ will has defeated U.S. maximum pressure, senior official says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi has said that the Iranian people’s determination has defeated the United States’ policy of “maximum pressure”.

“Tightening sanctions cannot impede Iran’s scientific and defense progress. These advances will continue by the scientists and youths’ endeavor. The policy of maximum pressure has failed against the Iranian people’s determination and its continuation along with other wrong policies of Trump will lead to his defeat in presidential elections,” he wrote in a tweet in Persian.

Trump 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” campaign against Iran.

In a tweet in June, Vaezi said that the Donald Trump administration has no way but revising wrong policies and making up for past mistakes, especially economic and medical terrorism against Iran.

Vaezi, a former deputy foreign minister, predicted that Trump will lose the November

election if he insists on his wrong policies.

“Continuation of practicing discriminatory policy and pushing knee on neck and tightening unilateral sanctions and health and economic terrorism against the Iranian people will not end in Trump’s victory in elections, and will just make this administration more isolated. The United States has no way but revising wrong policies and making up for the past,” Vaezi tweeted.

U.S. Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff said in May that Donald Trump administration’s policy of maximum pressure against Iran is a “failed policy”.

“No amount of spin can save this disastrously failed policy,” he said in a tweet.

Many analysts and think tanks believe that the maximum pressure policy has failed.

On the second anniversary of the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said Washington’s maximum pressure campaign has ended up being an “abject failure”.

President Hassan Rouhani said in December 2019 that the White House has no way other

than putting an end to its policy of “maximum pressure” on the Islamic Republic.

Former Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani also said in December that maximum pressure is a “wrong policy” and the U.S. must stop it.

“There has always been political will to solve issues and there is no dead end... The issue is that policy of maximum pressure is wrong and must be changed. We have not closed the door, however, the United States must come to the understanding that this policy is not right,” Larijani said in a press conference.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in September 2019 that Washington’s policy of sanction and pressure against Iran has not worked.

“The United States is running out of options. It is desperate. The policy of maximum pressure has not worked,” Zarif told CGTN in an interview.

Former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has called policy of “maximum pressure” on Tehran bankrupt.

“We have been pressuring them. Maximum pressure... we’re seeing the unfolding

Why E3 keeps silent on UN arms embargo on Iran

1 → Earlier on July 27, the State Department said in statement that the main goal of Hook’s visits to Tunisia, Qatar, and Kuwait was “to discuss extending the UN arms embargo on Iran, which is scheduled to expire on October 18, 2020.”

The Guardian newspaper confirmed that Hook “was in London on Wednesday to meet Foreign Office officials as part of his attempt to drum up support for the U.S. policy of extending the arms embargo,” suggesting that the Europeans have offered a compromise to extend the EU arms embargo on Iran.

“Hook ruled out an EU offer to extend its own arms embargo as sufficient, since the EU embargo would still allow Iran to purchase arms outside the EU and the U.S. The E3’s arms embargo does not expire until 2023,” the newspaper said.

It also quoted Hook as saying, “It’s great that Europe has these sanctions in place, but what we need is a global embargo, and if you do not have a global embargo it allows Iran to purchase these weapons.”

Hook’s visit to London made it clear that the Europeans are making consultations with the U.S. officials before taking stance on the UN arms embargo. They also seem to be holding talks among themselves to decide how to proceed with the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and the UN arms embargo.

Two days before hook’s visit, UK Foreign Minister Dominic Raab held a telephone conversation with his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian on Iran.

“The UK and France continue to work together to support global stability and security. Good discussions with French FM Jean-Yves Le Drian today in issues of shared importance, including Iran and joint efforts to deter annexation and to facilitate dialogue between the parties to the MEPP,” tweeted Raab on July 27.

The Europeans parties to the Iran nuclear deal have increased



their contacts to address what they call “major implications” of the planned lifting of the UN arms embargo. They are yet to take a clear stance on the UN arms embargo, but they have implied on many occasions that they share some concerns with the U.S. over the arms embargo issue.

“The E3 remains committed to fully implementing Resolution 2231 by which the JCPOA was endorsed in 2015. However, we believe that the planned lifting of the UN conventional arms embargo established by resolution 2231 next October would have major implications for regional security and stability,” the foreign ministers of France, Germany, and the UK said in a joint statement on June 19, shortly after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors adopted an anti-Iran resolution on the same day.

With respect to the UN arms embargo and the JCPOA, some analysts believe that the European signatories to the Iran nuclear deal are facing unfavorable options.

“The EU is facing a dilemma. On one hand, it seeks to maintain its independence against the U.S. And on the oth-

er hand it’s trying to find a middle ground on the UN arms embargo,” Ali Bigdelli, an EU expert, told the Tehran Times, adding that the E3 stance on the UN arms embargo depends on the Iranian positions in this regard.

According to Bigdelli, the E3 cannot ignore the fact that the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 stipulates that the UN arms on Iran must be lifted by October, and thus they offered to extend the EU arms embargo on Iran rather than the UN arms embargo. The expert also said that the Europeans want to save the nuclear deal.

They haven’t publicly discussed any offer yet. But pundits believe that the European parties to the Iran nuclear deal could soon be forced to clearly announce their positions on the UN arms embargo, given that they are running out of time. October will soon arrive and that the Europeans will have to make a fateful decision on the UN arms embargo and the JCPOA.

The Guardian suggested that the Europeans hope that a possible Joe Biden’s win in the November election would lead to the U.S. rejoining the JCPOA.

“The three European signatories to the nuclear deal – Germany, France and the UK – are caught in a vice in that they do not wish to see the resumption of conventional arms sales to Tehran, but unlike the U.S., they do want to keep the 2015 nuclear deal alive. The Europeans are especially conscious of the fact that a Democratic win in November’s election would probably lead to the U.S. rejoining the deal, and more positive relations between Tehran and the West,” the Guardian said.

To the Europeans’ consternation, the UN arms embargo on Iran is scheduled to expire before the U.S. presidential election. Therefore, the Europeans need to make a decision on the UN arms embargo before the Americans go to the polls.

Zarif: West must cease financing, harboring terrorists

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The West **d e s k** must cease financing and harboring terrorists, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on Saturday night.

"From their safe havens in US and Europe, they promote hatred, agitate & organize murder & mayhem, and shamelessly claim responsibility for the murder of innocent Iranian civilians," Zarif wrote. "Smokescreens can't obscure this hypocrisy," he added.

Zarif's tweet came a few hours after the Intelligence Ministry announced it has arrested the ringleader of an anti-Iran terrorist group based in the United States.

In its statement, the ministry said 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," the statement read. 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 statement, 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 operations in Iran, it added.

"I was called before the bomb was about to be set off," Sharmahd said in footage broadcast on national TV, speaking about the Hosseynieh Seyed al-Shohada terrorist attack.

"They were in a good position. They [just] needed explosives that we provided for them," he added.

The footage also incorporated intercuts of his previous televised remarks, during which he is seen admitting to Tondar's working alongside the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation. "Do you know where is the FBI's office, the same federal building, wherein we are present?" he is seen telling a member of the audience in one.

Iran has established new order in West Asia: parliament speaker

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Parliament Speaker **d e s k** Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf says through resistance all kinds of seditions, Iran has gained such power to thwart the most complex plots of the enemies and establish a new order in West Asia.

"After the Islamic Revolution, our nation gained enormous power to protect the Revolution, and after bypassing the seditions of the first years of the Revolution, the nation managed to courageously resist against the enemies during the Holy Defense (Iraq's imposed war on Iran in the 1980s)," Ghalibaf said during an open session of the parliament on Sunday.

"These days, the enemies of the Iranian people have complicated plots to harm the people economically, therefore, the issues surrounding people's livelihood must be resolved," he said.

The parliament speaker noted while there are problems and infiltrators are heavily pursuing their acts of sabotage against Iran, change is imminent.

Ghalibaf said that there is a third current that complements the two currents of sanctions and distortion, and that is inefficiency.

"This current takes over management positions but



ignores the country's priorities and makes sanctions problematic and leads the country to psychological collapse," he added.

He also said the United States' sanctions were aimed at disrupting the country's economy and ultimately leading to bankruptcy but the sanctions have failed to reach their goals.

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.

Foreign Ministry lauds intelligence forces for arresting head of U.S.-based terror group

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign **d e s k** Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has lauded the Intelligence Ministry's "decisive" move in arresting the ringleader of a U.S.-based terrorist group, the Foreign Ministry website reported.

"The U.S. regime considers itself to be standing by the Iranian people while it harbors and supports in different ways notorious terrorists and those who have claimed responsibility for several terrorist operations inside Iran and have the blood of innocent Iranian people and citizens on their hands," Mousavi said in a statement on Saturday evening.

Mousavi also expressed the Islamic Republic's strong protest at the U.S. government, saying, "The regime must be held accountable for supporting this terrorist cell and other outfits as well as criminals that lead sabotage, armed and terrorist operations from within the United States against the Iranian people and shed the blood of Iranian citizens."

The Iranian Intelligence Ministry announced on Saturday that it has arrested the ringleader of an anti-Iran terrorist group based in the United States.

Iranian security forces have managed to arrest the head of the terrorist group, Jamshid Sharmahd, who directed "armed operations and acts of sabotage" in Iran from the U.S., the ministry said in a statement.



Following a complicated operation, the ringleader of the group, named Tondar (Thunder), was arrested and he is "now in the powerful hands" of Iranian security forces, it added.

The ministry said it has dealt a heavy blow to the Tondar terror group that planned and carried out a deadly terrorist attack on Seyyed al-Shohada mosque in the southern city of Shiraz, Fars Province, in 2008, which killed 14 people and wounded 215 others.

Iran's Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi also told the national TV that "people like Sharmahd make a mistake to rely on the U.S. and the Zionist regime as these two support them as long as they serve their interests."

"Although Interpol was tasked with arresting him, no action was taken against him, which shows the West's empty slogan of fighting terrorism," he pointed out.

S. Korea, Iran agree to launch working group on humanitarian trade

SEOUL (Yonhap) — South Korea and Iran have agreed to launch a working group on expanding humanitarian trade as part of efforts to maintain bilateral partnership within the scope of a U.S.-approved sanctions exemption, a source close to the matter said Sunday.

The director general-level consultation aims to discuss on a regular basis how to match Iran's demand for medicine and medical equipment with what South Korean exporters can offer, the source said.

The first working group talks will likely be held early next month.

The two sides reached the agreement during their higher-level virtual talks held earlier this week. In the talks, the Iranian side expressed intent to purchase several hundred millions of dollars worth of South Korean products, according to the source.

South Korea has been seeking to expand humanitarian exports to Iran, including coronavirus test kits, amid the worsening COVID-19 outbreak there, as well as other essential medicine, like flu vaccines and antidiabetics.

Expanding humanitarian trade with Tehran is also expected to help the two countries settle the issue of Iran's assets -- known to be worth up to U.S.\$7 billion -- frozen in two Korean bank accounts since last year due to Washington's tightened sanctions against Tehran.



The two countries had used the won currency-based accounts to continue Korea's oil imports from Iran and exports of goods to Iran upon the U.S. waiver of sanctions limiting dollar-based financial transactions with Tehran. But Washington refused to extend the sanctions waiver.

In April, Washington approved a special license for Seoul to resume some humanitarian transactions with Tehran even if they involve Iran's central bank subject to U.S. sanctions. In late May, Seoul sent to Tehran \$500,000 worth of medicine for hereditary diseases in the first such shipment to the Middle Eastern country.

The Seoul government has also launched an interagency task force to step up humanitarian trade with Iran and hosted a series of briefing sessions for local companies to help them resume trade with Tehran.

of Iranian intelligence forces".

"Once, when some individuals threatened in a phone call to catch him (Sharmahd), he said in response that his seat was on the sixth floor of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; he meant they were not able to arrest him," said the minister.

Alavi added that the person who regarded himself as having a seat at the FBI is now in the hands of Iranian intelligence agents.

Iran's Intelligence Ministry said on Saturday it had arrested Jamshid Sharmahd, adding its forces dealt a "heavy and serious blow" to Tondar (Thunder) terrorist group by nabbing the ringleader of the anti-Iran terrorist group based in the United States.



Tehran blasts continued Saudi bombardment of Yemen during Eid al Adha

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a **d e s k** senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker, has condemned Riyadh for continuing to bomb women and children in Yemen, even during the Eid al Adha. "During #EidAlAdha, the Saudi rulers, relying on US terrorist leaders, continue to bomb women & children in #Yemen, back death penalty for youths in #Bahrain, feed terrorists in the region, aid and abet US in sanctioning people in #Syria & #Lebanon, AND make friendship w/Tel Aviv," Amir Abdollahian tweeted on Sunday.



Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign against Yemen in March 2015 with the aim of eliminating the Yemeni opposition groups who had toppled the government of President Mansour Hadi. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had vowed to restore the toppled president in a matter of weeks.

In a report on its website on March 24, Amnesty International said, "Gross human rights violations, including what could amount to war crimes, are being committed throughout the country. By the end of 2019, it is estimated that over 233,000 Yemenis would have been killed as a result of fighting and the humanitarian crisis."

Meanwhile, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has documented more than 20,000 civilians killed and injured by the fighting since March 2015, the amnesty said.

A man-made humanitarian crisis has spiraled with approximately 16 million people waking up hungry every day, the amnesty regretted. Last month, Iran called on the United Nations to stop Riyadh's atrocities "by any means possible".

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi on July 17 expressed regret that the Saudi-led military forces are continuing their war crimes in Yemen "under the international community's silence and indifference".

He called on international human rights bodies to prevent the continuation of such crimes by the Saudi fighter jets against Yemen by any means possible.

"The countries providing arms for the forces that have invaded Yemen, which have caused the slaughter of the Yemeni women and children by supplying them (aggressors) with destructive bombs and weapons, are accomplice in these crimes and must be held accountable for such support before the international community and the people of Yemen," the spokesman said.

Army Ground Force signs MOU to receive geographical data

TEHRAN (MNA) — National Geography Organization and the intelligence branch of Iran Army's Ground Force signed an MOU to develop cooperation in the fields of science, education, and research interactions.

Second Brigadier General Majid Fakhri, the head of the National Geography Organization of the Armed Forces of Iran stated that the purpose of the signing of this MOU is to develop cooperation in the fields of intelligence, human capital, scientific, educational and research interactions as well as exchanging the two organization's expertise and experiences in this regard.

He also stressed that both sides use capabilities of each other to meet the country's need for modern geographic and geomatics technologies in the field of security and added that the cooperation for providing spatial information systems and user services is one of the issues agreed upon in this document.

