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Zanganeh inaugurates 286 gas supply projects in northeastern Iran

TEHRAN — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, on Monday, inaugurated and commissioned 286 gas supply projects in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi province through video conference, IRIB reported.

As part of the mentioned projects, 77 rural areas were connected to the national gas network to increase the coverage of the national network in rural areas to 88 percent, while operations for the gas supply to 39 more villages were also started.

Operations for supplying natural gas to 167 production and industrial units were also started.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior officials from the Oil Ministry and Khorasan Razavi province.

Speaking in the ceremony, the minister noted that since the Iranian calendar year 1392 (March 2013-March 2014) up to the current date over 32,000 rural households have been supplied with natural gas through the national network. ➔4

Academic co-op key element of Iran-China strategic partnership

TEHRAN — The most important element of the science and technology section of the Tehran-Beijing 25-year strategic partnership is the enhanced academic cooperation between universities of the two countries, deputy science minister Hossein Salar Amoli has said.

The development of Persian language chairs in Chinese universities, the coop-

eration of science and technology parks, and the granting of mutual scholarships between the two countries, he said, IRNA reported on Monday.

Cooperation of Chinese knowledge-based companies in Iranian knowledge-based companies and transfer of knowledge and technology by the private sector are other parts of the science and technology section, he noted. ➔9

Georgian scholar Murman Tavdishvili novelizes life story of Persian poet Ferdowsi

TEHRAN — Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization announced on Monday that Georgian scholar Murman Tavdishvili has authored the life story of Ferdowsi, the composer of the Persian epic masterpiece Shahnameh.

"The Life Story of Abulqasem Ferdowsi" edited by Professor Nomady Bartaya

has recently been published by Intelekti Publishing

Tavdishvili, a professor at the Georgian Technical University, has previously published several books tracing the influence of Ferdowsi and another Iranian poet, Nezami, on the medieval Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli. ➔12

Harassing Iranian plane by the U.S. is instance of 'state terrorism': military analyst

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — In the latest escalation between the United States and Iran, two American fighters intercepted an Iranian passenger plane over Syria. The harassment led to the injury of some passengers.

The Iranian plane, belonging to Mahan Air, was heading from Tehran to Beirut on Thursday 23 July when the pilot staged a safety maneuver to avoid a collision.

In this regard, Omar Maarabouni, a Syrian military analyst, tells the Tehran Times that U.S. adventurous actions are flagrant breaches of international law.

Maarabouni thinks that three countries are tasked to respond to the American measure: Iran, Syria, and Lebanon.

"Iran, as the owner of the Mahan airplane, Syria which the plane passed through its airspace, and Lebanon because many Lebanese were on the plane," he explains.

Noting that these three countries must deal with American harassment, the Syrian expert stresses that the response to the U.S. by legal means is the first step.

"I think Iran and Syria Lebanon will submit a complaint at the United Nations about the dangerous American adventure; however, Lebanese response was not strong enough as we saw no condemnation nor complaint by its foreign minister," according to Maarabouni.

Asked about Iran's possible response to the interception of its civilian aircraft over Syrian skies, the Syrian analyst believes that the issue will remain within the framework of international law because an issue of this importance is complicated to a very large degree.

"Iran, until this moment, condemned and denounced the move, and considered it international terrorism practiced by a superpower," he points out.

Iranian officials have said 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; additionally, Syria is responsible for protecting its airspace.

Responding to a question about Iran's retaliation, the Syrian analyst rules out that Iran resorts to a military response, saying it contradicts the Iranian values.

"While Iran has denounced such a terrorist act, it cannot behave similarly," Maarabouni notes. ➔7

Seoul may lose Iranian market forever

TEHRAN — Iran and South Korea are locked in a dispute over Seoul's decision to block Iranian assets due to U.S. sanctions. An analyst tells the Tehran Times that the South Korean procrastination could impinge on Seoul-Tehran ties and lead to South Korea's loss of the Iranian market.

In a step to settle the issue of Iran's assets, South Korea reached an agreement with Iran 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, Yonhap news agency reported on Sunday.

Citing a source familiar with the matter, the agency said that the two sides reached the agreement during their higher-level virtual talks held earlier this week, adding

that in the talks, the Iranian side expressed intent to purchase several hundred millions of dollars worth of South Korean products.

According to the agency, the Iran-South Korea humanitarian trade agreement is also expected to help the two countries settle the issue of Iran's assets -- known to be worth up to US\$7 billion -- frozen in two Korean bank accounts since last year due to Washington's tightened sanctions against Tehran.

The agreement was reached against a backdrop of increasing diplomatic tensions between Tehran and Seoul over the blocked assets, with some Iranian officials even threatening to take legal actions against South Korea ranging from filing lawsuit against it to introducing a double-urgency motion in the Iranian Parliament to ban imports of South Korean goods. ➔2

Museums lose 90% of revenues in wake of coronavirus outbreak

TEHRAN — Iranian museums have lost 90 percent of their revenues due to the consecutive closures caused by the global coronavirus pandemic, Mohammadreza Kargar, the tourism ministry's director of museums and historical properties, has said.

The country closed cultural heritage museums and historical sites across the country in a preventive measure amid fears of coronavirus outbreak back in February, but as the coronavirus lockdown was eased, they were reopened in early May.

However, due to a sharp rise in the number of coronavirus infections and deaths, museums and all art and cultural centers, universities, schools, seminaries, English schools, libraries, movie theaters, mosques, beauty salons, and several other entities had gone on lockdown once again in late July.

After a weeklong halt, museums in Tehran and some other provinces reopened their doors to the public.

It is almost about six months that the country is

fighting the coronavirus outbreak, and during this time the number of foreign tourists, who are mostly the main visitors of the museums, have drastically fallen, Kargar added, ILNA reported on Monday.

He also noted that online visits and virtual tours of the museums could compensate parts of the damages.

During the Iranian New Year (Noruz) holidays in late March, some museums and tourist sites arranged online visits and virtual tours for the people who were in-home quarantine. ➔8

Golestan hosting online marriage festival of Iranian tribes

TEHRAN — The second national marriage festival of Iranian tribes opened online in northern Golestan province on Monday.

The two-day festival covers traditional rituals of tribal marriage, traditional tribal music, stand-up comedy, and various cultural programs, IRNA reported.

One of the goals of this festival is to revive the traditional rituals of tribal marriage and to encourage young people to simple inexpensive marriage due to the economic conditions of the society, advisor of the Festival Sadeh Khosravi said. ➔9



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Lebanon's foreign minister resigns amid economic crisis

By staff & agencies

Lebanon's Foreign Minister Nassif Hitti has submitted his resignation to Prime Minister Hassan Diab in protest at what he described as the government's mishandling of the financial crisis.

"Given the absence of an effective will to achieve structural, comprehensive reform which our society and the international community have urged us to do, I have decided to resign," Hitti said in a statement on Monday.

The government, which defaulted on its sovereign debt, entered talks with the International Monetary Fund in May. But the negotiations have stalled in the absence of tough reforms dictated by the IMF. Foreign donors have also declined to assist the country.

Observers say that the U.S. sanctions on Lebanon have deteriorated the already struggling economy.

Meanwhile, President Michel Aoun's diplomatic adviser Charbel Wahbe appointed as new foreign minister, Daily Star reported.

Even with reforms and a plan to fight corruption in Lebanon, there seems to be no way out of the paradoxical situation with the only quick solution being almost impossible since the country is prohibited from turning towards novel means of financing its economy.

"I took part in this government to work for one boss called Lebanon, then I found in my country multiple bosses and contradicting interests," Hitti said, adding that "if they do not come together in the interest of rescuing the Lebanese people, God forbid, the ship will sink with everyone on it."

Hitti has served as foreign minister since January when Prime Minister Diab took office. ➔10

Imran Khan: Mediation between Iran, Saudi Arabia going slowly

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Pakistan's U.S.-requested mediation efforts between Saudi Arabia and Iran have been making slow progress, Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Monday.



"Our mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia has not stopped and we are making progress, but slowly," Reuters quoted Khan as saying, citing Al Jazeera.

"We have done our best to avoid a military confrontation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and our efforts have succeeded," he said.

Khan visited Tehran on October 13 to "facilitate" possible dialogue between Iran and Saudi Arabia which have been at loggerheads over a number of issues including the Saudi war on Yemen and Riyadh's support for the U.S. President Donald Trump's anti-Iran moves.

Khan met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani.

During a joint press conference with Khan in Tehran on October 13, Rouhani, without mentioning Saudi Arabia, suggested that Iran will give a positive response to "good intention".

Rouhani said Iran "welcomes efforts by the Pakistani prime minister to settle tensions in the region" and "restore peace and stability".

During the meeting with Khan, Ayatollah Khamenei said that ending the war on Yemen will have positive effects on West Asia.

The Leader said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran presented a four-point plan to end the war in Yemen a long time ago and if this war ends in the right way, it can have positive effects on the region."

Iran, UAE agree to continue dialogue on 'theme of hope': Zarif

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that Iran and the United Arab Emirates agreed to "continue dialogue on theme of hope".

"Just had a very substantive, frank and friendly video conversation with UAE FM @ABZayed, discussing Covid as well as bilateral, regional and global situations. We agreed to continue dialog on theme of hope—especially as region faces tough challenges, and tougher choices ahead," Zarif said in a tweet.



In a video call with United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Sunday afternoon, Zarif said 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," he said.

The two foreign ministers also exchanged greetings for the Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday.

In the video call, Sheikh Abdullah said his country attaches great importance to talks and cooperation between Iran and the UAE.

According to WAM, the Emirati state news agency, he said that strengthening bilateral cooperation was important in tackling Covid-19.

The two ministers also held a telephone call in March in which Sheikh Abdullah expressed the UAE's support for Iran during the coronavirus outbreak.

Iran, Azerbaijan discuss broadening ties

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In phone talks on Monday, Iran's presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi and Azeri Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev called for closer economic and trade cooperation as the COVID-19 outbreak has caused hurdles.

The top officials insisted the two neighbors will develop trade and transport relations despite the spread of the coronavirus disease.