He went on to express the readiness of the National Geography Organization to cooperate with all organizations of the Armed Forces such as collecting descriptive data to enrich the defense spatial database and set up Defense Spatial Data Infrastructure at the lowest cost in the shortest time.

Second Brigadier General Jalali Nasab, the head of intelligence branch of Army's Ground Force also called the signing of this document fruitful and said that the MOU will meet the Army's need for spatial data, including border photography, satellite imagery, and the linking of descriptive information and spatial data.

Lawmaker says Iran should not negotiate with U.S.

TEHRAN (MNA) — A legislator in the Iranian Parliament said that the Islamic Republic of Iran should not negotiate with the United States since they are not determined to lift sanctions imposed against Tehran.

Speaking in an interview with Mehr news agency on Sun., Ali Akbar Karimi pointed to recent remarks of Leader of the Islamic Revolution, saying that taking vital capabilities of Iranian people is the main and vital goal of Americans' claim to talk with Iran and added, "resolving problems between Iran and U.S. is not the goal of U.S. government, rather, they (U.S.) seek to impose a humiliating condition on the Iranian nation."

By claiming to talk with Iran, Americans want to say that "we could bring back Iran to the negotiating table and the Islamic Republic of Iran retreated from its position so that their request for negotiating with Iran has no other meaning," Karimi highlighted.

Negotiating with the United States in the current situation means admitting enemy's demand, he said, reiterating, "U.S. President Trump is in desperate need of such achievement for winning in the upcoming presidential election and for this purpose, he tries to negotiate with Iran in any way."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Karimi said that Americans have no intention of accepting the legal rights of Iranian people and lifting sanctions they imposed against Iranian people at all.

It is not in our best interest to sit at the negotiating table in this situation, because in this way, Iran should give concession to them (Americans), he reiterated.

U.S. astounded by terrorist ringleader's arrest: intelligence minister

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Iranian Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alawi said a recent complicated operation by the country's security forces which led to the arrest of Jamshid Sharmahd, a terrorist group ringleader, has left the U.S. astounded.

"He was strongly supported by American and Israeli intelligence services, and they considered it unlikely for Iran's Intelligence Ministry to be able to penetrate their umbrella support and apprehend him inside the Islamic Republic of Iran through a complicated operation," Alawi said on Sunday.

He added, "Jamshid Sharmahd and his associates planned some 27 acts of terror all of which were thwarted thanks to the perseverance, vigilance and knowledge

Russia to build new port for boosting trade with Iran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Russia will construct a new port to increase trade with Iran, India, and Kazakhstan, Russia Today reported on Sunday.

As reported, a seaport with a capacity of 12.5 million tons will be constructed in Russia's Kalmykia region, near the city of Lagan. It will connect the operating ports of Iran, India, and Kazakhstan with Russia.



The new port will consist of 32 off-loading terminals and other facilities, such as elevators with a capacity of 300,000 tons of simultaneous storage for grain crops, as well as terminals for storing and shipping vegetable oils, fruits, vegetables, and other goods.

The grain and container terminals will have the capacity of five million tons each, while the liquid cargo terminal will have a capacity of 500,000 tons.

Container transportation is one of the promising directions the new port will take, as existing sea transport hubs in the neighboring regions are not adapted for this. Container traffic is planned to operate mainly from India and the Persian Gulf countries, through Iran.

During a meeting held via video-conference last month, Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali and Russian officials at Federal Customs Service including Vladimir Vladimirovich Ivin, the deputy head of the customs, the two sides investigated ways of boosting bilateral customs cooperation.

Addressing the conference, Jalali said that Iran is ready to create customs "Green Corridor" with Russia on the pandemic occasion when many international activities have been brought to lockdown.

Housing rental in Tehran city rises 27% in a month

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Rent price in Tehran city increased 27 percent in the fourth Iranian calendar month Tir (June 21-July 21) from its previous month, according to a recent report released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

The CBI report also shows that the rent price in the capital city has experienced a 31-percent rise in the fourth month of this year compared to the same month in the past year, IRNA reported.

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 Dejjpasand 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.

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 the 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.

TEDPIX hits record high of 2m points

1 → The minister also said that the value of four-month trades at this market has increased 145 percent since the beginning of the current 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 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."

While the amount of liquidity absorbed

by the stock market is rising more and more, this market is also developing its scope of activity, for example, it's planning to add a new exchange to its current major exchanges, including TSE, Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

The new exchange is supposed to be the real estate stock exchange which is estimated to be established by the next four-six months.

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 government's approach toward the capital market, which is the expansion of this market's activity, the capital market's



strategy for more growth and development, and the current economic condition of the country and the status of the parallel markets, all are promising a prosperous future for the capital market.

And one of the significant results of such prosperity could be leading the liquidity toward production and materialize the motto of this Iranian year, which is "Surge in Production".

Iran's 4-month non-oil trade exceeds \$19b

1 → and Afghanistan with \$713 million as well as Turkey with \$405 million, so the country's top five export destinations remained the same in comparison to previous months, according to Latifi.

As reported, China accounted for over 28 percent of Iran's total exports, followed by Iraq, UAE, Afghanistan, and Turkey with 22 percent, 14 percent, 8 percent, and five percent respectively.

The top five sources of imports during this period were China with \$2.806 billion, the UAE with \$2.479 billion, Turkey with \$1.178 billion, India with \$757 million, and Germany with \$493 million worth of imports.

China accounted for over 25 percent of Iran's total imports, followed by UAE, Turkey, India, and Germany with 23 percent, 11 percent, seven percent, and five percent, respectively.



Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$13.98 billion during the first three months of the current fiscal year (March 20-June 20), of which exports accounted for \$6.36 billion and imports for \$7.62 billion.

The country exported over 21.92 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$6.36 billion during the period to register a 43.98 percent and 45.12 percent decline in value and weight respectively year-on-year.

Q1 imports weighed over 8.92 million tons worth \$7.62 billion, posting a decrease of 26.76 percent in value and 0.78 percent in tonnage compared to the previous year.

Like all other countries around the world, Iran's trade with its foreign partners has been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic, however, the situation is getting back to normal and the country's trade borders are opening one by one.

First domestically-made DME system to be unveiled by late Sep.

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran will unveil its first home-made Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) system to be installed in the country's airports by the end of the next Iranian calendar month (September 21), according to an official with Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company.

DME is a radio navigation technology that measures the distance between an aircraft and a ground station by timing the propagation delay of radio signals in the frequency band between 960 and 1215 megahertz (MHz).

Siamak Behnam, the director for navigation in Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company, told Fars news agency on Saturday that the system is being tested in the lab for two months before being utilized in the country's airports in the next month.

"Iran had purchased the DME systems from Germany, Britain and France," he added.



Behnam said that indigenizing the manufacturing of DME system by the Iranian experts has saved 50 percent of the price of foreign models for the country.

Iran has taken many significant steps in development of its air industry despite the U.S. sanctions.

In a ceremony held last Monday, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami unveiled the country's first domestically-made mobile air traffic control (ATC) tower.

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

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

Speaking in the ceremony, Eslami underlined the significance of this achievement and said: "This is the starting point for utilizing the domestic capacities more widely in all aspects of transportation including roads, rail, sea, and air, and move towards an integrated and intelligent transportation system in the country."

Elsewhere in the event, Deputy Head of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company Mohammad Amirani said that his company signed a deal with Iran Electronics Industries for construction of five mobile towers 18 months ago and this is the first delivery.

Mentioning the significant reduction of costs by constructing such control towers inside the country Amirani said: "While the cost of building five domestic control towers was about 500 billion rials (about \$11.9 million) in total, we had to pay more than 400 billion rials (about \$9.5 million) to supply only one of these towers from abroad."

According to the official, currently, the only mobile flight control tower in the country, which was purchased from a Canadian company several years ago, is worn out and does not have the necessary efficiency for critical or special conditions.

Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce inks co-op MOU with IMH

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce and Iran Mine House (IMH) signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation for the expansion of the Iranian private sector's presence in Oman.

The MOU was signed by the Head of Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce Mohsen Zarabi and IMH Head Mohammadreza Bahraman, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported on Sunday.

As reported, the mentioned MOU is aimed at helping Iranian companies active in the field of mining to expand their presence in the Omani market, while increasing the export of mineral products through Oman, facilitating joint ventures, and also to form specialized mining committees.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Zarabi pointed to Oman's ninth five-year development plan which is focused on five major axes of mining, industry, tourism, fisheries, transportation, and logistics and said: "Mining is one of



Head of Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce Mohsen Zarabi (R) signs a memorandum of understanding with Head of Iran Mine House (IMH) Mohammadreza Bahraman in Tehran.

the most important axes of this five-year plan."

The official also noted that by signing this memorandum,

the Iran-Oman Joint Chamber intends to inform IMH about the projects, tenders and exploration zones of Oman, deploy trade delegations from the Iran Mine House to exhibitions and trade talks to Oman, inform the Omani side about Iran's mining capacities and capabilities, provide consulting for the private sector while building infrastructure and providing facilities for them to be present in Oman.

Collaboration with IMH in solving the problems of businessmen active in Oman, holding training courses on Oman laws and regulations and how to enter the Omani market, establishing a specialized mining committee under the Joint Chamber Technical, Engineering and Investment Services Committee for trade with Oman, were some of the other goals of the MOU mentioned by the official.

Bahraman, also expressed his satisfaction with the signing of the first memorandum of understanding between Iran Mining House and a joint chamber and said: "Certainly, this will be the beginning of new activities with other joint chambers."

Value of trades at IME rises 40% in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) rose 40 percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IME Public Relations Department reported.

As reported, 712,569 tons of commodities worth \$1.166 billion were traded at this exchange in the past week, indicating a 74-percent rise in terms of weight as well.

Last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 166,640 tons of various products worth \$467 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 159,918 tons of steel, 6,040 tons of copper, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 18 tons of precious metal concentrates, 550 tons of zinc as well as 16 kg of gold bullion were traded by the customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 545,273 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$704 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 230,000 tons of VB feed stock, 152,938 tons of bitumen, 67,207 tons of polymer products, 36,360 tons of chemical products, 940 tons of insulation, 49,500 tons of lubecut oil, 50 tons of argon, 1,378 tons of base oil, 1,000 tons of slaps waxes as well as 5,900 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 650 tons of commodities were traded on the IME's side market.

As previously reported by the IME Public Relations Department, the value of trades at this exchange has risen 23 percent during the past Iranian calendar month (ended on July 21).

As reported, 3,169 million tons of commodities worth 232 trillion rials (about \$5.52 billion) were traded at the IMF in the past month, indicating an eight-percent rise in terms of weight.

The oil products and petrochemicals floor of the IME witnessed trading of 2.034 million tons of products valued at 110.249 trillion rials (about \$2.62 billion) during the previous month.

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

On April 21, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad unveiled the market's new outlook plan, which depicts IME's development



roadmap until the Iranian calendar year of 1404 (March 20205-March 2026). Materializing the slogan of this Iranian year, which is "Surge in Production" is seriously considered in the mentioned plan and it is, in fact, the strategic approach of the outlook plan.

New research, technology center to be established in Assaluyeh

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of Pars Special Economic Energy Zone (PSEEZ) Organization has announced the establishment of a new research and technology center in the southwestern city of Assaluyeh, where the zone is based.

According to Iraj Khorramdel, preparations are being made for the inauguration of this new center in the near future, Shana reported on Saturday.

"Growth and technology centers are an important necessity for the country to achieve development, and this region is the best place to set up such a center due to its high capacities as well as the existence of upstream and downstream industries in the oil industry," Khorramdel said.

The official noted that this center



is going to be established under the framework of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which is going to be signed between the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology and Bushehr Persian Gulf Science and Technology Park.

"We hope this center will help the oil industry complete the production chain of products and equipment," he stressed.

Located in the port city of Assaluyeh, PSEEZ is home to several petrochemical complexes that receive gas and gas condensate feedstock from the giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

The zone is the hub of Iran's exports of major non-oil commodities that are gas condensate and petrochemicals.

RIPI inks co-op MOU with local university

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Kharazmi University for expansion of cooperation in various areas, Shana reported.

According to the RIPI office of public relations, the MOU was signed by the RIPI Head Jafar Tofiqi and Kharazmi University Chancellor Azizollah Habibi.

As reported, cooperation in indigenizing and transfer of new technologies, as well as defining, and implementing joint industrial and research projects required by the oil, gas, and petrochemical industries are among the most important goals of this five-year memorandum.

Utilization of educational and research facilities available in laboratories and research centers of the two sides, cooperation in holding training workshops, and implementation of new interdisciplinary courses are other provisions of the signed MOU.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Tofiqi underlined some of the major goals of his institution and

said: "Research Institute of Petroleum Industry is an industrial complex that always conducts applied and industrial research, so it has reached many technological achievements and this is what differentiates it from other research institutes in the country."

"The institute's focus is on the market and industry, and to play this role, on the one hand, it is associated with the downstream sectors and knowledge centers such as universities and research institutions, and on the other hand, with the upstream sectors," he added.

Habibi for his part said: "One of the good policies of the country's higher education is to use the existing capacities of other industries and fields, according to which the oil industry should be able to easily collaborate with universities."

The official also pointed out the importance of bilateral cooperation between the two sides and said: "This cooperation can be considered as a new process for expanding the joint activities of the university with the research institute and we can also start a new phase of cooperation in the field of human resources."



Iranian Kharazmi University Chancellor Azizollah Habibi (L) and Head of Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI) Jafar Tofiqi exchange signed MOU documents on Saturday in Tehran.

Jet fuel demand outlook sours after fleeting market optimism

For a faint moment, energy traders had an inkling that demand for jet fuel, the worst-hit product in fuel markets due to the coronavirus pandemic, might stage a bit of a rebound, Reuters reported.

The number of flights increased in the United States in early July, making some traders optimistic. That spurred a bevy of shipments of jet fuel to the U.S. West Coast from locales in Asia.

But with a resurgence in coronavirus cases, passenger air traffic has pulled back. Commercial aviation was easily the hardest-hit of the major transport sectors when coronavirus hit, given the close proximity of passengers in an air-conditioned space where viruses can spread. International flights remain down more than 80 percent from year-ago levels, Rystad Energy said.

In Europe, traders were hopeful that the summer vacation season would increase



demand for jet fuel. But stocks recently hit a record high despite subdued imports to the region and high exports as more countries impose border restrictions to control the new wave of the pandemic.

Stocks had set new records in July at 984,000 tons in a fifth weekly consecutive rise, according to data from Dutch consultancy Insights Global. They slightly fell last

week to 937,000 tons.

Exports westward have come largely from countries such as South Korea, Japan and India. That has decreased jet fuel and kerosene floating storage in Asia to 1.1 million barrels from four million barrels in early May, according to Vortexa.

The rising stocks in Europe and the low demand in summer encouraged many traders to look into export options. The United States was one of the main destinations in June and July, according to Kpler.

But air travel in the United States also has not recovered. Activity rebounded around the July 4 U.S. holiday, but has since stalled, Standard Chartered said Wednesday. The week-over-week rolling seven-day average for passenger number growth in the United States fell below zero in mid-July for the first time since April 20, the company said.

Jet fuel imports to the United States in July increased to 190,000 barrels per day, still 45,000 bpd under year-ago levels, but up 33,000 barrels per day versus June, according to data intelligence firm Kpler.

Much of that went to the U.S. West Coast, which at times relies on imports, given its lack of connectedness to other markets in the country, Kpler's Reid Anson said. "Airlines might have been marginally more active in the region than initial expectations, prompting the need for some international jet volumes."

Meanwhile, while the imports of most products from East of Suez to Europe fell in July according to Kpler data, imports of jet fuel remained stable versus June. However, shippers have grown so pessimistic about near-term demand that some vessels are now taking longer routes to arrive in Europe at the end of summer.

Japan crude imports hit 54-year low on pandemic

Japan's crude imports plunged 31 percent year on year to 1.91 million bpd in June, the lowest for the month in 54 years, as refiners slashed their crude throughput because of the plunge in domestic oil-product demand caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

June crude imports, which were the lowest for the month since 1966, also dropped 16.3 percent from May as refiners cut their crude throughput by 28 percent year on year to 2.08 million bpd, Platts reported citing preliminary data released July 31 by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Japanese refiners and other importers, however, boosted imports of key refined products such as gasoline and gasoil in June on signs of a recovery in demand since the lifting of the state of emergency on May 25.

Japan was a net importer of gasoline for the third consecutive month in June due to low refinery run rates combined with the month-on-month recovery in domestic motor fuel sales.

Japan imported an average of 76,508 bpd of gasoline in June, more than double the 36,607 bpd a year earlier and up 44.1 percent from May.

The growth in imports came as domestic gasoline sales surged 24.4 percent month on month to 782,213 bpd in June, but the year-on-year fall of 4.5 percent was less than the 7 percent expected by Tsutomu Sugimori,



president of the Petroleum Association of Japan and chairman of ENEOS Holdings.

June gasoline sales were the lowest for the month since June 1991's 763,020 bpd, according to METI data.

Gasoil imports also surged 66.3 percent year on year and 41.8 percent month on month to 21,822 bpd in June when the middle distillate sales grew 9.8 percent month on month to 537,301 bpd. June product sales, however, slid 8.3 percent from a year earlier and were the lowest for the month since 1987.

Japanese refiners are keeping their refinery runs low and raising product imports as consumption recovers because of plummeting demand for jet fuel despite a month-on-month rebound in domestic aviation fuel demand.

Domestic jet fuel sales plunged 48.6 percent year on year to 49,228 bpd in June, the lowest for the month since 1986, although they were more than double May's 20,434 bpd.

In June, Japan's crude imports from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, its top two suppliers, dropped 18.1 percent and 30.3 percent year on year to 761,316 bpd and 671,217 bpd but their combined supply accounted for 74.9 percent of total imports, given sharp drops in imports from outside West Asia.

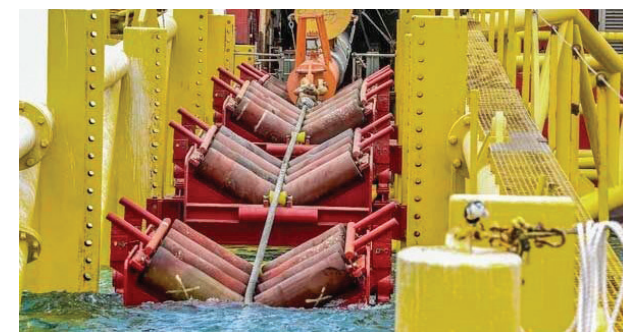
The significant reduction in non-West Asian crude imports in June helped boost Japan's share of crude oil imports from West Asia to 95.2 percent, the highest since records began in 1950.

Crude imports from Kuwait, the third largest supplier, slid 1.9 percent from June 2019 to 211,662 bpd, with Qatari crude imports dropping 34.2 percent to 158,865 bpd.

Vietnam became the fifth largest crude supplier in June, when Japan raised imports by 22 percent year on year to 29,869 bpd, while Russian crude imports plummeted 71.7 percent to 24,609 bpd.

'Pipe-laying operation of Iran's longest offshore gas line completed'

TEHRAN (Shana) — The head of Iranian Kish Gas Field development project announced the end of the offshore pipeline extension operation in the Kish-Garzeh offshore pipeline project with an unprecedented record.



According to Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), Abdollah Mehrabi, noted that the shore pulling operation of the sea pipeline for 2.2 km started on July 21 on Kish Island, adding: "With the efforts of the staff of the employer and contractor, this project was completed in only 7 days which was an unprecedented record."

He described the implementation of this operation as the initial part of the Kish Garzeh offshore pipe-laying project and said: After the operation of pulling the pipe from the shore, the rest of the pipe-laying to Garzeh area (Bandar Aftab) would be carried out by a C Master (pipe-layer) belonging to Iran Offshore Engineering and Construction Company which functions were the contractor of the project.

With the completion and operation of this project, Kish Island will be connected to the seventh national gas transmission line (Iran Trunkline 7).

Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company (IOEC) started the construction of the country's longest underwater gas transmission pipeline in late-July as part of a project to transfer gas to Kish Island power plants.

According to Mehrabi, in this project, a 32-inch gas transmission pipeline and an 18-kilometer fiber-optic cable will be laid between Kish Island and Bandar Aftab.

The official stated that the purpose of this project is to send gas to Kish Island gas power plants, adding: "The Kish Island gas supply pipeline project will be derived from the seventh national line in the north of Bastak city in the southern Hormozgan province and will lead to Kish Island gas power plants."

Engineering studies, supply of goods, and implementation of piping and cabling of the mentioned project have been carried out by Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company as the contractor of the project, Mehrabi said.

Norway targets lower oil-wealth spending in budget, Sanner says

Norway's Covid-related economic-support measures need to be phased out gradually and the government's use of oil money should be tightened in the 2021 budget, the country's finance minister said.

In an interview with E24.no, Jan Tore Sanner said he has a clear goal of reducing the use of oil revenue, and believes it should happen as early as next year, in the budget to be presented in October, Bloomberg reported.



"It will be a goal to reduce the use of oil money somewhat by next year, but how much, it's too early to say, also because the uncertainty is so great," he said. "We must take into account that we must implement new measures throughout the autumn, and we are ready for that if necessary."

Norway's budgetary rules state that over time a maximum of 3 percent of the country's oil fund's value should be allocated yearly to the budget. In the government's latest estimate from the end of May, this year's use of oil money is estimated at 425 billion Kroner (\$47 billion). That corresponds to 4.2 percent of the oil fund's value. According to Sanner, Norway will gradually return to the 3 percent level.

"There will be a need for measures in the future to get value creation up and people back to work," he said. "Those measures must also contribute to solving long-term challenges that we worked on even before the pandemic."

Sanner also said he has not yet adjusted his May forecast for a contraction in GDP of 4 percent this year.

Russia's Rosneft to cut 25% of salaries at central office

Rosneft, Russia's largest oil producer, will cut salaries at its central office by a quarter following a decision to reduce the working hours due to the fallout from the coronavirus, Kommersant daily reported.

The newspaper, citing unnamed sources, said the cuts will be implemented from Oct. 1 when the working hours will be reduced to six per day.

Rosneft said earlier this week that the working hours would not be reduced for those who are engaged in production, while 84 percent of its employees at the central office are still working from home as a measure to combat the virus.

The newspaper believes the measure to reduce salaries would allow the company to cut costs by between 4 billion roubles and 5 billion roubles per year (\$54.7 million - \$68.4 million).

Rosneft did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

Russia reported 5,509 new cases of the novel coronavirus on Thursday, pushing its national tally to 834,499, the world's fourth largest caseload.

Iraqi Oil Ministry said on Saturday that it exported more than 85 million barrels of crude oil in July, bringing in revenues of over 3 billion U.S. dollars, Xinhua reported.

Iraq's total exports of crude oil during 31 days of July reached 85.66 million barrels with an average of 2.76 million barrels per day, a ministry's statement said, citing statistics of the State Organization for Marketing of Oil.

The average selling price for crude oil in June was about 40.7 dollars per barrel, the statement added.

"The crude oil revenues has witnessed an increase in July compared to the past few months, despite the reduction in production and export rates in compliance with the OPEC Plus agreement," the statement quoted Asim Jihad, the ministry spokesman, as saying.

Iraq, OPEC's second-largest producer, is scheduled to cut exports to 2.8 million bpd of crude oil as part of its commitment to the OPEC Plus agreement that aimed to help bolster oil prices in the world markets since their collapse in April due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to the ministry statement, about 82.7 million barrels were exported from Iraq's central and southern oil fields via Basra ports, while about 2.7 million from the northern province of Kirkuk via the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean, in addition to exporting 261,894 barrels of crude oil to the neighboring Jordan during the month.

Iraq's economy heavily relies on the exports of crude oil, which accounts for more than 90 percent of the country's revenues. Enditem



Second Announcement
Call for public tender (First/Second publish)
One -Stages tender

N.I.O.C
1399.2194

National Iranian Drilling Company

Subject of Tender:

Tender No.	Description
FP/20-99/060	P/ F: "GOALTECK" MEASURING WHILE DRILLING(MWD)
FP/20-99/061	P/F: QUICK-CLAMP THREAD PROTECTOR DRILLING

Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	11,176,724	Tender No.: FP/20-99/060 Indent No.: 08-22-9845121	20,349,481,619 (Rial)
	11,175,780	Tender No.: FP/20-99/061 Indent No.: 08-22-9745121	3,607,600,000 (Rial)

Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	Qualification process will be done in plain mode in offers opening session according to presentation of valid practice certificate / legal documents (certificate of corporation/ supply announcement up to latest changes) which should be related to tender subject.
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Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof
Distribution Place	Hall No.: 113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148707 - 06134148615
Submitting Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
Closing date	35 days after the last time of Purchasing.
Documents Receiving Method	Address Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

Tender Guarantee

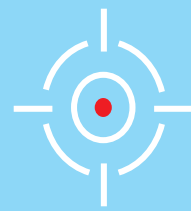
Value of guarantee	1,018,000,000 Rial / 8,499 Euro	Regarding Tender No	FP/20-99/060
	181,000,000 Rial / 1,357 Euro	Regarding Tender No	FP/20-99/061
Type of guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran. 		
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.		

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)
More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr
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Oil min. holds phone talk with Russia's energy min. on reducing oil output

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

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Beijing's strategic 25-year partnership with Tehran

Implication on Chabahar port

By Salman Parviz

Beijing is in the final stages of approving the 25-year \$400 billion economic and security deal with Tehran dubbed Sino-Iranian Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The media reports that the agreement incorporates massive Chinese investment in Iran's infrastructure envisions closer defense and intelligence sharing and guaranteed Iranian oil for China.

The partnership was in process since 2016 when China's Xi Jinping proposed it during his visit to Tehran. However, the proposal managed to remain low on the media radars and resurfaced when President Hassan Rouhani's cabinet approved it in June. Chinese and Iranian officials confirmed that it is a document which is labeled "final version" and dated June 2020.

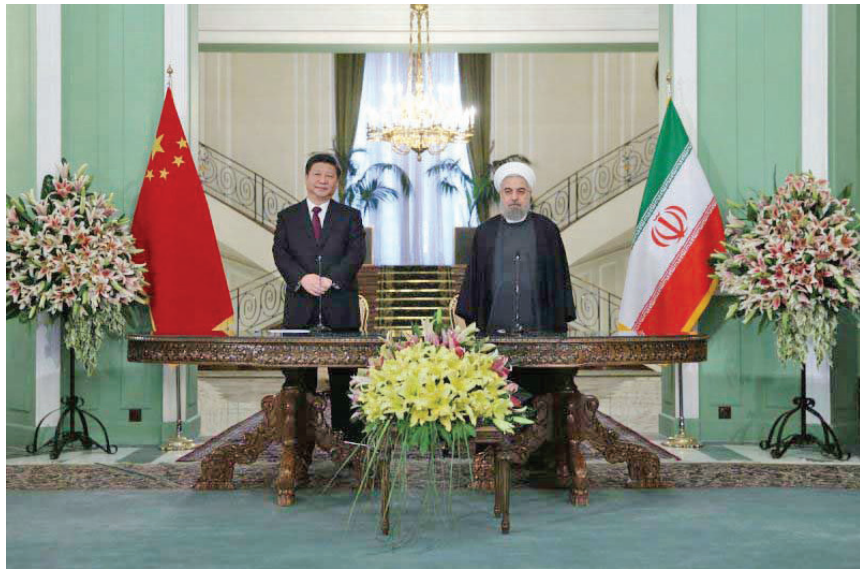
According to the Indian business newspaper, the Financial Express, China is to invest \$120 billion for upgrading Iran's transport infrastructure, beginning with the 2,300-km road that will link Tehran with Urumqi in China's Xinjiang province. This road will be dovetailed with the Urumqi-Gwadar link developed under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor under the "New Silk Road." The road link will provide connectivity with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan and thereafter via Turkey into Europe.

The timing of such a deal amid the immoral and crippling "maximum pressure" economic sanctions could not have been better for the Islamic Republic. For the downward slope in China-U.S. relations, the deal will further deteriorate the bilateral ties between the two largest economies of the world, and another round of trade war between the two countries is expected.

The rising geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and China are likely to hurt both sides and the global economy. In uncertain times people hedge on gold to protect personal savings. In the last week of July, gold price broke a record, reaching an all-time high of \$1,921 an ounce.

China's new digital currency e-RMB could play an important role to bolster the Sino-Iranian pact as it would bypass American financial systems, and eventually reduce the power of the dollar. The move towards digital money has gained momentum globally amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The U.S. dollar is the most powerful and influential currency in the current financial market. In 2019, the U.S. greenback made up nearly 90 percent of all international transactions and 60 percent of all foreign exchange reserves. The supremacy of the U.S. dollar gives U.S. economic sanctions their strength, making it nearly impossible for sanctioned nations such as Iran and



North Korea to conduct international business.