The two officials, meantime, underlined the need to share experiences to contain the COVID-19.

Vaezi and Mustafayev vowed that Iran and Azerbaijan will spare no joint effort to restore the level of trade ties to the pre-coronavirus era.

Completion of the North-South Corridor was also discussed by the two officials as they stressed the significance of the joint project, according to Fars news agency.

They stressed that implementation of joint projects and development of cooperation on different railway and road projects would benefit the two countries and the entire region as well.

In a relevant development last Friday, President Hassan Rouhani and his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev reviewed bilateral relations, stressing the need for implementing the Rasht-Astara railway.

Rouhani said, "Fortunately, with the efforts of the officials of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, we are witnessing good, friendly and developing relations between the two countries in recent years."

The president also stated that the officials of the two countries can hold consultations via video conference in these situations where face-to-face meetings and travel is hard.

A telecom in Iraq involved in Gen. Soleimani's assassination: Shafaq News

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — It has been reported by the Shafaq News that a telecommunication company in Iraq was involved in assassination of top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani and deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

Reportedly, an informed source has said that the telecommunication company had given the United States data of a cellphone of a person who accompanied Muhandis, ISNA reported on Monday.

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

Former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has strongly condemned assassination of Soleimani and Muhandis.

Maliki told an Arabic news channel that he supports Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units, ISNA reported on July 28.

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

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



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

"The investigation into the airport incident began from the first moment and the Iraqi judiciary dealt with that incident as a criminal act that took place on Iraqi land where some

of the victims are Iraqis," the council said in a statement.

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

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

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

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

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

No effective action taken within INSTEX: expert

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Reza Mirtaher, an expert on international affairs, has said that no effective action has been taken within the framework of INSTEX (the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges).

In an interview with ISNA published on Monday, Mirtaher said that the financial mechanism has been launched for a year and a half, however, no effective action has been taken based on it.

Pointing to theory of the good cop, bad cop routine, he said that both the United States and Europe seek to stop Iran's nuclear program but have adopted different policies.

Apparently, INSTEX has been designed to facilitate legitimate trade with Tehran. It was introduced on January 31, 2019, by France, Germany, and Britain, the three European countries party to the nuclear deal.

INSTEX was supposed to be a financial channel and a special mechanism for transferring money in spite of U.S. sanctions on Iran. Its objective was to facilitate Iran's transactions with European companies.

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

"In light of the continuous European support for the agreement and the ongoing efforts to implement the economic part of it and to facilitate legitimate trade between Europe and Iran, we are now in the process of becoming shareholders of the Instrument in Support

of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) subject to completion of national procedures. INSTEX was established by France, Germany, and the United Kingdom in January 2019," read the statement, published by the Foreign Ministry of Finland.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Friday called INSTEX a "silly game".

Through INSTEX, the Leader said, Europeans made the Iranian economy "conditional".

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in April that the INSTEX is a preliminary step for Europeans to fulfill their obligations and their commitments are not limited to it.

■ 'Europeans are accompanying U.S. in extending arms embargo'

Mirtaher also said that the Europeans are accompanying the U.S. in extending arms embargo on Iran which will expire in October.

He noted that Europe has adopted double standards in this respect.

The United States has stepped up calls for the extension of UN arms embargo on Iran since April.

In a letter to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council circulated on June 8, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the Trump administration of unleashing a politically motivated campaign against Iran and called for "universal condemnation" of the U.S. attempts.



The Russian foreign minister said the United States withdrew from the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and the 5+1 group and now has no legal right to try to use the UN resolution endorsing the deal to indefinitely continue the arms embargo.

China has also announced opposition to extension of the arms embargo.

China's UN mission wrote in a tweet in May that the U.S. has "no right" to extend arms embargo on Iran "let alone trigger" a return of all UN sanctions on Tehran.

"It has no right to extend an arms embargo on Iran, let alone to trigger snapback," China's UN mission tweeted.

Seoul may lose Iranian market forever

South Korea is somehow shooting itself in the foot by refusing to release Iranian funds

1 → "It is appalling to see that Korean

banks have conveniently neglected their obligations, common international financial agreements, and decided to play politics and follow illegal and unilateral U.S. sanctions," Abdolnaser Hemmati, the head of the Central Bank of Iran, told Bloomberg on July 10. He threatened that Iran could launch legal action to gain access to the funds.

He added, "Should Korean banks not adhere to their international agreements with us, we reserve our rights to take legal actions under international laws."

The CBI governor also said that Iran and South Korea have been working on a special trade vehicle, which would allow Iran to complete humanitarian transactions using the money locked in Korean banks. However, it seems that the two countries' talks were not going smoothly. That was maybe the reason that pushed an Iranian lawmaker to threaten South Korea with a double-urgency motion to ban imports of goods from South Korea in case it failed to release the Iranian funds.

"If South Korea fails to carry out its undertakings in the negotiations and shows lack of commitment again, the Parliament will devise a double-urgency motion to prohibit imports of all types of [South] Korean goods," Mohsen Alizadeh, a member of the

Parliament's Economic Committee, told the Tasnim news agency on July 30.

With South Korea ultimately agreeing to launch a working group on expanding humanitarian trade with Iran, it seems that Iranian warnings haven't fallen on deaf ears in Seoul. It's likely that the South Koreans have finally decided to avoid a further deterioration in their country's relations with Iran by finding a way to release the Iranian assets. If true, this could reflect positively on Iran-South Korea relations, because any South Korean procrastination could have delivered a severe blow to the ties between Tehran and Seoul.

Iran is big market for South Korean goods, including home appliances and cellphones, according to Behzad Shahandeh, a university professor specializing in East Asia affairs.

"However, South Korea's refusal to release the Iranian assets would definitely impinge on Iran-South Korea relations," Shahandeh told the Tehran Times.

South Korean brands have made great strides in the Iranian market over the past few years, but Seoul's possible adherence to the U.S. unilateral sanctions on Iran could lead to loss of the Iranian market, because Iran may refuse to let Korean brands once again make strides in the Iranian market.

"South Korea's stance on the Iranian funds will certainly have a negative effects on Tehran-Seoul ties," Mehdi Safari, Iran's former ambassador to China, told the Tehran Times, adding that South Korea's behavior towards Iran is "very unfair."

"It's very unfair and immoral that South Korea even refuses to give back Iranian funds with its currency, [South Korean won]," Safari noted.

Shahandeh also said that the Iran-Korea agreement to launch a working group on expanding humanitarian trade is "a positive step forward", calling on the two countries to follow up on their efforts and continue exchanging views on matters of bilateral interests.

"We need to dispatch a strong delegation to South Korea," pointed out Shahandeh, adding that Tehran and Seoul relations are currently facing ups and downs, but this problems are unlikely to have a negative effect on the relations in the long-run.

Considering South Korea's procrastination, some analysts believe that Iran should form a strong team and send it to Seoul to explore all legal and financial ways of getting its funds back home. In addition, some analysts hold the view that ethically Seoul has no rights to block the assets, because these assets can strengthen Iran's efforts

in the fight against the novel coronavirus.

Hemmati has said that the South Korean banks' refusal to release the assets was preventing Iran from using its money to buy foods and medicines.

The first working group talks are expected to be held early next month. Meanwhile, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in statement on July 30 that the CBI assets in South Korea were the main issue in Iran's relations with South Korea and dozens meetings have been held in Tehran and Seoul to settle it. The statement also said filing lawsuit against some South Korean banks is underway. This means that South Korea, in addition to losing the Iranian market, could face legal actions too.

With respect to South Korea's exports to Iran, Alizadeh said that South Korean products, including home appliances, cellphones and cars, have seized a big share in the Iranian market.

"A large volume of home appliances, mobile phones and cars in the Iranian market are allocated to South Korean goods, and if we do not import them, a large part of South Korea goods will face problems. If the South Korean officials fail to fulfill their obligations, the Parliament certainly will pursue the ban [on South Korean goods]," Alizadeh warned.

for Muslim worshiping, shortly after a top Turkish court revoked the UNESCO World Heritage site's status as a museum.

Velayati also decried U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's recent remarks in which he called on Ankara to maintain the Hagia Sophia's status as a museum.

"His ancestors converted all museums of the world into churches. The Hagia Sophia, which has been a mosque for 500 years, will remain as a mosque until the apocalypse," Velayati said.

On July 24, Friday prayers were held in the iconic site, now officially known as the Great Mosque of Ayasofya, for the first time in nearly nine decades.

Turkish authorities say the mosque, which is one of Turkey's top tourism destinations, will be open to all visitors outside prayer time.

Velayati hails Turkey's conversion of Hagia Sophia museum back to mosque

(Press TV) — A senior Iranian official has hailed Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan decision to convert the Hagia Sophia museum back into a mosque after nine decades.

"We congratulate the Turkish people for this important Islamic success," Ali Akbar Velayati, adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on international affairs, told Iranian state television on Sunday.

The Hagia Sophia was constructed in the 6th century AD as a cathedral, during the Byzantine Empire, but was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul in 1453.

In 1934, Turkey's cabinet declared it a museum.

On July 10, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that the Hagia Sophia would be handed over to the country's religious affairs directorate and reopened



Army, IRGC united like a fist against enemies, says admiral

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian **d e s k** Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) are united like a “fist” against the enemies of the country, Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Affairs Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said on Monday.

Speaking at a meeting with the commanders of the Army and the IRGC on Monday, Sayyari said there is a unity and amicable relationship between the two forces in thwarting the plots by the foes, Mehr reported.

“All of us know that wherever there’s been unity across the country, we’ve been successful, whether in the field of Sacred Defense (Iraq’s imposed war against Iran in the 1980s) or confronting and resisting against global arrogance,” he remarked.

The rear admiral said the enemy is seeking to undermine solidarity among the Armed Forces, especially the powerful Army and IRGC, and tries to damage the friendly ties existing between the two forces.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Sayyari emphasized the need for setting up joint meetings between the Army and the IRGC for better organizing the 40th anniversary of the Sacred Defense.



“The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to establish necessary cooperation and collaboration with the Sepah Pasdaran (IRGC)

for better organization of this ceremony in the best form possible,” Sayyari said. Earlier this month, Leader of the Islamic

Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei insisted that all officials are duty-bound to maintain unity.