■ Chabahar Free Trade Zone

Reported to be over three trillion dollars, China has the world's largest foreign exchange reserves. Some analysts argue that China is using the FOREX reserves to stretch its muscles and redraw the Asian map. It has used these reserves to invest in infrastructure projects in Africa and Asia mainly. Sri Lanka's Hambantota port was leased to China for 99 years after months of negotiations between China and South Asian island country the Lankan government handed over the port and 15,000 acres of land around it.

The transfer gave China control of territory just a few hundred kilometers off India's shores and a strategic foothold along a critical commercial and military waterway.

Pakistan owes China at least \$10 billion in debt for the construction of Gwadar Port, which is leased to the Chinese government through 2059. Transit trade to Afghanistan via Gwadar port began on July 19 with a consignment of bulk cargo from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). With its 600-km coastline, Gwadar is a key deep seaport currently operated by China to gain direct access to the Indian Ocean in line with its \$64-billion Pakistan-China Economic Corridor (CPEC) megaproject.

The future of the port of Chabahar, which was in part India's response to Gwadar port, hangs in the balance as the massive Iran-China deal incorporates infrastructure projects including airports, railways, and free trade zones.

The prospect that India could lose out on the rail line project connecting the port of Chabahar to the Afghan border city of Zahedan due to apparent delays to invest has raised questions about the foreign

priorities of New Delhi.

The Indian Ocean port of Chabahar consists of two separate ports named Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti, each containing five berths. Iran awarded the development of this port to India, which committed \$500 million to build two new berths in this port.

In 2016, India, Iran, and Afghanistan signed an agreement to establish transit and transport corridor using the Chabahar port linking the region to Central Asia and further west. The port will complement China in its Belt and Road Initiative for trade and travel links from China to Asia, Africa, and Europe.

In January 2017, seven agreements valued at over \$3 billion were signed by Iranian, Indian, Omani, Chinese, and South Korean investors during a conference to promote investment opportunities and sustainable development in Mokran coastal area in the Chabahar Free Trade Zone (CFTZ).

India sent its first consignment of wheat to Afghanistan through the port in 2017. In June, Afghanistan sent three transit consignments to India via the Chabahar port. Afghanistan's first transit of goods to China was shipped through the port in mid-July.

Indian private industry firms, with the presence of Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers and Gujrat State Chemical and Fertilizers, looked at the establishment of urea and ammonia plant in CFTZ, then Indian Ambassador, Saurabh Kumar told the Tehran Times in 2017, adding that the Indian private sector would be the main investor in CFTZ.

National Aluminum Company of India (NALCO) and Iran Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) signed

an agreement for an aluminum smelter plant in CFTZ.

Kumar added that the two countries were negotiating on important agreements on Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), double taxation avoidance, and bilateral investment agreement (BIT). Representatives from Iran and India held a new round of negotiations on PTA in mid-February.

Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Hamid Zadboum and the present Indian Ambassador to Tehran Gaddam Dharmendra met early July to discuss the expansion of trade ties.

The second round of preferential trade agreement was to meet this week, it reported EurAsian Times, adding that the Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson has clarified their "balanced foreign policy" and that it is not favoring Beijing at the cost of Delhi.

Although India has traditionally maintained good ties with Iran, despite the waiver which Chabahar port got from the U.S. sanctions regime, India has been criticized for delays in investing in Iran's only seaport. Moreover, India has fully complied with the unilateral U.S. sanctions and has suspended its energy imports from Iran. Figures released by the Chinese officials show that although Iranian crude deliveries to China were never suspended but reached a 20-year low in March 2020.

Analysts see U.S. President Donald Trump's recent visit to India and his friendship with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a way for the U.S. to contain China's influence in the region. As well, the waiver that Chabahar port got from the sanctions was another sign of Washington's efforts to contain Beijing.

India recently clashed with China in the Himalayas, and the bilateral relations are not at an all-time high, and the Chabahar port can be another venue for conflicting interests. Having good relations with India and China, Iran would prefer a situation whereby both countries could simultaneously benefit from the multi-modal development of the transport infrastructure at the Chabahar port.

Through such bilateral cooperation, the Chabahar port project could bring China and India closer. Recall the "Peace Pipeline" for transportation of natural gas from Iran to Pakistan to India? Unfortunately, the lack of political will prevented this project from implementation.

What happens to the development of the Chabahar port if the Majlis approves the Iran-China strategic 25-year strategic agreement remains a matter of speculation at the moment. The implication of this 25-year strategic deal with China doesn't necessarily mean deterioration of Tehran-New Delhi bilateral relations. On the contrary, it could shape up a new beginning for Beijing-New Delhi ties.

Harassment of Iranian passenger plane proves Washington doesn't intend to respect intl. covenants: Lebanese lawyer

➔ Responding to a question about American warplanes' dangerous move to intercept a passenger plane in the sky of another country, the Lebanese lawyer described what the American fighters did against the Iranian passenger plane as an illegal act and a flagrant breach of the Geneva Convention, air piracy and a violation of the airspace of another country.

"This violation committed by the Americans is considered a message to the international community that the U.S. is going not to respect international covenants," the Lebanese legal expert warns.

Pointing to Washington's intransigence in continuing such adventures unless the UN General Assembly takes a harsh decision against it, the lawyer said it is needed to submit a complaint to the UN Security Council and take the issue to international competence courts.

In this context, Iran has said that it will study multiple options to respond to harassment of its aircraft.

Iran's Foreign Ministry sent a protest note to the Swiss Embassy, which represents America's interests in Iran. The same note was also delivered to UN Secretary-General António Guterres by Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Majid Takht-e Ravanchi.

Abu Said, nevertheless, thinks that Iran's next step is not predictable.

"Of course, we cannot speak on behalf of Iran and what it might do at the military level. But in addition to the international legal procedures that we mentioned above, Tehran may take harsh military action, and Washington must be prepared for that."

According to the Lebanese lawyer, if Iran retaliates against the U.S., this would be a correct move that would prevent a regional confrontation.

Asked about the trick that Israeli fighters used to deceive the Syrian air defenses in downing a Russian plane in Syrian September 2018, Abu Said says, "It is in contravention of the International Conference on Air Law, held in Beijing on August 30 to September 10, 2010, which is an agreement to prevent illegal acts related to international civil aviation."

Noteworthy is that the conference was held under the auspices of the International Civil Aviation Organization. Representatives from more than 80 states adopted two international air law instruments for the suppression of unlawful acts relating to civil aviation. The two instruments were the Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation and the Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft.

"In short, what the United States has done against the Iranian plane and what the Israeli entity previously did in tricking Syrian air defense to down a Russian plane by mistake is contrary to the ICAO law," he concludes.

Abu Said calls on Iran to use all legal mechanisms and to take all international measures to protect its civilian aircraft from the attacks and harassments by America over Syria's airspace.

Global history demonstrating political irrationality

By Peyman Yazdani

TEHRAN (MNA) —Referring to harassment of Iranian airliner by U.S. warplanes and different lawlessness of Trump administration, Prof. Adib-Moghaddam says global history is demonstrating a period of political irrationality and incompetence.

In their last provocative act, two U.S. warplanes harassed an Iranian airliner bound to Beirut over the Syrian sky on Thursday night. US forces claim that their aircraft has kept a safe distance and was in routine mission and approached the airliner to make a visual inspection. The Mahan airliner's pilot receives TCAS alert and abruptly reduces altitude to avoid the collision, and this leads to several injuries among 163 passengers and crew on board.

Meanwhile, Tehran has strongly condemned the U.S. action, calling on the international community to stand against U.S. violations of law. Iran says the plane had obtained all the necessary licenses and was flying in a commercial route and that warplanes have no right to inspect the civilian planes in this route, also given that Syria is responsible for protecting its airspace.

The issue was discussed with Arshin Adib-Moghaddam Professor in Global Thought and Comparative Philosophies and Chair of the Center for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute.

Here is the full text of the interview:

■ How do you assess the harassment of Iranian Mahan Airlines' passenger plane by U.S. warplanes over Syria with respect to international norms and regulations?

A: The incident has to be analyzed within a wider context of hostility towards Iran that is a central plank of Trump's administration's policy. By all standards available, this is a rogue administration whose conduct is reckless and short-sighted. It is this incompetence permeating pretty much everything the current White House does that allowed for the dangerously amateurish maneuver of the two F-15 bombers, which was unwarranted and illegal.

■ What should Iran do to protect its rights under international law and norms?

A: Iran should pursue every legal channel it can in order to hold the Trump administration accountable. A measure is unlikely to yield a major success given the overt lawlessness of this administration and its blatant disregard for international norms of appropriate behavior. Iran needs to continue to diversify its alliance patterns and strengthen its position within the region and beyond in order to balance any further threats emanating from the United States. There will be a window of opportunity for better relations after this U.S. President is sent to the dustbin of history.

■ Is there any similarity between this incident and downing of an Iranian passenger plane by a U.S. warship over the Persian Gulf a couple of years ago?

A: This incident could have easily had similarly horrific consequences, given that the hostile context that I mentioned above is very comparable to the aggressive policies that the Reagan administration pursued against Iran in the latter 1980s that led to the downing of Iran Air flight 655 and indeed allowed for the chemical holocaust in Halabja and Sardasht. Global history has demonstrated that it is within such periods of political irrationality and incompetence that the worst atrocities against innocent people happen.

Trump's policy on Iran disaster for everyone involved

By Kevin Barrett

Wendy Sherman is a professor at Harvard University. She's the former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs under Obama and worked on the 2015 JCPOA nuclear deal with Iran.

And now she is out with a new article in Foreign Policy magazine. Its headline is the "Total Destruction of U.S. Foreign Policy under Trump." Well, that's an interesting title. I think U.S. foreign policy has been heading in a lot of bad directions for a long time, but she makes some good points.

She points out that the Trump administration hasn't had any really notable successes in its dealings with the countries that it perhaps foolishly, and that's my words, not hers, find to be antagonists or enemies, namely, that would be China, Russia North Korea, Iran, and Venezuela. In all of these cases, the U.S. hasn't done anything productive, from the point of view of people like Sherman, who essentially believe in constantly extending American power around the world and trying to rein in these independent countries.

Trump has been a failure, she writes. And for her, that's a tragedy. For the rest of the world, not so much. In fact, I think much of the world is probably breathing more freely because the U.S. has been so unsuccessful in going after its designated enemies - these independent countries. Of course, it's a little bit scary that the world is becoming multipolar, and there's no longer a global hegemon to give the whiplash of discipline to these various countries. In the long run, though that may be a good thing—as long as the instability doesn't get out of control and turn into a war.

I think Wendy Sherman's perspective is right in a sense, Trump's foreign policy has been absolutely utter chaos and has been very self-serving. She points out that Trump's only guiding principle is not what's good for the American Empire, it's what's good for Trump.

And she points out that inviting foreign interference in elections in favor of Trump seems to be a big priority for the Trump administration. But of course, she can't tell the truth about this, because one is not allowed to say that the real problem with foreign interference in U.S. elections is not Russia. It's Israel.

The Russian mafia headed by Semion Mogilevich, and also featuring very, very wealthy billionaire criminal lieutenants, is, in fact, more of an arm of the state of



Israel than of the state of Russia. These people are all Zionists with ethnic loyalties to Israel, just as the previous biggest global criminal organization, the Meyer Lansky syndicate, was likewise loyal to Israel. But the Russian mob is even more so.

And so, Trump has clearly invited foreign election interference and criminal election interference in the United States from Israel and its organized crime accomplices. The problem is that different wings of the Zionist mafia control the media here in the United States, control the banking system here in the United States, and have so much power here in the United States that nobody in the position of Wendy Sherman is allowed to tell the truth about it.

So ultimately, her very strong criticism of the Trump administration is self-serving and hypocritical, maybe not quite as self-serving as Trump's policy is. But it's certainly not the truth, nor is it obvious that a more competent administration running the U.S. empire in a way more advantageous to the U.S. claim to rule the world would actually be any more in the interest of the world's people than the bumbling Trump administration, which is driving the U.S. imperial project off a cliff, where it belongs.

Wendy Sherman points out that one of the great failures of the Trump administration, based on her perspective, is its complete inability to rein in Iran or to pursue a rational policy regarding Iran. And she's right. The U.S. policy has been terrible, and it's been vicious, as the dastardly murder of General Soleimani proved, inviting him to a peace conference and then ambushing him is the most

cowardly and disgusting murder in the history of so-called international diplomacy.

And this hasn't done anything to change Iran. On the contrary, it's actually caused Iran's people to rally behind their leadership.

And now, Iran's economy is immune from U.S. sanctions as another recent article I believe in Foreign Affairs put it. So from her perspective, and really from any rational perspective, Trump's policy regarding Iran has been a disaster for everyone involved, including the U.S. Empire, and it seems that this so-called maximum pressure, trying to bankrupt the Iranian people and engage in collective punishment for what Trump's Israeli controllers believe is Iran's obstreperous unwillingness to knuckle under to Zionism.

Iran's continuing to support media outlets like this one, which provides a critical perspective on Zionism. It's absent from all high production values, professional media worldwide, except for in Iran. And there is Iran's willingness to support the Palestinian resistance.

These are the reasons that Trump's Israeli controllers - his organized crime operators, the people that have owned him ever since he was created by Roy Cohn, the organized crime lieutenant in New York—these people have pushed this insane approach ripping up the JCPOA, and just beating up on Iran for no rational reason. This is the idiotic approach of the visceral Zionists like Netanyahu, who has control over the gangsters, people like Sheldon Adelson, who control Donald Trump.

And Wendy Sherman's absolutely right. This has been a completely insane U.S. policy from the U.S. perspective, from any perspective. And it's completely failed, and Iran is "becoming immune" to U.S. pressure and becoming more independent and continuing to forge productive ties with other independent countries like China and Russia, and indeed Venezuela.

So, truly the U.S. Empire is falling apart. I don't know if Wendy Sherman should blame it completely on Donald Trump. Yes, Trump's complete ineptitude has contributed to this decline of the U.S. Empire. But I think the U.S. Empire was going to decline anyway. And it's just declining a little more quickly and chaotically due to Trump's utterly incompetent leadership and his Zionist controllers.

Kevin Barrett is an American author, journalist, and radio host with a Ph.D. in Islamic and Arabic Studies.

(Source: Press TV)

Over \$117m approved to support corona-affected tourism businesses

➔ **1** In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the tourism ministry in cooperation with the Health Ministry has announced new guidelines and instructions to ramp up the safety of travels across the country; the procedures are initially formulated for “emergency or work travels” being implemented in hotels, guest houses, eco-lodge unites, tourist destinations, transport facilities, recreational centers, and restaurants as the country gradually prepares for travels to start amid the pandemic.