The Leader said the adversaries, especially the United States, are making the most efforts to bring the Iranian nation to their knees and it is essential to protect national unity. 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.

One of the chief goals of Trump’s maximum pressure policy is to strangle the Iranian economy and provoke unrest in Iran, something which Foreign Minister Zarif has called “economic terrorism”.

Foreign analysts and officials have likened the U.S. economic pressure on Iran to the way a white policeman pressed his knee on the neck of George Floyd for about 9 minutes and suffocated him on May 25.

U.S. plagued by injustice, gross human rights violations: Iran’s Judiciary chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian **d e s k** Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi has said the United States is plagued by domestic injustice and gross human rights violations.

“The American [rulers] have been committing injustice and human rights abuses for years,” Raisi said on Monday, according to ISNA.

“But they still continue their hostile conducts against freedom-seeking nations of the world,” he added.

“It has become clear for the people of the world that the U.S. and Europe are the biggest violators of human rights, and the most hated government in the world is the hegemonic American system,” the top judge added.

Raisi also thanked the Iranian intelligence forces for arresting the head of Tondar, an anti-Iran terrorist group.

The Intelligence Ministry announced on Monday that its forces have managed to arrest Jamshid Sharmahd, who directed “armed

operations and acts of sabotage” in Iran from the U.S.

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.

Austrian envoy calls U.S. sanctions on Iran ‘unfair’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Austrian **d e s k** Ambassador to Tehran Stefan Scholz has termed U.S. sanctions on Iran as “unfair”, saying 250 Austrian firms are ready to establish economic relations with Iran.

In remarks in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Scholz said his trip to the province is meant to expand bilateral ties, Mehr reported.

Hinting at the U.S. maximum pressure and the imposed monetary and trade restrictions against Iran, the envoy said his country intends to set a proper ground for the expansion of cooperation between Iranian and Austrian firms despite the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions.

He added that Austrian delegations are planning to make trips to Iran.

“Austrian firms are really interested in establishing ties with Iran among which are 250 firms who have held some related discussions at the place of Austrian Economic Chamber,” he said.

Ambassador Scholz also said, “The trade department of the Austrian embassy

will be in contact with the Iranian side to prepare the framework for closer mutual ties and implementation of the bilateral agreements and MOUs.”

Back in December 2019, Scholz said that Austria sought to preserve the nuclear deal.

“The Austrian government is interested in preserving the JCPOA and we believe that Europeans must fulfill their promises and uphold Iran’s economic benefits,” he said.

Ambassador Scholz noted that Austria, as a member of the European Union, is making efforts to save the JCPOA.

Austria and Geneva hosted the nuclear talks between Iran, the 5+1 group, and the European Union, which led to the conclusion of the JCPOA in July 2015.

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

Under the JCPOA, Iran promised to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for the termination of economic and financial sanctions.

BBC; from outdated info to Iranophobia

TEHRAN (FNA) — A brief look at the British State-run BBC Channel’s performance since the coronavirus outbreak in Iran reveals that this media outlet has made every effort to cast doubt on the country’s statistics in a bid to push forward Iranophobia and tarnish the image of religion.

Since two days ago, BBC Persian has reinvigorated campaign to cast doubt on the figures announced by Iran on the number of the coronavirus patients and dead. But the British agency didn’t give any valid and concrete information or document to substantiate its claims.

The questions and ambiguities raised by the BBC are not specific to Iran but the whole world states and Iranian health ministry officials have time and against answered all these points. This time the BBC has claimed that the rate of coronavirus deaths are triple the numbers stated by the Iranian health ministry, based on “an anonymous source” whose authenticity may not be verified.

The only document presented by the British media is a vague table of numbers whose contents may not be verified. The BBC Persian has not even approved of the details of the table, but raised its old claims about mortality rates in Iran only by relying the numbers carried in the table.

The British media claims that it has found access to a list of individuals who have died with “clinical symptoms similar to coronavirus”, an issue pertinent to the figures presented by all the world states, specially considering that flu and coronavirus clinical symptoms are very similar

and hence, making coronavirus test as the only standard criteria to declare an infection case. BBC Persian even acknowledges this very fact, but without presenting any other proof or document claims that all similar deaths should be considered as a coronavirus test, when dealing with the cases in Iran.

Iran’s Health Ministry officials have said since the identification of the first COVID-19 patient in the country that the statistical figures of the ministry are based on definite diagnostic criteria. In other words, since it is not possible to conduct virus tests on all people to identify all infected cases, if some people pass away with symptoms similar to coronavirus, while they have not been tested, they are not included among coronavirus mortality rate, a criteria-based standard method globally recognized and practiced by other world countries.

The ministry continued that this is the standard method carried out by all countries that provide coronavirus figures, adding that the method is approved by the World Health Organization (WHO).

BBC Persian that is totally blind to British media claims that the numbers of infection and death cases in Britain are twice or three times more than the numbers declared by official London is known to be a propaganda instrument accuse Iran of a cover-up in every aspect since its establishment over decade ago.

The Iranian health ministry announced on Sunday that 2,685 new cases of COVID-19 virus infection have been identified in the country during the past 24 hours,

noting that 17,190 patients have passed away so far.

“2,685 new patients infected with COVID-19 have been identified in the country during the past 24 hours and 1,423 patients have been hospitalized,” Iranian Health Ministry Spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Sunday, and added, “The total number of the COVID-19 patients reached 309,437.”

“Unfortunately, 208 patients have passed away in the past 24 hours, increasing the number of the dead to 17,190, and 4,089 patients are in critical conditions,” she added.

Sadat Lari expressed pleasure that 268,102 cases infected with coronavirus have recovered or been discharged from hospitals.

The ministry’s spokeswoman also noted that 2,508,418 coronavirus tests have been conducted across the country.

She warned that 3 provinces are still in read condition or status of alert.

President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday lauded all Iranians for observing coronavirus-related instructions set by the health ministry, and noted that obligatory protocols will persist until discovering the vaccine.

Everybody should follow the instructions announced by the National Anti-Coronavirus Campaign Headquarters so that we overcome the virus and the related vaccine is made, Rouhani noted.

Those provinces which had already been in red conditions passed the coronavirus peak today, President Rouhani said.

He appreciated the nation for cooperating with the health officials in fighting

Ayatollah Jannati slams Riyadh for atrocities in Yemen

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chief of the Guardian Council **d e s k** Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati has condemned Saudi Arabia for its crimes in Yemen.

“God does not neglect the enemies. Israel, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. burn the noble and resisting people of Yemen and al Saud commits atrocities in this country,” Jannati said in remarks on Sunday.

“These evil powers will be defeated with God’s grace, and the oppressed people will be happy,” he added.

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”.

On Sunday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker, 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 wrote in a tweet.

Iran sanctions former aide to John Bolton under anti-terror law

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry **d e s k** announced on Sunday that it has imposed sanctions on an aide to John Bolton, the former U.S. national security adviser, under the Islamic Republic’s anti-terrorism law.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said Richard Goldberg, who is currently a member of the so-called Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), would be subject to sanctions, Press TV reported.



The ministry underlined that the sanctions are in accordance with articles 4 and 5 of the Law on Combating Human Rights Violations and U.S. Adventurous and Terrorist Actions in the Region, passed by the Iranian parliament in 2017.

“To achieve the goals of the aforementioned law in imposing sanctions on American individuals who are actively involved in economic terrorism against the interests of the government and citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Richard Goldberg, an affiliate to the FDD and former aide to the U.S. national security advisor, John Bolton, will be placed under sanctions set forth in articles 6 to 8 of the said law,” the statement said.

Goldberg has recently said that even if Secretary of State Mike Pompeo could persuade Russia to extend the arms embargo on Iran as per the contents of the JCPOA, it would not be worthwhile to maintain the deal, which was achieved under the former U.S. president, Barack Obama, because it would allow Iran “to develop nuclear weapons,” when the deal’s restrictions are removed.

Tensions between Iran and the U.S. have been high since U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal in May 2018 and re-imposed sanctions on all major industries in Iran, including oil and petrochemicals exports.

The Trump administration’s sanctions were imposed under the banner of a “maximum pressure” policy against Iran.

The U.S. government has since targeted Iranian officials and organizations with vicious sanctions.

Back in April 2019, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) was blacklisted by the U.S. as a “foreign terrorist organization”. In retaliation, the Iranian Supreme National Security Council named the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) a terrorist organization.

In June 2019, Trump announced new sanctions against Iran, targeting office of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and top commanders of the IRGC.

In July 2019, the U.S. Treasury Department said it was imposing sanctions on Zarif for acting on behalf of Ayatollah Khamenei.

Advertisement for using one or two jack up drilling rigs with complete equipment

Iran Offshore Engineering and Construction Company intends to use one or two offshore jack up drilling rigs for the drilling project of the Iranian offshore field with a cantilever length of more than 50 feet. Therefore, the owners of the rig / their legal representatives are invited to announce their readiness within 10 days to the head office of this company at the address of Tehran, No. 173, Ostad Nejatollahi St., Trading Commission.
Email: Tc.Drilling@ioec.com Fax: **021-88812177**



Agriculture share in Iran's GDP reaches 8.8%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The share of the agriculture sector in Iran's non-oil gross domestic product (GDP) reached 8.8 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), IRIB reported, quoting an official with the Agriculture Ministry.

"Over the years, the agricultural sector has been the only economic sector that has always registered positive growth, so that we see the growth of this sector reaching 8.8 percent in [the Iranian calendar year] 1398 from three percent in 1392 (March 2013-March 2014)," Shahrokh Shajari said.

"We must be able to increase the economic growth of this sector even more by using modern science and new technologies and methods, both in the technical aspects and in the commercial sector", the acting head of Agriculture Ministry's Economic Affairs Department stressed.



Shajari noted that to realize the development projects in the agricultural sector 15 percent of the country's total bank resources should be allocated to this sector.

"Unfortunately, the banking system allocates only about eight percent of its resources to the agriculture sector, and if we exclude the share of Bank Keshavarzi (Agricultural Bank), the share of other banks is only two percent," he regretted.