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

The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Relics dating back to Parthian, Samanid eras recovered

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian police have confiscated ancient relics from five smugglers and illegal antique dealers in Zanjan, west-central Iran.

The objects, according to cultural heritage experts, date back to various historical times including 1ST millennium BC, the ears of Parthian Empire (247 BC–224 CE), Samanid Empire (819 to 999) and the early Islamic epoch, a senior police official Rahim Jahanbakhsh, said on Sunday.



An animal-shaped Rayton pottery, glass vases, and gold brooches were amongst objects discovered from their hideouts, Jahanbakhsh added.

New season of exploration begins in Persepolis

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – A new round of exploration on ancient water ducts in the UNESCO-registered site of Persepolis, southern Fars province, has been recently commenced.

The importance of completing exploration studies on these water ducts is felt more than ever, especially due to the heavy rains and floods in recent years in the region, CHTN quoted the director of the site Hamid Fadai as saying on Sunday.



The fourth season of exploration, like the previous seasons, aims at protecting and preserving the historical site as well as disposing of surface water, the official added.

The royal city of Persepolis ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art.

The official also noted that the ancient water ducts of the UNESCO-tagged site are considered as unique and flawless engineering of its time.

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

The city was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as a revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

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

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

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

Pigeon towers significant but strange buildings of ancient times

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – Pigeons are many times deemed as mere nuisances especially by city dwellers. However, they were quite valuable in ancient Iran, mostly for their droppings!

There are still many ruined or well-preserved “luxury” accommodation buildings across the ancient land, which are specially designed and constructed for pigeons. Named “pigeon towers”, each of such bird homes, where the droppings could be collected and used as fertilizer, can hold as many as 14,000 pigeons.

It is not clear when such pigeon houses were built first but according to the comments by ancient travelers, at least they have been existed since 800 years ago. For the first time, “Ibn Battuta” the famous Moroccan traveler mentioned about pigeon houses.

Moreover, according to historians Tamerlane after knowing their functions, ordered to build such places in his capital, Bukhara. Also the famous French traveler, Sharden who visited Iran during the 16th century, again mentioned different pigeon houses in Iran, especially in Isfahan and Yazd. During the invasion of Afghans, most of them were ruined, probably as a result of being used as shelters.

Isfahan, in central Iran, is famed for having a rich heritage of pigeon towers; most of them were built in the 17th century. The architecture of these towers is based on the vernacular architecture of Iran.

It is an efficient use of space inside the towers; the walls were strengthened with interior arches. The ceiling is of barrel-vaulted kind.

The environs of Isfahan are dotted with bizarre but very picturesque pigeon towers. In contrast to a European dovecot, which often housed pigeons to be used as meat, in Iran, the pigeons were never eaten. Here pigeon towers were used as guano factories to produce fertilizers for the melons that



have always been the pride of the region. The guano was also used in the manufacture of gunpowder.

Pigeon towers are of considerable size, often 10.5-12 m high, of sturdy construction and fine proportions. The pigeon houses are usually built of mud-brick. Unbelievably varied, often decorated by ornate cupolas and muqarnas friezes, they are so charming that it is well worth going even great distances to see them.

Although there are never two identical pigeon towers, all conform to a single plan. Each tower consists of an outer drum, but-

tressed internally to prevent collapse and to support the inner drum that rises perhaps a third as high as the main structure.

Pigeons can get to their nets through some passages which are such narrow that it is impossible to other birds such as eagles or falcons to enter. At the bottoms, there are some smooth parts of stucco works. These parts can avoid snakes to ascend. In some cases, they put a bowl of milks at the center with limes around it. As snakes like milk, they try to get it but will be stuck in the lime.

Nowadays, due to the wide usage of chemical fertilizers, such pigeon towers just

convey memories of the past as significant but strange buildings.

■ **Under globetrotters’ eye**

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the mosque have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

■ **“Interesting architectural heritage”**

It's a building in Isfahan that would be easily overlooked. It looks like a closed building; actually, if you pay the caretaker he would probably grant you entry permission, so do try not to miss the amazing and photogenic interior of the tower. (Kenneth_LKM from Hong Kong, China; Date of experience: April 2017)

■ **“Worth going if you are passing”**

You need someone to explain it to you but it is worth a short visit. 2000 pigeons used to visit and drop their droppings which were then converted into fertilizer. (32madeines from Greater London, United Kingdom; Date of experience: April 2017)

■ **“Free attraction!”**

Don't miss this free attraction! Well maintained place! The top offers a nice Ariel view! Tip the caretaker if you wish but not obligatory! We enjoyed the climb with my teenage children! Lots of photo opportunities when we were up there. (Puha P. from Moscow, Russia; Date of experience: December 2016)

■ **“Good for animal and history lovers”**

This tower has about 18000 pigeon nests. A very beautiful and small tower in the center of Mardavij street in Isfahan. We could also see a pigeon drinking water and I took a picture. It is free to go there but when you are coming down and you wanna go out of the tower you may want to pay to the guy who is taking care of the tower and the pigeons and feeds them. Nice place. (Ronak_Gh. from Valladolid, Spain; Date of experience: August 2016)

Stratigraphy study reveals vestiges of Iron, Bronze, Copper, and Neolithic ages in northern Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** – A recent stratigraphy study has revealed historical vestiges dating back to various eras of history including Iron Age, Bronze Age, Copper Age, and Neolithic era at Touq Tepe, a historic region in northern Mazandaran province, bordering the Caspian Sea.

“In this survey, vestiges and pottery fragments were identified that date back to the Iron Age, Bronze Age, Copper Age, Stone Age, and Neolithic era. However, the Neolithic-era potteries discovered in the site are of very high importance when it comes to prehistorical archaeological findings in the eastern side of Mazandaran province,” Iranian archaeologist Rahmat Abbasnejad, who led the survey, said on Saturday.

Two trenches were dug with the depth of over four meters into the [archaeological] hill (tepe) by the means of which the team could probe the evidence of various settlements through analyzing the stratigraphy [rock layers] of the site, the archaeologist explained.

Abbasnejad added attached great importance to the Neolithic-era layer identified in the site, which is situated in Neka county.

“The discovery of more than one meter of Neolithic-era layers in this excavation is a very important event in the shedding a new light on the history of the region in the Neolithic period. Such finding has been made for the first time in the plains of eastern Mazandaran in general and in the plain of Neka in particular.”

Neolithic, also called New Stone Age, the final stage of cultural evolution or technological development among prehistoric humans. It was characterized by stone tools shaped by polishing or grinding, dependence on domesticated plants or animals, settlement in permanent villages, and the appearance of such crafts as pottery and weaving. The Neolithic followed the Paleolithic Period, or the age of chipped-stone tools, and preceded the Bronze Age, or early period of metal tools.



Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari holds exceptional potential to become tourism hub: Austrian ambassador

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Vienna's ambassador to Tehran Stefan Scholz has said that natural sights in Iran's southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari hold the potential to turn the province into a tourism hub for foreign travelers.

“The pristine and unique nature of this province has a special potential to attract foreign tourists.”

He made the remarks on Saturday during his two-day visit to Kuhrang and Saman counties of the province, IRNA reported.

He also noted that the efforts for the sustainable development of the province



are noticeable.

Last October, Scholz said that he be-

lieves U.S. sanctions against Iran will be no obstacle in the path of Austrian tourists to travel to the Islamic Republic.

“Austrian arrivals in Iran are not affected by the sanctions and threats,” the envoy told ISNA.

In an interview with the Tehran Times last September, the ambassador remained commonalities and the history of relations between the two nations, saying “Austria and Iran have a long history in common. It's an incredible special profile that distinguishes us from many other countries. We have 700 years of documented contacts,

500 years of partnership, and about 60 years of full diplomatic relations.”

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

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

Restoration project of Portuguese Castle of Hormuz halted

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – The recent restoration project on the 16th-century Portuguese Castle of Hormuz Island, one of the last surviving monuments of the colonial rule in the Persian Gulf, has been stopped by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, IRIB reported.

The restoration projects and plans need to be approved by the ministry, and as the castle's restoration project hasn't been reviewed by the ministry's experts, it is not validated, said Seyyed Hadi Ahmadi Ruini the director of the ministry's office for preservation and restoration of historic buildings, textures and sites.

The ministry's cultural heritage experts and restorers will be sent to the Island in the near future to inspect the condition of the castle and check its need for restoration,



the official added.

History of the castle goes down in time when Commander Afonso de Albuquerque ordered the construction of a fortress in 1507 after his troops captures the island in early 16th century.

Made from reddish stones on a rocky promontory at the north end of the island, the stronghold was cut off from the rest of the island by a moat, traces of which still remain. It involves arms depot, water reservoir, barrack, prison, church, command center and central hall.

Muscular-looking walls, chambers and archways as well as sets of rusting cannons in the courtyard still give the area a scenic beauty. In addition, upper levels of fort offers wonderful views of the island, its village, rugged mountains all surrounded by the blue waters of the Persian Gulf.

Qatar Airways increases Doha-Shiraz flights

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** – Qatar Airways, the state-owned flag carrier of Qatar, has increased its Doha-Shiraz flights from four times to seven times a week.

“International flights to and from Shiraz came to a four-month halt over the coronavirus fears.... Qatar Airways on Tir 27 (July 17) restarted its [Doha] Shiraz flights in a

four-times-a-week timeline. However, the airline has extended the flight schedule to seven times a week,” Reza Badieifard, the director of Shiraz airports, said on Saturday.

All passengers coming to Shiraz airports must observe the defined health protocols and provide proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test not more than 92 hours before boarding, the official explained.

Passenger traffic at Iranian airports was plunged by 80 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20) in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic which also resulted in a decrease of 70 percent and 79 percent respectively in the number of flights and cargo transport, according to data collected by Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company.

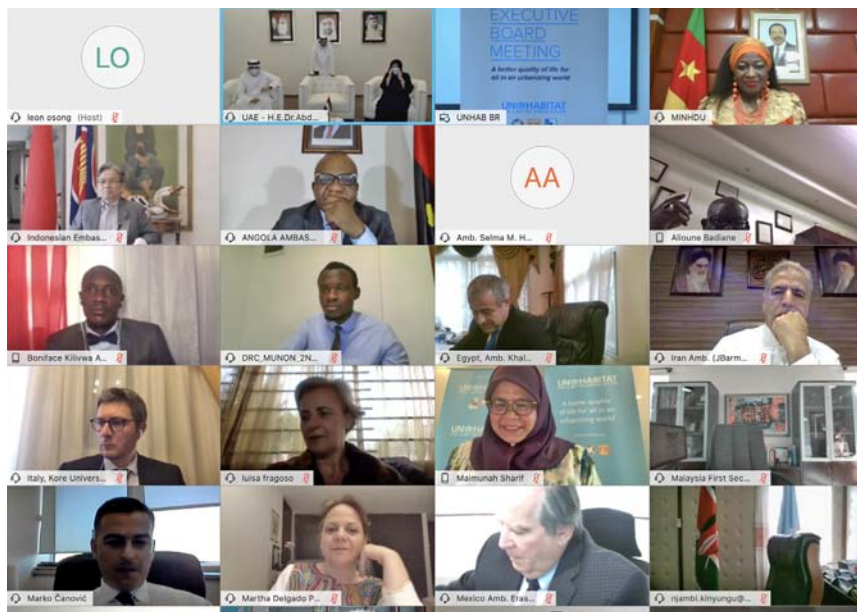


Iran elected as UN-Habitat Chair of Executive Board

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, has elected Iran as the Chair of the Executive Board, according to a report published by the UN-Habitat website.

During an online meeting held on July 29, UN-Habitat's Executive Board elected the new members of its Bureau, which is responsible for organizing Board meetings, facilitating transparent decision making and guiding the Board in its conduct of work.

The Executive Board, which was resuming its first regular session this year and met online, elected Iran as the Chair of the Executive Board (Asia Pacific), Egypt (Africa), Chile (Latin America and the Caribbean) and France (Western Europe and others) as Vice-Chairs and Serbia (Eastern Europe) as the Rapporteur. Together they make



up the Bureau of the Executive Board.

The new Bureau members were elected by acclamation which means the regional groups all agreed by consensus on the nominees. They will hold office until the first session of the Executive Board in 2021.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif welcomed the incoming members of the Bureau of the Executive Board and assured them of her commitment to work with all of them for the good of the organization and in line with the duty, UN-Habitat has towards the Member States. She emphasized that the Board plays a crucial oversight role, particularly over UN-Habitat's work program and budget.

The conclusion of the elections ends the first session of the Executive Board for 2020. The second session of the Board is tentatively scheduled for 27-29 October 2020.

Iran rejects BBC Persian claim of under-reporting COVID-19 mortality

1 → In response to the false report, the Ministry of Health spokesman Sima-Sadat Lari said that some foreign media are trying to create skepticism based on anonymous sources, ambiguity, and using the phrase "it seems so" with an unspecific methodology.

She went on to note that we firmly follow the scientific path approved by the World Health Organization [to report coronavirus patients and toll] and strongly suggest individuals and the media not enter into scientific discussions for political purposes.

"If we were looking for secrecy, as in many countries, including Europe, the first cases would be announced with a delay of weeks, or we would hide the second wave of the disease, as in some countries with political and often economic considerations.

However, we acted quite transparently, and it was clear to eyewitnesses of the disease in comparison with other countries in the region and some even developed ones," she stated.

Naturally, fluctuations are seen in all countries, including Europe and the United States, she highlighted.

Unfortunately, today it is clear to us that the definitive cases in European countries have not been taken into account since December for any reason.

While as one of the last countries to be infected with the virus in the Northern Hemisphere, Iran is still one of the first to announce. In recent weeks, we have announced the second wave of the disease, faster and clearer than many other countries, regardless of political and economic considerations, although these erroneous considerations could not and will not be able to finally hide their re-expansion status, she explained.

In this regard, to improve the current situation and attract broad social participation in their country, they have no choice but to be transparent and stable in presenting their exact statistics and information, she emphasized.

She further concluded that British media should focus instead on tens of reports released so far on the ambiguities in the UK government's COVID-19 figures, particularly the real mortality in the country's elderly care centers.

The World Health Organization's director-general,

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said in early March that the organization has not noticed any problem with Iran's statistics on coronavirus outbreak.

Some media have doubted the official statistics provided by the Iranian health ministry, citing the COVID-19 death toll in Iran is far exceeding that of official statistics.

There are "specific mechanisms" for investigating the facts, the WHO official told CNBC.