He said that the reason for the low export prices of Iranian products compared to neighboring countries is because Iranian exports are mostly supply-oriented.

"We must move toward being demand-oriented, when we produce the products needed by the destination markets, we will trade at a reasonable price," he added.

In late June, Shajari announced that Iran's agricultural production is expected to reach 128 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021).

Speaking in a meeting of Agriculture Ministry's senior officials with First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, Shajari put the country's agriculture production in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) at 123 million tons.

He pointed to improving the trade balance of agriculture and food sectors, preserving the country's basic resources, improving food security by relying on domestic production, and improving productivity as some of the most important strategies of the Agriculture Ministry for the current Iranian calendar year.

4-month pistachio exports stand at 35,000 tons

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran exported 35,000 tons of pistachio during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), the secretary general of Iran's Pistachio Association announced.

Hossein Rezaei put the amount of exports at 2,600, 9,200, 9,800, and 14,140 tons in the first, second, third, and fourth months, respectively, IRNA reported.

As previously reported, Iran exported 21,720 tons of pistachio worth more than \$154 million during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Rouhollah Latifi said Iran's pistachio was exported to 54 countries during the first quarter.

Importing 5,547 tons of pistachio valued at \$35.4 million, China was the first export destination of the Iranian product, while Germany, Iraq, Russia, and Kazakhstan came next through importing 2,982 tons, 1,866 tons, 1,455 tons, and 1,129 tons of pistachio, respectively, from Iran in the three-month period, the official stated.

Non-oil exports from Markazi Province hit over \$186m

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of non-oil exports from Iran's central Markazi Province reached \$186.38 million during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), a provincial official announced, Mehr news agency reported.

"Markazi Province exported commodities to 70 countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, the UAE, Azerbaijan and Pakistan during the mentioned period", Saeed Farrokhi, the province's deputy governor for the economic affairs, stated.

The official further put the value of imports to the province at \$93 million in the first four months of this year and named China, Turkey, the UAE, India and Taiwan as the main exporters of goods to the province.

The value of Iran's non-oil trade during the first four months of the current year stood at \$19.635 billion, IRNA reported.

According to the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Rohollah Latifi, in the mentioned period Iran imported \$10.922 billion worth of goods, while exporting \$8.713 billion.

The volume of traded goods was estimated at 42 million tons, of which 30.285 million tons were related to exports and about 11.793 million tons were imported goods.

Iran's top five non-oil export destinations during this period were China with \$2.474 billion worth of exports, Iraq with \$1.965 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with \$1.216 billion, 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.

Zanganeh inaugurates 286 gas supply projects in northeastern Iran

1 → According to Zanganeh, currently, about 88 percent of the country's rural areas are supplied with natural gas through the national network, and over 95 percent of the country's total population is enjoying natural gas through the national network. "This coverage is unprecedented in the world," he stressed.

Zanganeh further explained the ministry's program for gas supply to the country's rural areas and said: "We examined all methods of supplying gas to the rural areas, which took a year to study and research, and we

came to the conclusion that connecting these areas to the national network is the most economical way."

With the implementation of this program, thousands of jobs were created, the minister said.

Back in July, the Head of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Hassan Montazer Torbati had announced that gas supply operations in rural and urban regions of various provinces were ongoing despite the limitations created by the outbreak of the coronavirus.



According to Torbati, in the past few years, every year more than 3,000 villages have been connected to the national gas network.

Earlier, NIGC's former dispatching director had said that the transmission capacity of the national gas network rose to one billion cubic meters per day (bcm/d).

Noting that several projects were carried out last calendar year (ended on March 19) to

increase the country's gas network capacity, Mehdi Jamshidi-Dana said: "Most of the mentioned projects were implemented in the ninth national line."

The official mentioned the South Pars gas field's new platforms going operational in the current year and noted that with the increase of the national gas network's capacity the new production capacity from the South Pars platforms won't be idle.

Commodities worth over \$4.6b traded at IME in July

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — More than 2.608 million tons of commodities valued at over \$4.669 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) in July.

As reported by the Public Relations Department of IME, during the last month, the oil and petrochemical trading floor of the IME played host to trading of 1.729 million tons of commodities worth more than \$2.346 billion.

On this trading floor, more than 434,379 tons of bitumen, 292,014 tons of polymer products and 189,902 tons of chemical products, 590,000 tons of VB feed stock, 134,500 tons of lube cut oil, 72,095 tons of sulfur, 4,585 tons of insulation, 3,000 tons of slaps waxes, 100 tons of argon as well as 8,720 tons of oil were traded by the customers.

The metal and mineral trading floor witnessed trading over 873,768 tons of commodities worth more than \$2.31 million.

On this trading floor 738,319 tons of steel, 24,565 tons of copper, 530 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 54 tons of precious metals concentrates, 94,300 tons of zinc, 200 tons of lead ingot, 16,000 tons of aluminum as well as 30 kg of gold bullion were traded by the customers.

Furthermore, in agricultural trading floor of the IME



more than 1,250 kg of saffron was traded by the customers.

The side market of the IME experienced trading of 300 tons of PDA TAR, 4,260 tons of tomato paste, 53 tons of used locomotive engine oil, 606 tons of metal scrape as well as 500 tons of Ferrosilicon.

Meanwhile, 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.

Offering of shares through 3rd ETF to begin in late 2020

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The deputy head of Iran's Privatization Organization said that offering of shares through the country's third exchange-traded fund (ETF) will be done in the ninth Iranian calendar month Azar (November 21-December 20).

Hassan Alaei told IRNA on Sunday that the shares of car and metal groups will be offered through the offering.

He said offering through the first ETF has been experienced some good growth so far, adding that subscription for the second ETF, which is for offering the shares of refineries, will continue until the end of the current Iranian calendar month (August 21).

The official further said that no decision has been already made about the fourth ETF.

On May 2, the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is the main stock exchange of Iran, listed the first exchange-traded fund (ETF) from a series of three ETFs, through them shares of some state-owned organizations and companies are planned to be offered.

An exchange-traded fund (ETF) is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges, much like stocks. An ETF holds assets such as stocks, commodities, or bonds and generally operates with an arbitrage mechanism designed to keep it trading close to its net asset value, although deviations can occasionally occur.

As described by Investopedia, ETFs can contain many types of investments, including stocks, commodities, bonds, or a mixture of investment types. An exchange-traded fund is a marketable security, meaning it has an associated price that allows it to be easily bought and sold.



The shares to be offered via the above mentioned Iranian ETFs belong to those governmental bodies defined in Iran's privatization program, a comprehensive plan seriously followed up by the government to downsize and reduce its role in the economy.

The three ETFs are planned to offer 550 trillion rials (about \$13 billion) worth of the governmental stakes.

The first ETF, established by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, comprises government shares in three banks, including Bank Mellat, Tejarat Bank, and Bank Saderat, as well as the shares of two insurance companies, i.e. Iranian Reinsurance Company and Alborz Company.

The government has a 17-percent stake in Bank Mellat, a 17-percent stake in Tejarat Bank, and an 18-percent stake in Bank Saderat.

In mid-June, the finance and economic affairs minister announced that the value of shares that are offered by the first exchange-traded fund had doubled.

Referring to the offering of the shares via the first ETF, Farhad Dejpasand said, "The offering was our first experience in this field. About 3.6 million persons purchased the units of shares offered by the first fund."

Over 8.8m tons of basic goods imported in 4 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over 8.866 million tons of basic commodities worth \$3.974 billion have been imported to the country during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) told Mehr news agency.

Rouhollah Latifi put the imported basic goods at 8.831 million tons valued at \$5.746 billion during the same period of time in the past year, indicating a 30-percent drop in the value of imports.

The official further said that there is no shortage of basic goods in the country.

IRICA head has previously announced that 25 million tons of basic goods have been cleared from Iran's customs during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

According to Mehdi Mirashrafi, 35 million tons of commodities were imported into the country in the mentioned year, of which 25 million tons were basic goods.

Noting that the coronavirus outbreak has decreased the level of trade in the current Iranian calendar year, the official said in late June: "This year, the trend has slowed down, and we hope that with the measures taken by the Central Bank [of Iran (CBI)], the Industry Ministry, and IRICA, we will be able to minimize the deposition of goods in the customs before and after clearance. In this regard, we are going to make a new proposal to the government through the Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry."

Last week, IRICA proposed some solutions to the Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry for facilitating the clearance of goods and preventing commodity pile-up at the customs.



IRICA Deputy Head Mehrdad Jamal Orounqi has proposed the said solutions in a letter to the Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand.

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

The need for clear classification and determining the priority basic goods (the commodities which should be cleared in the shortest possible time) by a single supervisor body or organization was one of the major suggestions that were singled out in Orounqi's proposal.

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

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

The new instructions declared to the country's customs departments required the representatives of the related organizations to act under the supervision of IRICA for conducting necessary controls and inspections.

TEDPIX gains 49,870 points on Monday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 49,870 points to 2.011 million on Monday, IRNA reported.

As reported, 13.584 billion securities worth 235.579 trillion rials (about \$5.609 billion) were traded on Monday.

The first market's index rose 28,764 points and the second market's index gained 132,138 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 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.

53 projects inaugurated under Energy Ministry's A-B-Iran scheme since Mar. 20

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Monday that 53 major water and electricity projects have gone operational in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) under the framework of the ministry's A-B-Iran program.

Speaking in the inauguration ceremony of 15 energy-related projects in Tehran province during the 14th week of the mentioned program, Ardakanian put the total investment made in the mentioned projects at 147.25 trillion rials (about \$3.5 billion), IRNA reported.

According to the official, in the second phase of the A-B-Iran scheme (the acronyms A and B stand for water and electricity in Persian) 250 projects are going to be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

The official noted that a total of 500



trillion rials (about \$11.9 billion) of investment will be made in the mentioned 250 projects.

Ardakanian had earlier said that in the water sector, the mentioned projects include nine major dams, implementation of modern irrigation systems in 54,000 hectares of land, 20 water, and wastewater treatment plants and supplying drinkable water through a pipeline to more than 1400 rural areas across the country.