"There are reports in the media, but here is the World Health Organization which is a technical organization and needs to investigate the facts; We don't repeat what the reporters say, we have our own mechanism, and we haven't seen faults in the statistics."

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 309,437 on Sunday, of whom 17,190 have died and 268,102 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,685 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 208 died, Lari said.

Currently, 4,089 patients with coronavirus are in critical condition, she added.

African continent very slowly peeling apart; scientists say a new ocean being born

In one of the hottest places on Earth, along an arid stretch of East Africa's Afar region, it's possible to stand on the exact spot where, deep underground, the continent is splitting apart.

This desolate expanse sits atop the juncture of three tectonic plates that are very slowly peeling away from each other, a complex geological process that scientists say will eventually cleave Africa in two and create a new ocean basin millions of years from now. For now, the most obvious evidence is a 35-mile-long crack in the Ethiopian desert.

The African continent's tectonic fate has been studied for several decades, but new satellite measurements are helping scientists better understand the transition and are offering valuable tools to study the gradual birth of a new ocean in one of the most geologically unique spots on the planet.

"This is the only place on Earth where you can study how continental rift becomes an oceanic rift," said Christopher Moore, a Ph.D. doctoral student at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom, who has been using satellite radar to monitor volcanic activity in East Africa that is associated with the continent's breakup.

It's thought that Africa's new ocean will take at least 5 million to 10 million years to form, but the Afar region's fortuitous location at the boundaries of the Nubian, Somali and Arabian plates makes it a unique laboratory to study elaborate tectonic processes.

Earth's crust is made up of a dozen large tectonic plates, which are irregularly shaped, rocky slabs that constantly mash against, climb over, slide under or stretch apart from one another, the NBC reported.

For the past 30 million years, the Arabian plate has been moving away from Africa, a process that created the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden between the two connected landmasses. But the Somali plate in eastern Africa is also stretching away from the Nubian plate, peeling apart along the East African Rift Valley, which extends through Ethiopia and Kenya.

But there are still some big unknowns, including what is causing the continent to rift apart. Some think that a massive plume of superheated rocks rising from the mantle beneath East Africa could be driving the region's continental rift.

In recent years, GPS instruments have revolutionized this field of research, allowing scientists to make precise measurements of how the ground moves over time, said Ken Macdonald, a marine geophysicist and professor emeritus at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

"With GPS measurements, you can measure rates of movement down to a few millimeters per year," Macdonald said. "As we get more and more measurements from GPS, we can get a much greater sense of what's going on."

Detailed satellite observations combined with additional field research could also help scientists piece together what is happening underground in the Afar region. But if the area is a living laboratory to study continental rift, the environment doesn't make it easy.

Tehraners produce waste equaling 38 Boeing 747s per day



ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — In Tehran, on average, about 6,500 tons of waste is produced daily, which is as much as 38 Boeing 747s in weight, Narges Rajaei, deputy director of the Tehran Waste Management Organization, has said.

About 58,000 tons of waste is produced daily in the country, she stated, Mehr news agency reported on Sunday.

Hassan Pasandideh, deputy head of the Department of Environment (DOE) for waste management, said in November 2019 that poor waste management brings the country an annual loss of 440 trillion rials (about \$10.5 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

Sadr-o-din Alipour, the director of the environment

and sustainable development department of Tehran Municipality, has said that over 3,000 tons of plastic waste is generated per day in the country, which reaches 1 million tons in a year.

Ali Moridi, head of soil and water office at the DOE, said in October 2018 that while reduction of waste generation and separation of waste at source are the two major processes in waste management, in Iran the focus is mainly on the last phase of waste management which is waste disposal, which will slow down the path to waste minimization and waste sorting at source.

Although proper waste management could solve the country's environmental problems, the budget requested by the DOE for waste management has not been approved by the Majlis [Iranian parliament], he lamented.

According to a report published by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in October 2016, waste generation per capita in Iran's urban areas is about 658 grams per day while Iranian waste generation per capita in rural areas is about 220-340 grams per day. Average Iranian waste generation per capita amounts to some 240 kilograms per year.

In Tehran alone waste generation per capita is estimated at 750-800 grams per day and each Tehrani citizen generates about 270-450 kilograms of waste per year.

The report continues that unfortunately only 7 percent of the waste is separated at the source, 13 percent is recycled and only 2.5 percent of them end up in formal or sanitary landfills and some 77.5 percent of the waste will be burnt or buried in informal landfills located in the countryside or deserts near cities.

30% of schools built by benefactors

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Some 30 percent of the country's schools have been constructed by school-building benefactors, Mehrolah Rakhshanimehr, director of the organization for renovation and development of schools, has stated.

There are 450 school-building charities in Iran, he further said, IRNA news agency reported on Sunday.

In line with the education reform plan, people who have a popular reputation are being invited as ambassadors to attract public participation for school construction, he noted.

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

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

But school construction in Iran does not end with the construction of ordinary schools, the construction of special schools, sports, and recreation halls for exceptional students and equipping of various parts of the school are other measures that fall within the scope of school-building charities, he emphasized.



Donors have built more than 320 exceptional student schools so far and have contributed more than 1.4 trillion rials (nearly \$33 million) in this regard, Seyed Javad Hosseini, head of Special Education Organization, said.

The latest action to be taken with the help of charities is to address the 83,000 items that exceptional students need, he said.



First to fight, last to rest

Whenever he left his dish untouched we got terrified because we realized that we had forgotten to distribute food to a company somewhere in part of the legion. In this way he expressed his objection to our performance. He did not start eating his food unless we had found the company and given them food. Sometimes he did not eat food for forty-eight hours to make sure everyone had eaten.

U.S. signed deal with Kurdish-led rebels to steal Syria's oil

By staff & agencies

Syria's foreign ministry said on Sunday that an American oil company had signed an agreement with Kurdish-led rebels who control northeastern oilfields in what it described as an illegal deal aimed at "stealing" Syria's crude.

A ministry statement, published on state media, did not name the firm involved in the deal with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance that seized swathes of north and east Syria from Islamic State with U.S. help.

According to Reuters, the statement did not give details on the agreement. There was no immediate response from SDF officials to a Reuters' request for comment. There was no immediate comment from U.S. officials.

Damascus "condemns in the strongest terms the agreement signed between al-Qasd militia (SDF) and an American oil company to steal Syria's oil under the sponsorship and support of the American administration", the statement said.

"This agreement is null and void and has no legal basis," it said, adding that it was a violation of Syrian sovereignty.

Syria produced around 380,000 barrels of oil per day before a civil war erupted following a crackdown on protests in 2011, with Iran and Russia backing President Bashar al-Assad's government and the United States supporting the opposition.

Damascus lost control of most oil producing fields in a stretch east of the Euphrates River in Deir al-Zor. Western sanctions have also hit the energy industry.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said that despite a military pullback from northeast Syria, a small number of American forces would remain "where they have oil". The Pentagon said late last year that oilfield revenues would go to the SDF.

Afghanistan ceasefire holds as hundreds of Taliban fighters freed

A ceasefire between the Taliban and Afghan government appears to be holding for the third and final day, as hundreds of the armed group's prisoners are released in a bid to bring peace talks closer.



The government has released 317 Taliban prisoners since the beginning of the three-day Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha on Friday, the country's office of National Security Council said on Twitter on Sunday.

According to al Jazeera, calm prevailed across much of Afghanistan, with officials not reporting any major clashes between the two sides since the truce began to mark Eid.

President Ashraf Ghani and the Taliban have both indicated that long-delayed negotiations could begin straight after Eid.

Under a deal signed by the Taliban and the U.S. in February, the "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.

The deal stipulated that Kabul would free about 5,000 Taliban prisoners in return for 1,000 Afghan security personnel held captive by the Taliban.

Resistance News

Armed settlers assault Palestinian families in western Ramallah

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— A horde of Jewish settlers on Saturday evening assaulted Palestinian citizen in Jeelya area, west of Birzeit town in the Ramallah and Bireh province.

According to local sources, a gang of armed settlers with dogs assaulted Palestinian families, including the family of Sheikh Mohamed al-Hajj during their presence in Jibiya village, north of Ramallah.

The settlers pointed guns at and physically assaulted Sheikh Mohamed, his children and wife as well as other families and kids in the area.

The families were having a picnic in the area when the settlers assaulted them.

Some members of the families used their cellphones to document what happened, but the settlers forced them at gunpoint to erase all the footage.

Israel okays plan to build commercial complex in east of Issawiya

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— The Israeli municipality in Occupied Jerusalem on Saturday approved a plan to build an additional commercial complex on about 90 dunums of land in the east of Issawiya district.

In press remarks, chief of the municipality pledged to continue carrying out settlement and Judaization projects in the holy city.

The Israeli occupation authority had already announced its plan to carry out a huge settlement project in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Wadi al-Joz called Silicon Wadi (Silicon Valley), which will include high-tech industrial employment centers and tens of thousands of shopping centers and hotels.

The only Palestinian industrial area in east Jerusalem is to be demolished in order to make way for this Silicon Wadi project.

Israelis hold largest anti-Netanyahu rally, asking him to resign

By staff & agencies

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has railed at swelling protests against his rule, saying they are being egged on by a biased media.

Netanyahu has faced a wave of protests in recent weeks, with demonstrators calling for the long-serving leader to resign, panning his handling of the coronavirus crisis, and saying he should not remain in office while on trial for corruption charges.

In a nearly six-minute rant at a meeting of his cabinet, Netanyahu slammed the media for «inflaming» the protests - devoting disproportionate airtime to them - and for distorting incidents of violence against the protesters.

«In the name of democracy, I see an attempt to trample on democracy,» said Netanyahu.

Netanyahu's statements came after thousands of demonstrators gathered outside his official residence in central Jerusalem, while smaller anti-government gatherings were also held in Tel Aviv, near his beach house in central Israel and at dozens of busy intersections nationwide.

The demonstrations on Saturday were among the largest turnouts in weeks of protests. Though Netanyahu has tried to play down the protests, the twice-a-week gatherings show no signs of slowing.

Israeli media estimated that at least 10,000 people demonstrated near the official residence in central Jerusalem. Late Saturday, thousands marched through



the streets in a noisy but orderly rally.

Demonstrators waved Israeli flags and blew horns as they marched. Many held posters that said «Crime Minister» and «Bibi Go Home» or accused Netanyahu of being out of touch with the public.

Hundreds of people remained in the area well after midnight, ignoring calls by police to leave.

Anti-riot forces moved into the area and began clearing out people. As of early Sunday morning, most of the remaining protesters appeared to be leaving peacefully, but police were seen dragging some activists away.

Clashes with police

The rallies against Netanyahu are the

largest Israel has seen since 2011 protests against the country's high cost of living.

Netanyahu has dismissed the demonstrators as «leftists» and «anarchists.»

Late on Saturday, his Likud party issued a statement that accused Israel's two private TV stations of giving «free and endless publicity» to the protesters and exaggerating the importance of the gatherings.

While the demonstrations have largely been peaceful, there have been signs of violence in recent days.

Some protesters have clashed with police, accusing them of using excessive force, while small gangs of Netanyahu supporters affiliated with a far-right group

have assaulted demonstrators. Netanyahu has claimed demonstrators are inciting violence against him.

Israeli police have arrested some 20 far-right activists in recent days, and police said they were on high alert for violence at the demonstrations.

Several arrests of Netanyahu supporters were reported Saturday, including a man who got out of his car in the northern city of Haifa and threw a stone towards a crowd of protesters. Police said a 63-year-old woman was slightly hurt.

The demonstrations are organised by a loose-knit network of activist groups. Some object to Netanyahu remaining in office while he is on trial. He has been charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in a series of scandals. Many carry black flags, which have given their name to the grassroots movement.

Many of the demonstrators, including many young unemployed Israelis, accuse Netanyahu of mishandling the coronavirus crisis and the economic damage it has caused.

After moving quickly to contain the virus earlier in the year, many believe Israel reopened its economy too soon, leading to a surge in cases.

The country is now coping with record levels of coronavirus, while unemployment has surged to more than 20 percent.

As of Sunday, there were more than 72,000 coronavirus cases reported in Israel with more than 500 confirmed deaths.

U.S. protests: American flags burned in the streets

→ **1** Under the deal announced by the governor, the agents will withdraw in phases.

The U.S. government had arrested 94 people as of Wednesday, the most recent accounting. Since the protests began, Portland police chief Chuck Lovell said local police had made more than 400 arrests.

As agents from US Customs and Border Protection, the US marshals service and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Ice) pulled back, troopers with the Oregon state police took over. Since then, there have been no visible signs of any federal law enforcement presence outside the Mark O Hatfield federal courthouse.

In a tweet on Friday night, Donald Trump reiterated

that the Department of Homeland Security "is not leaving Portland until local police complete cleanup of Anarchists and Agitators!"

"Last night, the world was watching Portland," Brown said in a tweet Friday. "Here's what they saw: Federal troops left downtown. Local officials protected free speech. And Oregonians spoke out for Black Lives Matter, racial justice, and police accountability."

Leaders in Oregon are pushing for a raft of measures that would address systemic racism in everything from policing to housing. Those proposals could be fast-tracked for consideration in a special legislative session this summer.

The governor also announced the creation of a Racial

Justice Council to advise her on criminal justice reform and police accountability, health equity, economic opportunity, housing and homelessness, and environmental justice.

Portland's city council also voted this week to refer a ballot measure to voters in November that would create a police review board independent of any elected official or city department.

The scene outside the federal courthouse stood in sharp contrast to the violent clashes between protesters and the agents that Trump sent to Oregon's largest city in early July. Protests have roiled Portland for more than two months following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

U.S. House passes spending package valued at \$500mn for Israel's missile systems

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed an aid package valued at hundreds of millions of dollars and designated for assistance to the Israeli regime to develop its surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems.

The lower house of the U.S. Congress made the decision on Friday and the funding will mostly be allocated for Iron Dome, David's Sling as well as Arrow 3 missile systems, Israeli English-language newspaper The Jerusalem Post reported on Sunday.

The appropriations bill specified that "\$500,000,000 shall be for the Israeli Cooperative Programs...for the procurement of the Iron Dome ... system to counter short-range rocket threats...for the Short Range Ballistic Missile Defense (SRBMD) program... for co-production activities of Arrow 3 Upper Tier systems in the United States and in Israel."

The report asserted that the spending package is in accordance with the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United States and the Israeli regime worth \$38 billion over a decade.

U.S. military aid to Israel has skyrocketed over the past several years, even as Israeli forces are engaged in blatant human rights violations against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip and across the occupied West Bank.