Since the beginning of the second phase of the scheme in the current Iranian calendar year, every week several energy projects have gone operational across the country.

A-B-Iran program was initiated in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), during which the minister made 31 trips to various provinces for inaugurating over 220 major projects with a total investment of 335.6 trillion rials (about \$7.99 billion).

ICOFC conducting 4 research projects with local universities

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) has started four research projects in collaboration with the country's major universities and research institutions, Shana reported.

The said projects are aimed at optimizing and increasing the productivity and recovery factor of various oil and gas fields operated by the company and helping to solve ICOFC's production and operational challenges.

According to the Head of ICOFC Research and Development Department Seyed Abbas Ziaei, the mentioned projects have been awarded to the research units of Amirkabir University of Technology, Razi University, and the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI), and will be implemented under the supervision of the ICOFC Research and Development Department.

He noted that awarding these projects has been carried out in a precise process and based on scientific and technical standards.

The best academic research units have been selected

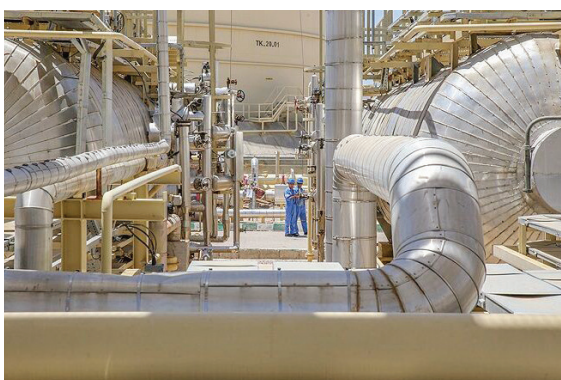
from among the bidders for these projects, the official added.

Back in December 2019, ICOFC, which is a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), inked deals with Amirkabir University and RIPI for conducting research projects.

In early May, head of RIPI's upstream faculty had announced that the institute is due to carry out four major research projects aimed at increasing the recovery factor of the country's oil fields by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2021).

According to Ezatollah Kazemzadeh, the institute signed 12 research agreements with private companies and government-owned firms for conducting a wide range of research activities in various fields of exploration, drilling, production, harvesting and laboratory technology services in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) and this trend is going to continue in the current year.

Operational exploration and development activities in the oil and gas industry require structural studies and up-



to-date technologies in this field.

In this regard, NIOC has been signing several agreements with Iranian universities and knowledge-based companies for research in various fields.

Iran polyethylene output capacity hits 5m tons

TEHRAN (Shana) — President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated Miandoab petrochemical plant, which would bring Iran's polyethylene (PE) production capacity to five million tons, in late June.

The plant's annual production capacity is 140,000 tons of high-density polyethylene (HDPE), and it is built on the way of West Ethylene Pipeline (WEP).

According to the Oil Ministry, the project cost €40 million plus 8 trillion rials (about \$190.47) to be completed.

Speaking in the inauguration ceremony, Rouhani said 17 more petrochemical projects would come on-stream by next March, calling on the private sector to invest in Iran's downstream projects.

He cited a promise from Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh about the startup of 17 petrochemical projects by next March, adding that the new projects would double Iran's revenue from petrochemical exports to \$25 billion.

Rouhani said Iran would see its petrochemical income reach \$37 billion in the third jump.

"In the petrochemical sector we would need another jump, which is downstream jump. As there are diverse petrochemical products, the downstream petrochemical sector could also create many jobs," he added.

Rouhani said the government would call for the private sector to invest in the downstream development of the 17 projects that would come online in the current calendar year "because of high job creation and higher revenue".

He said: "We would be witnessing a major change in this sector."

Historic output hike

Minister Zanganeh said the Miandoab petrochemical plant was the first of second-jump petrochemical plants to have come online.

"With the inauguration of 17 petrochemical plants in 2020, the production capacity of this industry will increase 25 million tons, which will mark the most historic production



hike in the history of Iran's petrochemical industry," he said.

"Furthermore, with the materialization of the second jump in the petrochemical industry by March 2022, the production capacity of this industry will reach 100 million tons, worth \$25 billion," he added.

Zanganeh noted that the third leap in the petrochemical sector had also started. "Some of the third jump projects are under way with satisfactory physical progress and some others are in the phase of preparation. The third jump projects would bring the value of petrochemical products to \$37 billion," he added.

The minister said 16 of second leap projects were planned to come online this year.

"Once all the 16 projects come online, the petrochemical production capacity will increase from the current 66 million tons to 90 million tons, up 35 percent," Zanganeh said.

Bringing a total of 27 petrochemical projects into operation by March 2022, which marks the end of the second petrochemical jump, would raise Iran's petrochemical production capacity to 100 million tons with a total revenue of \$25 billion. In the third jump up to 2026, another 27 petrochemical projects would become operational to bring Iran's production from 100 million tons to 130 million tons.

The official further touched on supplying feedstock to downstream units along with developing petrochemical projects, saying: "With a view to increasing the capacity of

downstream units, projects have been defined in the methanol, PP, ethylene and benzene chains for accelerating development and diversity in the downstream industries."

Petchem Projects

A group of new projects, known as driver projects, are focused on increasing petrochemical production capacity and diversity, the two sectors set to prove challenging for Iran. In the PP production sector, Iran is faced with 200,000-tonne shortages. Iran is currently producing about 980,000 tons of PP. Demand for PP is set to reach 700,000 tons in coming years and therefore Iran plans to bring its PP production capacity to 3 million tons from methanol and natural gas as envisaged by National Petrochemical Company (NPC). Iran has already mastered knowhow for converting methanol to PP.

Behzad Mohammadi, CEO of NPC, has said that Iran's petrochemical production capacity would reach 23 million tons by 2024, which would create a good opportunity for methanol conversion to PP.

Gas-to-Propylene (GTPP) projects with a view to carrying PP to northern and north-eastern provinces for developing downstream industries using Iranian knowhow are among the driver projects.

The first GTPP project using Iranian knowhow is under way in Eslamabad Gharb by NPC, which would come online by 2025.

Iranian Catalyst

The Miandoab petrochemical plant is the 15th plant producing a variety of LDPP, HDPP and LDLP on WEP.

Davoud Reza Rabbani, CEO of Bakhtar Petrochemical Company, said similar plants used until recently to import catalysts.

He said that 10 percent of the revenue gained from petrochemical exports is guaranteed by the Bakhtar Petrochemical Company. The share is set to reach 15 percent by next year.

The Bakhtar Petrochemical Company has seven petrochemical offshoots including the Kavian Petrochemical Company; the largest

olefin production unit in Iran. Most petrochemical plants located on the WEP route have been hived off to the Bakhtar company.

A review of global and regional offer and demand for PE products shows that following the Covid-19 outbreak, the market is faced with increased demand for packaging products and subsequently increased demand for PE products, particularly film grades.

Market analysts believe that in case the coronavirus spread subsides in the world, demand for various PE grades would increase in the mid-term and long-term as health protocols change and more products would need packaging. Therefore, building and developing PE units for the purpose of meeting domestic needs and boosting exports would remain economically viable.

Permits have recently been given for three new PE projects. The Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) has announced the planned construction of a 300,000-tonne PE plant near the Gachsaran Petrochemical Plant.

By implementing a project to boost the ethylene production capacity at Arya Sasol Polymer Plant by 10 percent, operations have started for building a 300,000-tonne PE production unit.

By connecting the Tabriz Petrochemical Plant to WEP, a plan is under way to build a 310,000-tonne PE plant in order to allow for three new PE projects in the petrochemical sector.

The Miandoab petrochemical plant would need 140,000 tons of ethylene and 2,000 tons of butane-1. Ethylene will be supplied by WEP and butane-1 from other petrochemical plants. The products of this plant would serve as feedstock for manufacturers of pipes, plastics and cable among other products.

The Miandoab plant, whose construction started in 2013 on 22 ha of land in the city of Miandoab, is under Japanese Mitsui license. 70 percent of its share is owned by the Bakhtar Petrochemical Company and 30 percent by the Pushineh Methanol Company.

Iran gas flow to Turkey back to normal

TEHRAN (Shana) — The flow of Iran's natural gas to Turkey, which had come to a halt on March 31 due to an explosion in the pipeline, came back to normal conditions on July 1.

In this regard, Mohammad-Reza Jolaei, head of Dispatching Directorate at National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), has said Iran's gas exports to Turkey would continue based on commitments by both sides.

On March 31, 2020, when Iran was in the final days of Persian New Year holidays, Turkish news agencies reported a blast in the pipeline on the Turkish territory. The blast was later reported to have struck part of the pipeline, 105 kilometers from Iran's Bazargan border post.

Turkish officials refused to provide any specific explanation about the explosion; however, separatist groups like Kurdish PKK have already been behind similar acts of sabotage on the pipeline. PKK has so far attacked the Iran-Turkey gas pipeline 11 times.

PKK claimed responsibility for attacking the pipeline, saying one of its fighters, a woman, had conducted an act of suicide blast there.

As the blast occurred on the Turkish section of the pipeline, Turkey was legally responsible for its repair.

Well familiar with such incidents, Iranian gas officials said from the very beginning that the gas flow to Turkey would resume within days. NIGC notified Turkey's Botas officials that its engineers could repair the damage to the pipeline within eight days.

The Iran-Turkey gas pipeline stretching from Tabriz in northwestern Iran to Ankara in Turkey is 2,577 kilometers long. Iran agreed in 2001 to pump 8.5 billion cubic meters (bcm) a year of gas to Turkey. In the gas contracts where supply and demand security is a key element, there is a "take-or-pay" provision, written into a contract, whereby one party has the obligation of either taking delivery of goods or paying a specified amount. Take or pay provisions benefit both the buyer and the seller by sharing risk, and can benefit society by facilitating trade and reducing transactions costs.

Line repair easy task

Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on state radio in late May that the damaged pipeline had not been repaired while it could have been done within days.

"Iran expressed its readiness to repair the gas pipeline, but Turkey did not welcome Iran's offer," he said.

Meantime, Mehdi Jamshidi Dana, former director of dispatching at NIGC, said: "The coronavirus outbreak and ensuing oil price slump made the problem worse and the pipeline blast added to challenges."

Turkey had reportedly invoked "force majeure" following the blast, which is often invoked during natural disasters. However, Iran dismissed the force majeure clause and demanded permission for visiting the damaged pipeline. The logic behind resorting to force majeure for Turkey was not to pay for the period the gas flow had been stopped.

The Turkish party had reportedly told NIGC that the Covid-19 outbreak had delayed the delivery of equipment ordered from Italy.

Interactive approach

NIGC insisted on an "interactive approach", saying the halt in Iran's gas flow to Turkey did not mean deprivation from the benefits of the contract. NIGC also expressed its willingness to renew the contract after its expiry in 2026.

NIGC and Petroleum Ministry, in addition to direct correspondence with Botas, followed up on the issue through Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Presidential Office.

The issue was discussed during Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's June visit to Turkey where he met with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu. In the meeting, Zarif said it was "necessary" to resume gas flow to Turkey.

Covid-19 and gas price

Crude oil prices always provide an index for gas pricing in normal contracts. After the coronavirus outbreak and the ensuing sharp decline in energy consumption, oil prices dropped sharply. The West Texas Intermediate (WTI) oil price even fell into the negative territory. The oil price developments are expected to affect gas prices sooner or later.

Iran and Turkey are looking to expand and strengthen the level of their trade ties. During Zarif-Cavusoglu meeting, it was announced that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan would soon visit Iran to discuss economic agreements.

Talks have already started with a view to renewing the Iran-Turkey gas contract whose term ends in 2026. However, Iranian officials say the talks have been slow due to Covid-19 outbreak.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) recognizes Turkey as the biggest buyer of Iran's gas. Iran supplies 90 percent of Turkish gas imports. Russia and Azerbaijan are the other two suppliers of gas to Turkey. Turkish Energy Ministry data show that Turkey's gas imports from Russia had seen a decline since 2017. Instead, Turkey has increased its liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports from the United States.

Turkey's gas consumption reached 50 bcm in 2019, which is estimated to reach 70 bcm by 2030.

Iran, reliable gas supplier to Turkey

NIGC has already said Iran would remain a "reliable gas supplier" to Turkey. During President Hassan Rouhani's first state visit to Turkey in 2014, joint cooperation in the energy sector was one of the first topics the two nations discussed.

Iran and Turkey are determined to boost their trade ties. Turkey hopes to bring its trade figures with Iran from the current \$10 billion to \$30 billion. However, White House threats of sanctions remain a major stumbling block on the way of Iran-Turkey trade exchanges.

One sector to have been affected is Turkey's crude oil imports from Iran. Following the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, Iran sharply increased its crude oil exports to Turkey, which reached 180,000 b/d in some months. But as soon as the US pulled out of the deal and re-imposed oil sanctions on Iran as part of its maximum pressure policy, Turkey had to halt its oil purchase from Iran.

The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies said in a report that Turkish officials would have to become assured of sustained energy supply in order to meet growing energy needs in the country.

Iran is said to be sitting atop the world's second largest gas reserves. It is currently producing 674 mcm/d of gas. Iran is also determined to increase production from the giant offshore South Pars gas field shared with neighboring Qatar.

Gas exports constitute a key policy in Iran. CEO of NIGC Hassan Montazer Torbati said recently that Iran's gas exports last calendar year grew 26 percent year-on-year.

Russian oil output rises in July, misses OPEC+ target

Russian oil and gas condensate production increased to 9.37 million barrels per day (bpd) in July, Interfax news agency reported on Sunday, citing energy ministry data, indicating it missed its output target under a global deal.

Production was up from 9.32 million bpd in June.

From August, the output cuts — agreed between the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) other major producers including Russia, a group known as OPEC+ — are due to be eased.

In tons, Russian oil and gas condensate production rose to 39.63 million in July from 38.16 million in June, Interfax reported.

Under the OPEC+ agreement, Moscow pledged to reduce its output to around 8.5 million bpd in May-July to support oil prices.



The deal does not include output of gas condensate, a light oil.

Russia usually produces 700,000 to 800,000 bpd of gas condensate. That means that excluding gas condensate, Russia could have produced around 8.57 million to 8.67 million bpd of crude oil in July.

The cuts under the global deal should be eased starting from August thanks to a recovery in oil prices. Russia has said it would increase its oil production by 400,000 bpd.

Russian oil exports outside the former Soviet Union stood last month at 15.72 million tons, down 27.1 percent from July 2019. In barrels per day, exports reached 3.72 million, according to Interfax.

The news agency also said on Sunday that Russian natural gas output reached 50.33 billion cubic meters in July, down 7.9 percent from a year earlier.

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Israel has left Palestinians unable to control the virus

By Jalal Abukhater

COVID-19 has spread, uncontrolled, in heavily populated Palestinian cities, towns, and overcrowded refugee camps.

In recent weeks, some countries around the world have managed to slow down the spread of COVID-19 within their borders, and successfully eased their strict lockdown measures. However, many others experienced a second wave of infections and are still struggling to reduce the number of new coronavirus cases.

Unfortunately, the occupied Palestinian territories are in the latter group.

After imposing strict measures early on during the first wave of infections, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories appeared to have contained their outbreaks, with each reporting only a few dozen new cases a day in May. But an easing of restrictions has led to a steady uptick in cases since mid-June. This caused panic and confusion while the authorities rushed to come up with more effective methods to get the virus under control.

However, stemming the coronavirus's spread is particularly difficult in Palestine due to Israel's military occupation and the resulting apartheid and economic devastation.

The sharp deterioration in coordination between Israeli and Palestinian officials after Israel threatened to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank has made an already grave situation worse. The Palestinian Authority's refusal to accept tax revenues from Israel due to its annexation plans meant that the public sector employees did not receive regular salaries since May, putting more strain on the local economy during the lockdown.

The fractured administrative structure of the occupied West Bank - where the PA exclusively administers area A, Area B is administered by both the PA and Israel, and Area C is administered only by Israel - has made it impossible for the Palestinian leadership to impose effective preventive measures. The PA's inability to fully access Areas B and C, which comprise almost 80 percent of the West Bank, has left it struggling to follow an all-inclusive coronavirus containment strategy.

The recent rise in coronavirus cases in the occupied territories has largely been blamed on the continuation of weddings, funerals, and other forms of mass gatherings as well as Palestinian laborers working in



On July 18, Israeli forces also conducted a night raid on the Al-Jalazon refugee camp, where more than 150 COVID-19 cases have been recorded. Palestinians in East Jerusalem have also been left vulnerable to the virus due to Israeli authorities' activities and policies.

Israel. Recognizing that it is powerless to officially impose any virus containment measures in areas under Israeli control, the PA has asked grassroots activists, influential families, clan, and tribe leaders to help it raise awareness and prevent large gatherings.

The situation in the West Bank city of Hebron, the area hardest hit by the second wave of infections, provides further proof of the occupation's devastating effect on the PA's ability to contain the virus. The 1997 Hebron Protocol signed between Israel and the PA divided the city into two areas: H1 and H2. The PA controls the H1, but H2 is under Israeli military control.

During the first wave of infections, the PA imposed a strict lockdown in H1; however, Israeli authorities did not follow the same strategy in H2. Thus, while some shops and venues were forcefully shut down, others, sometimes located on the opposite side of the same street, were allowed to continue

with business as usual. This caused a lot of confusion and frustration for the residents of the city and exacerbated the spread of the virus.

Furthermore, on July 21, at a time when the Palestinian Ministry of Health recorded daily increases averaging 400 cases across the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, with 80 percent of active cases being recorded in Hebron, the Israeli authorities demolished a COVID-19 quarantine and testing center in the city. Another testing center in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan was raided and shut down by the authorities in mid-April.

And as the Palestinian population was put under another strict lockdown in July, Israeli forces continued to conduct nightly raids on Palestinian areas, disregarding the severity of the crisis. Ramallah, Jenin, Bethlehem and other Palestinian cities were raided multiple times throughout the month,

Palestinians in East Jerusalem have also been left vulnerable to the virus due to Israeli authorities' activities and policies.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Egypt's military gambit in Libya risks backfiring

By Jonathan Fenton-Harvey

On 20 July, Egypt's parliament approved an army deployment to fight what it deemed "criminal militias" and "foreign terrorist groups" on a "western front", showing its preparedness to usher in a new phase of Libya's conflict.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi called U.S. President Donald Trump on the same day to discuss Libya's conflict, claiming that Cairo prefers non-intervention in the country.

"President El-Sisi confirmed Egypt's unwavering strategic position on Libya, which aimed to restore stability in the country, preserve its national institutions, and prevent further deterioration in Libya's security situation via curbing illegal foreign interference in the Libyan issue," said a spokesperson for the Egyptian president.

■ Egypt readies for war

Egyptian troops are now organizing themselves on the country's border, Al Masry Al Youm reported on Monday, suggesting that Cairo will back up its words over recent weeks with action.

Meanwhile, the UN on Monday warned of a "huge risk" of Libya sparking a greater regional war. Turkey continues supporting the internationally recognized Government of National Accord's (GNA) successful counter-offensive against renegade general Khalifa Haftar's so-called Libyan National Army (LNA), which launched an offensive to capture Tripoli in April 2019.

Haftar has received backing from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Russia, France, and Saudi Arabia - none of whom have renounced their support for the warlord.

Egypt's move had built up for weeks, as GNA forces edged closer towards the oil-rich city of Sirte and the Jufra airbase, which serve as a key operations hub for Haftar's backers. In a televised speech on 20 June, Sisi hinted at sending troops to Libya to secure its western border.

Then on 16 July, Egypt warned it would intervene, citing security concerns. In a meeting in Cairo with tribal leaders operating alongside Haftar's so-called Libyan National Army, who invited Egypt to use military action, Sisi said, "the red lines that we announced earlier... were basically a call for peace and to put an end to the conflict in Libya."