Back in April, The Jerusalem Post reported that the Pentagon had supplied 1 million surgical masks to the Israeli regime in order to be distributed among soldiers, despite the fact that it had earlier introduced a measure requiring personnel to make their own masks to combat the spread of the new coronavirus.

The report revealed that the masks were procured from China, and a plane carrying the medical stuff intended for Israeli soldiers landed in Ben Gurion Airport on April 7.

The Jerusalem Post had initially published the article headlined "U.S. Department of Defense gives 1 million masks to IDF for coronavirus use."

The newspaper, however, changed the headline shortly afterwards to read, "Israel brings 1 million masks from China for IDF soldiers," in a possible attempt at downplaying the role of Washington in spite of shortages in protective equipment, including face masks, in the United States.

Visual point of view



Israel's recent assault on southern Lebanon violates UN resolution: Aoun

Lebanon's President Michel Aoun says his country is ready to defend itself against Israel's acts of aggression, which are in violation of a 2006 resolution by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a few days after Israel bombed a Lebanese border town.

"We are committed to defend ourselves, our land, our water, and our authority. We will not compromise on this matter," the Lebanese president said in a televised address on Saturday.

His remarks came five days after Israeli forces fired dozens of shells into Lebanon's Kafr Shuba town and the vicinity of the Shebaa Farms, which Tel Aviv has occupied since the 1967 Six-Day War.

Aoun also said that the Israeli attacks on the southern parts of the Arab country had once again flouted UNSC Resolution 1701, which calls for the full cessation of hostilities and the Israeli regime's complete withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

Lebanon remains willing to abide by the resolution and settle all disputes under the UN supervision, the president said. On July 27, the day Israel bombed Lebanon's southern town, Beirut said it would lodge an official complaint with the UNSC.

The Israeli regime claimed that it launched the attack after an attempt by Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement to 'infiltrate' into the occupied territories



in the Jabal Ros area, boasting that it had managed to thwart Hezbollah's attempt.

However, the Lebanese resistance movement, which has been of significant help to Lebanon's army in defending the country against Israeli aggression, rejected all Israeli claims.

"Everything that enemy's media say about thwarting an infiltration from the Lebanese soil into the occupied territories is incorrect," it said.

according to Press TV, Hezbollah also said the regime has come up with the account to falsely claim "victory" against the resistance and try to boost the morale of its forces.

Hezbollah had vowed in the past to retaliate if any of its members were killed by Israeli forces in Syria. The resistance group fired a barrage of anti-tank missiles into the occupied territories in September last year after two of its members were martyred in an Israeli strike near Damascus.

Israel has recently increased the number of its troops near Lebanon's border.

Australia's Victoria declares state of disaster over coronavirus

The state premier of Australia's Victoria has declared a state of disaster to help contain the surge in coronavirus cases as he reported 671 new infections - almost double the previous day.

In a news conference on Sunday, Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews also announced a curfew in the city of Melbourne and new movement restrictions for its residents.

Andrews said that, for six weeks beginning on Sunday until the middle of September, a curfew will be imposed daily from 8pm (10:00 GMT) to 5am (19:00 GMT) the next day.

Within the same period, residents of Melbourne are not allowed to travel beyond five kilometres (3.1 miles) from their residence, and only one person per household is allowed to shop for groceries once a day.

On Saturday, the state of Victoria reported 397 new COVID-19 cases.

Meanwhile, a stay-at-home order will also be imposed for areas outside Melbourne starting at midnight on Wednesday.

More restrictions on businesses will be announced on Monday, the state premier added. As this developed, Melbourne residents headed to the supermarket on Sunday before a new lockdown.

Social media users posted images of empty shelves and queues at local supermarkets. One eyewitness told Reuters news agency that the line had doubled in size as he left the supermarket.

Earlier on Sunday, Australia's national government expressed support for the strictest measures yet imposed by the state of Victoria.

The backing by the federal government, ruled by a Liberal Party-led coalition, for the measures by Victoria's Labor Party government shows national unity of message across the political spectrum in a country with a loose federal system.

Melbourne, Australia's second-largest city, is already under a reimposed six-week stay-at-home order, but it has been struggling to rein in COVID-19.

Winning FIBA Asia Cup 2007 the benchmark for Iran: Nikkhah Bahrami

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Samad Nikkhah Bahrami says that winning the FIBA Asia Cup 2007 was the benchmark for the Iranian basketball.

He talked in detail about the national team with FIBA Asia Cup on Instagram.

"I can remember, at that time, basketball was not professional in Iran. Players weren't getting paid a lot and most of the players had another job on the side. I was like maybe 15-17 years old when Iranian basketball was nowhere in Asia, even in West Asia," Nikkhah Bahrami said.

"I was really suffering when I saw everyone talking about every other sport on TV and not basketball, but I really believed in us," he said. "I was thinking that Iranian basketball players had good size, great intelligence, and we love basketball. So, I was just thinking if they cared a little bit more about basketball and us, we could do something."

"I was very young when I got to the national team, 17-18 years old," he explained. "I never wanted to be a young player on the team, I just wanted to be a key player in the team. Maybe now people think that I was young and they pushed me because I was young, but I remember I was practicing maybe two more times any other player in Iran for every day, not for a month or two months or for a short period of time. I just wanted to out-practice everybody because I just wanted everybody to respect me because of my game. Not my age. Not because I was young. Not because I was tall. Not because I was strong. I just wanted to make a change every time I got to the game."

"The hard thing was to make that personality for myself to just prove to everybody they can count on me, that I can change the game. Prove that if I'm on the court and off the court, what are the differences."

"I remember I got to the camp, physically I was not that strong. Some older players, they didn't want to give up their places which is normal. They were tough on me, bodied me, pushed me, bumped me so hard. So, I remember, me and brother, we went to the weight room like four hours a day and I was young so my body was ready for that, too. I gained like 16-17 kilograms, ridiculous muscles."

"Then, I went to the camp next summer and I was bumping everybody, pushing everybody. Then I remember the coach telling me out of practice 'You are young, you cannot hit everybody like that' but I didn't want to hit everybody! I was just big and I wasn't used to my body and I was very strong all the sudden. That was hard and tough. I didn't want to disrespect anybody but I was young and gained a lot of weight and muscles and I was very strong."

All of the pieces finally fell into place



at in 2007. Heading into the Asia Cup in Tokushima with little to no expectations, Samad and Iran ended up changing the course of history by winning their first of many titles.

"[Before the tournament] we had some young players and we had experienced players. All of the sudden, all of the experienced players were injured one by one and they left the camp. A week before the tournament, the team left for the Asia Cup and I remember everybody - newspapers, everyone - saying that this team will never go to the second round."

It was a fair assumption in the moment. Iran were grouped with Jordan, the Philippines, and the defending champions China.

"Everyone was saying that [we] aren't going to make it, we aren't going to be good because we were young, we didn't have any good experience."

"Inside the [training] camp, we all believed in ourselves because we had very good practices," he said. "Rajko Toroman is a very good coach. He changed the mentality of the other player to think that we can do it. It didn't matter if we were young, if we were inexperienced, whatever. We had a good team and we practiced really hard and good for him, so we ran into the tournament and we beat everybody."

Making their way through to the Final against Lebanon was further than what anyone on the team imagined. They were confident of how good they were, but this stage was already the furthest any Iran national team had gone in the Asia Cup. They were a young team that wasn't quite sure what was ahead for them in the future, yet here they were.

"I had no idea what was the 'Olympics'. I wanted to go to the Olympics, that would be nice. But we couldn't even touch or feel what was going to happen to us. I remember [the president of the federation] wrote on the board

that if we win, we will get the ticket to the Olympics and our professional lives will be changed."

"So, we go to the game and, obviously, we beat Lebanon. Then we qualified and we were happy, jumping up and down all over the court, yelling and singing, whatever. Then we come back to the locker room. I remember that I read it again, it's the same thing that he wrote on the board. I remember thinking 'okay, we are going to the Olympics. So, what is this?'"

"Then the next year, I was walking in the opening ceremony parade at the Olympics and I was thinking 'okay, he was right. He was seeing ahead'."

"I had no idea what it was at that time and I can say that the benchmark for Iranian basketball was that championship because after that, every team in Asia respected us. We believe in ourselves and then everybody in Iran believed in us."

"He was right, everything changed." Because of that and many other reasons, the Asia Cup 2007 title will always hold a special place in Samad's heart.

"That was our first title," Samad said of his all-time favorite Asia Cup experience. "I think that was the turning point for Iranian basketball and Aidin - my brother - was there with me so that was the best one for me. Maybe I can't remember any of those games, but I remember so many situations and I have so many images of 2007 in my head."

That title gave the opportunity for Samad and the national team to play all over the world whether it was in the NBA Summer League, Europe, or Australia. They got to beat Serbia. Samad got to experience a star-caliber NBA talent first-handed going up against Manu Ginobili. And all of that experience rolled along into the preparation for Asia Cup 2009.

They say defending a title is tougher than winning the first one, but Samad disagrees.

"I have to say the second time [in 2009] was so easy. I'm telling you, we had confidence through the roof," Samad claimed.

"When we won in 2007, everybody was talking about how China didn't go with the full team and that's why you guys won the championship. That was the only thing that bothered us for those two years. So, when we faced China in the Finals, we beat them [18] points."

"I remember all the fans leaving the stadium because we were dominating. The thing is that crazy confidence we had coming back from the Olympics with the experience as a young national team, so that the easiest one."

Iran were able to settle their slight "grudge" with China in 2009, but he still longed for more opportunities to go against a full force China squad. Samad got those chances early on against Yao's China teams in the early 2000s and wishes the two national teams could have had the chance to go up against each other in their primes.

"I think it was almost impossible to beat China at that time but I cannot say that. We were not in our peak, we were young."

"That would be a very nice matchup, if we could play against them when we were our prime. I think we could play against them because Hamed would match up against Yao and I think we could do something."

"I really miss playing against China with their best prime time generation."

The Iranian legend who played in seven Asia Cups also talked about the future of Iran basketball, specifically about Behnam Yakhchali who will be playing in Europe in the upcoming season. He emphasized about the difficulties of playing in Europe as an Asian - as he had done himself in the past - but that he was confident Behnam would be able to succeed and pave the way for many more.

Samad properly wrapped up the talk with a heartfelt appreciation note to the fans for their support over the years.

"Without the fans, I wouldn't Samad Nikkhah Bahrami like you know me now. Like they know me in the streets every time, they say hi, they want to take a picture, they want a signature, but they give a lot of energy, too. They think for them it's something special to see me and then take a picture with me, but they don't understand how much energy they give to me to sustain and stay at this top level to make them proud."

"I have to say that most of the things that I have right now - actually everything that I have right now is because of them. Because they push me, they pray for me, they love me. The energy they give and send to me when I was playing with the national team all around the world is something huge that changed my life, too. I'm not going to trade anything for that," He concluded.

Fenerbahce eye Alireza Jahanbakhsh: report

MNA — Turkey's Fenerbahce football club are reportedly seeking to sign Iranian striker of Brighton Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

According to Turkey's media outlets, Fenerbahce are eyeing Jahanbakhsh to boost their attacking line.

Jahanbakhsh has been already linked with teams from the Eredivisie such as Ajax and PSV Eindhoven as he found few chances to play for the Premier League side Brighton during the past season.

The Turkish reports note that such some €19m is needed to hire the Iranian international forward. Fenerbahce have already signed a 5-year contract with another Iranian striker, Allahyar Sayyadmanesh, in 2019, although the club has offered him to Istanbulspor on loan.

The Iranian winger joined Brighton in 2018 from AZ Alkmaar but failed to impress at Falmer Stadium. He has made only eight Premier League appearances this season.

Persepolis's Alipour nominated for best forward of ACL2018 Team

Persepolis football team Ali Alipour has been shortlisted for the best striker of the ACL2018 Team.

After deciding the top goalkeeper, the best defense in front of him and the playmakers in midfield, the-afc.com has eight players of the 2018 AFC Champions League Best XI confirmed.

Persepolis' run to the final was built on a solid backline, with goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand and defenders Shojae Khalizadeh and Jalal Hosseini already included in the relevant categories for the Best 2018 XI, but defense alone does not win games, and Ali Alipour was the main outlet up front for the Tehran giant.

Having scored just one goal in his previous two Continental campaigns, Alipour netted a brace in the 2018 opener against Nasaf before adding another against Al Wasl as Persepolis topped Group C.

Alipour saved his next two goals for vital moments in the knockout stages as he scored against Al Jazira in the Round of 16 and Al Sadd in the semi-finals to help his club into their first AFC Champions League final.

The Iranian striker will compete with Baghdad Bounedjah, Dejan Damjanovic, Youssef El Arabi, Mame Thiam, Kim Shin-wook, Yuma Suzuki, and Alexandre Pato to win the award.

(Source: the-afc)

Alireza Beiranvand shortlisted for AFC Player of the Year

Tasnim — Iran goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand has been shortlisted for the best AFC player of the year.

The goalkeeper, who has recently joined Belgian team Antwerp from Persepolis, is among the six-player list.

Qatari player Akram Afif is in the list and hopes to win the award for the second successive year.

Salem Al-Dawsari from Al Hilal, Kuwaiti club Al-Qadisiya's player Ahmad Al-Dhafiri, Urawa Reds of Japan's center back Tomoaki Makino and Kim Kyung-jung, striker of South Korean football club Gangwon FC, also are candidates in the list.

Three-man shortlist for the Asian Football Confederation's men's player of the year will be announced on November 25 and the winner will receive the annual accolade on December 5.

Milad Mohammadi on Leeds United's radar

Leeds United are lining up a bid for KAA Gent defender Milad Mohammadi, according to Football Insider.

Mohammadi, 26, is an Iranian international and has previously represented Russian outfit Akhmat Grozny. He left them to join Gent for the start of this season and has so far made 24 appearances for the club, scoring once across all competitions.

He was a regular member of their Europa League bid as well — he made four appearances for the Belgian side as they reached the Round of 32.



Now though it looks as though Marcelo Bielsa has identified the left-back as a summer target, and the report from Football Insider claims that Mohammadi would cost Leeds around £6.3 million this summer.

Leeds are yet to make any marquee signings since being promoted as champions. It ended a 16-year hiatus from the Premier League but now, Bielsa's side will head up as proud winners of the Championship.

The transfer rumors have been rolling in since — Edinson Cavani's name is still being banded around the club, and the ongoing situation with Ben White still looms.

Leeds have plenty of attacking options going into next summer (although a striker is still needed) and so defensive additions will likely be Bielsa's first port of call this summer.