"But we will not stand idle in the face of any moves that pose a direct threat to our national strategic security on our western borders, especially in light of the increasing military build-up operations in the vicinity of the city of Sirte. Egypt is able to change the military situation quickly and decisively if it wants," added Sisi.

However, when Sisi called Sirte a 'red-line,' observers slammed it as hypocritical, and a further breach of Libya's sovereignty should Cairo proceed, given the city is over 1,000km from Egypt's borders.

Meanwhile, many Egyptians expressed their opposition



towards the intervention, with the Arabic hashtag for "I did not delegate" spreading across Twitter following Sisi's decision.

Egypt has played an important role in empowering Haftar's forces, seeing his authoritarian military rule as a means of containing perceived security threats on its western border, and has backed his offensive on Tripoli. Along with Saudi Arabia, Cairo also lobbied Trump to support Haftar in April 2019.

■ Risks of greater conflict

Egypt's concerns, however, transcend Sirte's developments and whoever controls Libya's resources. Should Sirte fall to the GNA, the conflict may drift closer to its western border and create what it perceives as security threats within Egypt.

Meanwhile, two Egyptian officials suggested to Madr Masr that Egypt would only push forward with the military move should Sirte and Jufra fall. While Cairo presents this as a security move, its rivals have reacted harshly, with Libya's Foreign Minister Fathi Bashagha interpreting Cairo's deployment as a declaration of war.

"Egyptian parliament approval of troops deployment outside its western borders is a declaration of war on Libya and violates Arab League and UN charters," Bashagha said on 21 July in a tweet which he later removed. "Foreign forces on Libyan grounds are enemy. WE WILL NOT HESITATE to defend our nation's sovereignty, security, and freedom."

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan denounced Egypt's actions as "illegal" and "piratical." Turkey has said it will only accept a ceasefire should Haftar withdraw. However, given Haftar's foreign backers have not entirely ceased their support for him, he will not step down so easily.

With a successful use of militias, proxies, and drones, Turkey has enabled the GNA to push back Haftar, despite his tremendous international backing. The threat of Egypt's intervention would not deter it.

For Egypt's critics, its declarations of war are mere posturing to distract Egypt's population from its failures

with scores of Palestinians being arbitrarily arrested.

On July 18, Israeli forces also conducted a night raid on the Al-Jalazon refugee camp, where more than 150 COVID-19 cases have been recorded, and approximately 14,000 people are forced to live in close quarters with little possibility of social distancing. The camp's youth and volunteers have been working hard to control the spread of the virus within the camp, but the Israeli raid and the resulting clashes and arrests brought their efforts to a halt.

Palestinians in East Jerusalem have also been left vulnerable to the virus due to Israeli authorities' activities and policies. In a July briefing paper, Medical Aid for Palestinians, Al-Haq, and the Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Centre highlighted how "Israel's discriminatory response to COVID-19 in East Jerusalem, coupled with long-standing failures to fulfill fundamental human rights, has compounded Palestinians' susceptibility to the pandemic".

In their joint briefing paper, the NGOs explained how Israeli policies led to "long delays in opening testing centers for Palestinians in East Jerusalem, delays in the provision of quarantine facilities, harassment, arrests, and persecution of local volunteers distributing aid materials and foodstuffs, closures of community-led initiatives to contain COVID-19 and raise awareness as to the pandemic, and the initial failure even to provide data on the numbers and rate of infections in Palestinian communities as well as to issue information and guidance for the Arabic-speaking public".

Most of the fears Palestinians had when the pandemic began in March were realized over the past few weeks. The virus had spread, uncontrolled, in heavily populated cities and towns. It had also hit vulnerable and overcrowded refugee camps all over the West Bank, where social distancing is not possible.

Palestinians in the occupied territories are aware that their health sector capabilities are pale compared to those of more developed nations who had been devastated by the pandemic. This is why they fear the worst could still be to come. They are angry with the PA for failing to protect them from this deadly virus, but they are also aware that the Israeli occupation is making it almost impossible for the Palestinian leaders to manage the situation.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Harassing Iranian plane by the U.S. is instance of 'state terrorism': military analyst

1 → Commenting on the trick that Israeli fighter jets use to deceive the Syrian air defenses by hiding behind passenger planes, Maarabouni says it is not the first time that American and Israeli fighters violate international law using civil aircraft.

"This is the same crime Israel committed when they deceived Syrian air defenses to shoot down a Russian plane carrying a group of experts on board that led to the death of all of the officers and specialists," he explains.

In the Al-Tanf region, when the Iranian plane was harassed by U.S. fighter jets on Thursday 23 July before managing to safely land in the Lebanese capital, Syrian radars and air defense units gave clear orders to the plane which was heading to Damascus airport to go north and land at Khmeimim airbase, according to Syrian officials.

This measure came to protect the plane at the moment as Israeli aircraft took advantage of the presence of a civilian aircraft to fire missiles at Syria.

Maarabouni is of the view that the goal was to repeat the Russian plane disaster by misleading Syrian radars and air defense.

Regarding the messages that Israel and America try to send by provoking Iran in recent months, the military analyst says that there are multiple messages.

"The U.S. in the first place clearly sends a message that in the moment of the outbreak of a possible confrontation in the region, Tehran-Damascus, and Tehran-Beirut airlines can be targets," he maintains. "The message had reached those concerned in Syria, Lebanon, and also in Iran."

However, Maarabouni emphasizes that there is a problem with the message, saying legally such moves are a kind of terrorist act practiced by a state.

"We can call it 'state terrorism' in which a government tries to target peoples of another country by violating the rules of war. Even the war has its own rules and humanitarian principles while the U.S. adventures are flagrant breaches of these rules," he concludes.

News coverage can 'influence people's perceptions': media expert

TEHRAN — Kareem El Damanhoury, an assistant professor of media and journalism studies at Denver University, tells the Tehran Times that news coverage can "influence people's perceptions of what's happening on the ground", saying "tone of the coverage matters."

Damanhoury, who is a freelance journalist with 10 years of media experience in the U.S. and the Arab world, says "social media constitute a platform for youth to express their views and a facilitator to organize rallies and protests on the ground as we've seen in the past. But that does not mean that social media is the cause of the Arab Spring uprisings or any other social movement over the past two decades."

Here is the full text of the interview:

■ Please tell us more about the relationship between media and conflicts in West Asia.

A: Media have always been an integral part of conflict since the day of cave paintings documenting battle victories. And today's conflicts in West Asia are no different as state and non-state actors across the region use the media to project their views of the world.

■ ISIS greatly enjoyed social media to recruit terrorists from different parts of the world. The question is why did not Twitter and Facebook close the group's accounts?

A: Twitter and Facebook did crackdown on ISIS's social media presence closing out thousands of accounts, especially after the 2015 Paris attacks. But what happened afterward? ISIS migrated to the encrypted app Telegram. And even when the Europol cracked down on the group's presence on Telegram in November 2019, the group moved to other encrypted messaging apps like Hoop and TamTam, among many others. So, here's the thing, there's no way social media companies will be able to fully eradicate the presence of militant groups online.

■ Since there is no clear definition of "terrorism" among states, big powers affect media policies. As an expert, what's your solution for this challenge?

A: And I highly doubt there will ever be a consensus on the definition of terrorism among states. As for a solution, this is the one-million-dollar question. I think that one of the steps in the right direction would be for the media and journalists to give equal attention to violent actions of the same magnitude regardless of the race, ethnicity, and/or religion of the perpetrator.

■ As you know social media played a critical role in the Arab uprising. What is your view on it?

A: Social media constitute a platform for youth to express their views and a facilitator to organize rallies and protests on the ground as we've seen in the past. But that does not mean that social media is the cause of the Arab Spring uprisings or any other social movement over the past two decades. There are numerous political, social, and economic factors that push people to the streets.

■ And a question about the current situation in the United States. Protests over the death of George Floyd continue to rage across the country. What do you think about the protests? How do you assess the role of media in the protests?

A: News coverage can influence people's perceptions of what's happening on the ground and thus the tone of the coverage matters. And in the U.S. like many other countries, the reporting on issues and events, including the protests, can vary across outlets. So, Fox, which caters more to conservative viewers, tends to report on things very differently from Trevor Noah's satirical commentary on The Daily Show, let's say, which targets more liberal viewers.



Museums lose 90% of revenues in wake of coronavirus outbreak

→ 1 The virtual tours were extended for the following months and a number of people explored centuries-old objects at museums as well as tourist attractions across the country.

Back in June, Kargar announced that Iranian museums and historical sites have taken 600 billion rials (about \$14.2 million) hit from the coronavirus outbreak.

Last month, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced that revenues from museums and historical sites were almost eight billion rials (about \$190,000) during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20), a sharp decline compared to around 300 billion rials (over \$7 million) in the same period last year.



He also noted that most of the income is spent on preserving the historical sites and museums, but due to the closure of the sites, the ministry is facing a challenge in maintaining these places.

Several provinces including Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Zanjan have extended the closure of their museums and some historical sites as they are on the red risk zone.

Home of late Iranian conjoined twin sisters to be turned into traditional residence

TOURISM TEHRAN —The home of late Iranian conjoined twin sisters Laleh and Ladan Bijani in the city of Malard, Tehran province, will be repurposed into a traditional residence.

The project aims at keeping alive the memory of Laleh and Ladan, who, despite their difficult lives, were very hopeful and patient, CHTN quoted Hamid Karimi, a provincial tourism chief, as saying on Monday.



Laleh and Ladan Bijani (1974-2003) were joined at the head. The Bijani sisters were different and considered themselves as independent individuals. However, their personal decisions had to meet each other's approval. Therefore, they had wanted to be separated since they were children, but they were told that their case was hopeless.

Finally, in 2003 they were admitted to a hospital in Singapore. Even though they were warned by the doctors that the surgery to separate them would be very risky, the sisters were very determined. They underwent surgery under the care of a large team of international specialists, but they died immediately after their complicated surgical separation.

Demarcation projects begin on 21 historical sites in northwest Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN — A total of 21 historical sites across the northwestern West Azarbaijan province are being demarcated by teams of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts, a provincial tourism chief has said.

The demarcation projects aim at protecting the historical sites, mostly historical hills, from illegal constructions within their boundaries as well as preserving their originality, CHTN quoted Hassan Sepahfar as saying on Monday.