Mohammadi is a reputable defender and at 26-years-old he's still some years to offer. Leeds will no doubt have done his scouting for this one and if Leeds do move for him, then fans can rest assured that he'll be a top signing for the club.

(Source: Football League World)

Taremi chosen as Rio Ave's "Player of the Year"

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Mehdi Taremi has been named the Portuguese club Rio Ave's "Player of the Year" for the 2019-2020 Primeira Liga.

The Iranian forward, 28, was the outstanding player in the frontline of the northern Portugal team at his first season playing at a European team.

Taremi, who joined Rio Ave at the beginning of the season on a two-year deal, scored 18 goals for the Primeira Liga side and was chosen among the Primeira Liga's top three goalscorers along with Benfica players Carlos Vinicius and Pizzi, also netting 18 goals.

Rio Ave, this modest club in northern Portugal, qualified for the Europa League this month, matching the highest league finish in their history and achieving a record points total.

With Carlos Carvalhal at the helm, the team played attractive



football and they provided a good opportunity for Mehdi Taremi to shine and scored 21 goals for the club in 36 games at all competitions.

Taremi, who joined Rio Ave from Al Gharafa in July 2019, signed a two-year contract with the club. He did not shine at the beginning of the season but little by little, he made a splash and was deservedly voted as the Rio Ave's player of the season by the club's fans.

IPL: 10-man Esteghlal beat Sepahan

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Esteghlal football team earned a valuable victory over Sepahan and moved closer to a place in the next year's AFC Champions League.

In the match held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Esteghlal defeated Sepahan 2-1 and moved up to second place.

With one minute remaining to the break, Esteghlal midfielder Arash Reza-vand received a second yellow card and was sent off.

Esteghlal striker Cheick Diabate was brought down by Shayan Mosleh into the area in the 51st minute and the French forward converted the penalty.

In the 65th minute, Mosleh scored an own goal to give a 2-0 lead to Esteghlal. Sepahan striker Mohammad Mohebbi pulled a goal back in the 82nd minute.

Earlier on the day, Persepolis drew 1-1 with Nassaji in Ghaemshahr. Rouhollah Bagheri gave the hosts a lead



just five minutes into the match and Ali Alipour leveled the score from the penalty spot in the 19th minute.

Foolad and Gol Gohar played out a goalless draw in Sirjan and struggling Shahin Bushehr defeated Pars Jonoubi 2-0 thanks to the first half goals from Morteza Gholamalitabar and Abolfazl Razzaghpour.

Persepolis, who have previously won the title, have 63 points, followed by Esteghlal (48), Tractor (46) and Sepahan (45).

Arsenal win record 14th FA Cup

Arsenal used a Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang double to engineer a 2-1 comeback win over 10-man Chelsea in the FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium on Saturday, collecting a record 14th FA Cup and sealing a place in the Europa League.

The win means seventh place in the Premier League will not be good enough for the Europa League. Wolverhampton Wanderers' only route to Europe is by winning this season's UEL and going to the 2020-21 Champions League

Christian Pulisic scored early for the Blues but was removed with a painful injury just after halftime. Cesar

Azpilicueta also left with an injury and Mateo Kovacic was shown a controversial second yellow card in the 73rd minute to leave the Blues with 10 men.

Referee Anthony Taylor will be under the microscope for that decision as well as a possible Hector Bellerin foul on Andreas Christensen in the run-up to the winning goal.

Arsenal have won four of the last seven FA Cups, while this was Chelsea's third appearance in four years. It's a signature win for Mikel Arteta, and a small step back for Frank Lampard.

(Source: MBC)



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He who remembers the length of the journey, prepares himself for it.

Imam Ali (AS)

“The Messiah” director Nader Talebzadeh tests positive for COVID-19

A R T **TEHRAN** — Cinema Organization of Iran director Hossein Entezami said on Sunday that Nader Talebzadeh, director of the TV series “The Messiah”, has contracted COVID-19.

In a post published on his twitter, Entezami wished the filmmaker health.



Filmmaker Nader Talebzadeh in an undated photo. (Mehr/Shahab Qayyumi)

“Dear Nader Talebzadeh has tested positive for the coronavirus. He is a humble and creative individual who knows cinema well and has served culture especially in the international arena well. We wish him health and pray for him,” Entezami tweeted.

Talebzadeh is the host of Asr, a TV program by IRIB’s Mostanad Channel that reviews issues with analysts in various fields.

Talebzadeh is also the president of the Ammar Popular Film Festival, which has been established by a number of Iranian revolutionary figures.

The festival has been named after Ammar Yasir, a close companion of Prophet Muhammad (S).

Talebzadeh was honored with a lifetime achievement award at the Owj Arts and Media Organization, a Tehran-based institution producing revolutionary works in art and cinema in December 2017.

Agatha Christie’s “Swan Song” published in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A new Persian translation of “Swan Song”, a short story by British mystery writer Agatha Christie, has recently been published by Hermes Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Nima Hazrati. This story was first published in the book collection “The Listerdale Mystery” in the UK



Front cover of the Persian translation of British mystery writer Agatha Christie’s “Swan Song”.

Maria Jeritza suggest, Christie may have seen her referential performance in Tosca at Covent Garden in 1925; Jeritza sang the aria, “Vissi d’arte”, lying on her stomach on the floor.

In fact, Christie was a great pianist and singer herself, and often said she would have liked to have become a professional had she not suffered from stage fright.

Born in Torquay in 1890, Christie became, and remains, the bestselling novelist of all time.

She is best known for her 66 detective novels and 14 short story collections, as well as the world’s longest-running play, “The Mousetrap”.

Her books have sold over a billion copies in the English language and a billion in translation.

Tokyo to host 3rd Iranian Film Festival

→1 The lineup includes “18 Percent”, a documentary by Mohammadreza Rezaian about Ali Jalali, an Iranian soldier who is wounded in an Iraqi chemical attack. Jalali is sent to Japan to receive treatments for his wounds.

Roqieh Tavakkoli’s debut film “Motherhood” has also been selected to screen. It tells the story of Nava and Golnar, two sisters who live together after the break-up of their marriages. However, Nava tries to convince her sister to get back with her husband.

The festival will also showcase Reza Mirkarimi’s acclaimed 2005 drama “So Close, So Far”. Dr. Alam, a specialist in neurology and a successful surgeon, is drowned in his professional and social work, in a way that he has totally forgotten all about his son Saman. Samantha the beautiful nights of desert with its starry sky attracts Saman to himself and the young boy falls in love with the night sky and observation of stars. Due to an event the doctor leaves his profession and work behind and goes through the desert to find his son.

“Azar” directed by Mohammad Hamzei will also be screened. It is about a woman who is trying hard to manage



A poster for the 3rd Iranian Film Festival in Tokyo.

a cafe-restaurant she has opened with her husband who is now in jail. She also tries to compromise to get her husband released but things are not going as she has planned.

Director Kamal Tabrizi’s “The Sweet Taste of Imagination” is also on the lineup. It recounts the story of a man so fascinated with protecting the environment that he has dedicated his entire life to it. All he can think of is clean energies and educating others on how to keep the planet safe.

The lineup also includes “The Painting Pool” by Maziar Miri. The movie tells the story of Maryam and Reza, a married couple with severe learning disabilities. When their son’s school work starts to surpass their own abilities, he grows frustrated with them and after a heated argument runs away from home. Maryam and Reza are left to struggle with work, money and heartbreak in this affecting exploration of love and family that balances its more tragic moments with warmth and humor.

The Iranian Culture Center has called on Japanese Persian learners in Tokyo to attend the festival, which is open to the general public.

Kayhan Kalhor to perform “Silence City” online, free of charge

from “Silent City”, an album he produced in 2008 along with New York City-based string quartet, Brooklyn Rider.

The concert has no admission charge and will stream on instagram.com/kayhan_kalhor, Kayhankalhor-official on YouTube and instagram.com/hacoupianinc on Monday at 10 pm, Kalhor announced in an Instagram post published on Saturday.

Kalhor along with the Iranian string quartet Miniator began a concert tour named “Silence City” in April 2019 from Tehran’s Vahdat Hall. However, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the tour to a halt.

“Therefore, we decided to resume our performances live, online and free of charge for everybody on Instagram and YouTube in order to perform for you

sympathetically,” four-time Grammy Award nominee Kalhor wrote.

Earlier in May, Kalhor gave an online setar recital, which was streamed on his Instagram page and the website of Stanford University in California.

He has won several awards at Iranian and international music events.

In January, he received the Artist Award of the globalFEST, North America’s most important world music industry event, which was held in New York.

He won the Artist Award at the WOMEX Awards, the World Music Expo, in Finland in August 2019.

He was also one of the two winners of the Isaac Stern Human Spirit Award at the Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition in August 2018.



Kayhan Kalhor (L) performs during his concert tour “Silence City” with the string quartet Miniator at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on April 15, 2019. (Mehr/Majid Haqdoost)

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor plans to perform an online concert, which will feature tracks

Iranian movies line up for Universal Film Festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Ten movies by Iranian filmmakers will be competing in various categories of the Universal Film Festival, which will take place in Kansas City, U.S. from August 22 to 24

“The Castle of Dreams” by Reza Mirkarimi has been picked to be screened in the drama competition section.

The movie tells the story of two young children whose mother has just died, and their father, Jalal, after long years of absence, returns to sort things out,



“The Castle of Dreams” by Reza Mirkarimi.

but he does not want to take the children with him.

The mission of the Universal Film Festival is to create and provide a credible and accessible venue for aspiring and talented filmmakers.

Four films will be screened in the short film competition. The movies are “I Dream My Mother’s Dreams” by Hojjat Gholami, “Newsun” by Mahyar Foruzandeh-Asl, “The Waltz of Grey Years” by Ali Hosseini and Rahil Bustani, and “Mirror Is the Witness” by Abdulhamid Mandegar and

Seraj Bayat.

“Arina” by Ahmad Tajarri and “Repression” by Reza Guran will be competing in the foreign film category, while “And Still We Review” by Farhad Eivazi has been selected to be screened in the documentary section.

“And Kiarostami Goes On” by Ehsan Naji will be screened in the science fiction category and “Women Who Run with Wolves” by Amir Athar-Soheili will go on screen in the drama short film competition.

Turkish bestselling novel “Leyla’s House” available for Persian readers

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of the 2006 Turkish bestselling novel “Leyla’s House” has been published by Morvarid Publications in Tehran.

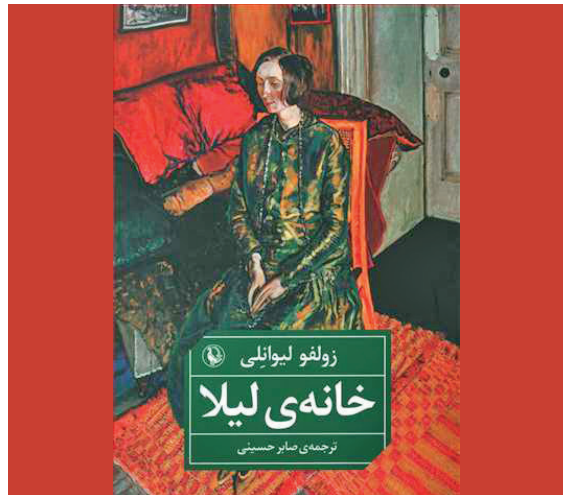
Written by Zulfu Livaneli, the book has been rendered into Persian by Saber Hosseini.

“Leyla’s House” is about the final living member of an old Ottoman family, who is forced to leave her house in which she lived for 76 years of her life.

The house is a small building situated at one corner of the garden of Bosnali Yalisi, an old Istanbul mansion that once belonged to her own family.

Roxy is a third-generation migrant who grew up in Germany and became a hip-hop singer. During her youth, she was torn between two cultures and she had serious problems of belonging and identity. She had survived but only at the expense of turning out to be a difficult, hardened person.

Indeed, it isn’t only Roxy who is changing, Leyla is changing too. As the two women get to know each other, they discover new sides to themselves and they both mature.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Zulfu Livaneli’s novel “Leyla’s House”.

The new owners of the garden are Omer Cevheroglu and his wife Necla who are among the new rich of Istanbul. Omer’s father Ali Yekta Bey is another key character in the novel. Towards the end of the novel, the paths of Leyla and Ali Yekta cross and the events take an unexpected turn.

Speaking to the Persian service of Honaronline, Hosseini said that what encouraged him to translate the book into Persian was that he wanted the Iranian readers to become more familiar with Turkish writers who are less known in Iran and whose books have not been translated into Persian.

According to the Turkish newspaper Daily Sabah, a stage adaptation of the book was performed earlier to a full house for five years by director Tiyatro Kare.

Livaneli’s other novel “The Last Island” had previously been published in Persian by Negah Publications in Tehran. The book was translated into Persian by Ilmaz Hoquqi.

“The Last Island” was written in 2008, but to a large extent, the story foreshadows the events and aftermath of Istanbul’s bloody Taksim Square political protests of 2013.

Director Amir Dejakam calls teleplays viable alternatives in pandemic

A R T **TEHRAN** — Director Amir Dejakam has said that teleplays can be practical alternatives to stage performances during the coronavirus pandemic.

“Producing teleplays in these hard coronavirus days can be a good replacement, because it helps involve the theatrical figures in an activity that keeps their spirits high, while it can also help them financially,” he said.

“Besides its financial support, it will also help promote culture among the viewers and can act as an alternative until the pandemic ends,” he added.

He added, “It also helps keep artists busy,

something which will avoid any mental problems for them. Any individual will feel depressed after a time of being idle.”

He also said that teleplays can be very attractive when they are alongside the stage plays, adding, “But when there are no stage plays, the teleplays can help for several months until conditions return to as they were in past times.”

Dejakam also noted that the plays can be successful only if the unofficial language would be chosen for the project. “Many television programs are official, and if the plays follow the same rule, they will not succeed.”

Stage director Hadi Marzban earlier

said that teleplays are viable alternatives to stage performances during the coronavirus pandemic.

Marzban said that in a meeting with Qader Ashena, the director of Iran’s Dramatic Arts Center, he told him television has forgotten teleplays but if it decides to show more interest in them, several teleplays can be aired every week.

“I know this will not be the theater we like and expect, and the attendance of the theatergoers is very important for us. However, we need to understand the situation: now that the coronavirus is fighting with us we need to fight back in this way,” Marzban said.



Director Amir Dejakam in an undated photo.

He noted that if television cooperates and dedicates a budget in collaboration with the dramatic center, more teleplays will be produced every week so that people will not forget theaters.