He also noted that satellite images from the 1960s have been studied and compared by the teams of archaeologists to identify the current condition of the sites to determine the causes and extent of the damages.



West Azarbaijan embraces a variety of lush natural sceneries, cultural heritage sites, and museums including the UNESCO sites of Takht-e Soleyman and Qareh Klise (St. Thaddeus Monastery), Teppe Hasanlu and the ruined Bastam Citadel.

The region was a center of several ancient civilizations. According to Britannica, it was conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC and was named Atropatene after one of Alexander's generals, Atropates, who established a small kingdom there. Ultimately, the area returned to the Persian (Iranian) rule under the Sasanians in the 3rd century CE.

Tehran, Athens discuss ways to cooperate in cultural heritage repatriation

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iranian desks and Greek officials have discussed ways to share experience in cultural heritage repatriation as the two cradles of ancient civilizations are subjected to smuggling of historical relics.

Iranian deputy tourism minister Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, and Greek Ambassador to Tehran Dimitri Alexandrakis met on Monday discussing ways to deepen cultural cooperation, ILNA reported.

The exchange of experiences in the field of restitution of cultural and historical property and the organization of a joint seminar on Persepolis and Acropolis were amongst topics conferred upon in the meeting.

"Iran is one of the most successful countries in recovering smuggled relics as it has repatriated more than 3400 historical and cultural objects, especially since 2014.... Iran's measures have made the global market insecure for the [trade of] smuggled relics and sales of cultural and historical properties," Talebian said.

The Iranian official explained measures taken by his country in returning the



trafficked cultural and historical properties of countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan and some other neighboring countries, adding "Considering that Iran, like Greece, has faced looting, theft, and smuggling of its historical properties during the last two

centuries. We hope to be able to return the stolen treasures by cooperating and adopting appropriate solutions."

Alexandrakis, for his part, emphasized that the arenas of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts in today's

Sistan-Baluchestan is a collection of tourist attractions: governor general

TOURISM TEHRAN — The governor general of Sistan-Baluchestan province has said that the southeastern province is a collection of unique historical, natural, and tourist attractions, however, its tourism industry has not been developed due to "neglects and historical backwardness".

"Insufficient attention and historical backwardness are amongst reasons behind the lack of tourism development in Sistan-Baluchestan.... that is a collection of unique historical, natural and tourist attractions from its north to south," Ahmad-Ali Mouhebbati said on Saturday.

He made the remarks in a meeting with hoteliers and travel marketers of the province, noting "the huge potential of the private sector and investors should be tapped to make a boom in tourism of the region."

"Hospitable people, their rich culture, traditions, and rituals are amongst the most important attractions when it comes to tourism in Sistan-Baluchestan."

Experts say that historical and natural sites, varied landscapes, cozy guesthouses, rugged sea coasts,

mouth-watering local dishes, reasonable prices, and above all, hospitable and welcoming people contribute to make the lesser-known Sistan-Baluchestan a must-visit destination for any traveler in Iran.

The collective Sistan-Baluchestan Province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west, and an obvious rise in humidity in the coastal regions. In ancient times, the region was a crossword of the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations.

For mainstream Iranians, the name of Sistan-Baluchestan conjures up stories of drought, desiccated wetlands, and dust storms. On the international scale, foreigners may consider it a reminiscent of the big red blot on the Iran safety map.

The vast province is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert. Seb castle; mud fountains;



Darak beach; Darren Negaran; Chabahar beach; and Martian mountains are some of the most notable historical and natural tourist attractions of the province.

Mashhad museum sets up exhibit dedicated to journalism

TOURISM TEHRAN — An exhibition dedicated to media correspondents and the history of journalism in Iran will open to the public at Khorasan Great Museum, which is located in Mashhad, northeast Iran.

The 12-day exhibit will kick off on Thursday, a day before the National Journalist Day, which marks the anniversary of the killing of an Iranian reporter in Afghanistan in August 1998.

Large copies of newspapers dating from the Qajar era, Pahlavi era, and a select of ones issued on the onset of the 1979 Islamic



Revolution, and 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War have been selected to be put on show at

the exhibit.

Newspaper attachments, old subscription forms and receipts, office letterheads, Press ID Cards, books [of journalism] and pamphlets, special stamps for Reporter's Day, magazines, and pens for Qajar-era journalists are among other items to be showcased.

The history of newspaper and book publication in Iran can be traced back to the mid-19th century when Mohammed Shah, the third Shah of the Qajar dynasty was in power (1834-1848). According to the Iran Chamber Society, it is also documented that

the flashing history of print in Iran started with Zaboore Davood in Jolfa district of Isfahan, a province in central Iran, during the mid-17th century and regular printing began with the Fath-Nameh and Jahadieh ressaleh (thesis) in Tabriz during the early 19th century.

However, there are some discrepancies and arguments between researchers and historians about the above facts. Also, some scholars believe Fath-Nameh and Jahadieh are not two separate titles but two different editions of the same book, which is highly unlikely.

Qajar-era cisterns in Qazvin undergo restoration

TOURISM TEHRAN — Three Qajar-era (1794–1925) cisterns in the northwestern province of Qazvin have undergone some rehabilitation works, CHTN reported.

Some parts of Hakim, Haj Kazem, and Zananeh Bazaar Ab-Anbars (cisterns) were in need of restoration, and some rehabilitation works were done on them by the cultural heritage experts and restorers, provincial tourism chief Ehsan Nourani said on Monday.

The restoration projects involved repairing arches, rooftops, façades, tiling as well as replacing some worn-out materials, the official added.

Hakim cistern, which was built in 1829, was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1976. The cistern goes down 36 steps, the capacity of its tank is about 900 cubic meters and its tiling is notable.

Haj Kazem cistern was built in 1841. It has two badgirs (windcatchers) and two marble inscriptions in Nastaliq. The cistern was registered on the National Heritage list in 1972.

Located next to Masjed al-Nabi Mosque and with five badgirs and 10 domes, Zananeh Bazaar cistern was added to the National Heritage list in 1999.

The term Ab-Anbar is common throughout Iran as a designation for roofed underground water cisterns.



It associates with water management systems in arid areas that are reliant on permanent springs or on seasonal rainwater.

Such underground reservoirs or Ab-Anbars are parts of the iconic qanat systems, which rely on snow-fed

streams flowing down from surrounding mountains.

Qanats, according to UNESCO, provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.

Qazvin was once capital the mighty Persian Empire, under Safavids, from 1548 to 98. It is a major tourist destination with a wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct, some quirky museums, and a handful of decent eating options. For most travelers, Qazvin is also primarily the staging point for excursions to the famous Castles of the Assassins and trekking in the sensational Alamut Valley.

Also known as the castle of the Assassins, the 12th-century Alamut castle is nestled on top of a peak. It was once a shelter for the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124) who was a spiritual leader of an Islamic sect. In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book "The Valleys of the Assassins".

Qazvin is also home to one of the biggest roofed caravanserais of the country, Sa'd-al Saltaneh caravanserai. Dating back to the Qajar era, it's a place for discovering tens of Hojreh or shops, cafes, yards, and a stunning mosque. It's a place for visitors who want to experience the culture, culinary, and hospitality of Iran.

House of Rais Ali Delvari in Iran's Bushehr

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Rais Ali Delvari Museum, which was the house of the Iranian freedom fighter, is located in the southeast of city of Delvar from Tangestan County of Bushehr Province.

The building was dedicated to the Cultural Heritage; Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Iran by the inheritors of Rais Ali Delvari. After that; this building; in forty-five kilometers from Bushehr was registered as a national heritage of Iran.

House of Rais Ali Delvari covers an area about four thousand square meters and was built during the final years of Qajar in 1286 SH. White and short walls of this house that are also a symbol of history of Iranian Constitution

Revolution shine brightly under the sunlight of Delvar.

Rais Ali Delvari was born in 1261 SH in Delvar. After the sudden entrance of British forces into Bushehr in 1915; this patriot soldier fought them as the commander of Iranian army in many encounters and for a long time. During only one battle; the Daliran Tangestan (The brave of Tangestan) were able to defeat a British troop of five thousand soldiers. The young commander of Tangestan forces during World War I got caught during a night attack in Tangak Sefer and passed away when he was only thirty-three. His body has been buried in Dar ol-Salam in Najaf.

The doors and windows of the house are

made of wood; and is seen more beautiful in contrast with the white walls. The doorway of the house has two columns with a small marquee. After the entrance gate of the museum; two similar sections are located left and right to it. There is a corridor between these two sections that lead the visitors to the vestibule of the house. There are twenty-three rooms in this house; seven of which has been allocated to documents.

One of the decorations of this building is plaster stuccos and a columned section that contains flower gardens with Palm trees as well as jars and Laleh lights. This museum is also the ethnography museum of Bushehr. The bust of Rais Ali Delvari and other soldiers



of Tangestan; weaponry; some canons; wills; oaths and a collection of old stamps are kept there.

COVID-19 increases PM concentration in Tehran by 20%: study

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The results of a study by Iranian researchers shows that the concentration of particulate matter (PM2.5) as the most important pollutant in Tehran air during the coronavirus outbreak has increased by about 20 percent compared to the same period last year.

The research entitled “Impact of SARS-CoV-2 on Ambient Air Particulate Matter in Tehran”, published in the international journal of Aerosol and Air Quality Research.

The pandemic has indirectly produced both positive and negative effects on the environment, particularly in terms of air quality; the study aimed to determine these effects in the city of Tehran by comparing the ambient PM2.5 and PM10 levels recorded at 22 air quality monitoring stations during the outbreak (20 February–2 April 2020) with those from the corresponding period last year (20 February–3 April 2019).

Contrary to expectation, the average concentrations of both the PM2.5 and the PM10 were markedly higher during the former, increasing by 20.5 percent and 15.7 percent, respectively, for the first month of the outbreak (20 February–19 March 2020) and by 23.5 percent and 20.0 percent for the subsequent Noruz New Year holidays (from late March till early April).

However, it resulted in overall increases of 20.5 percent and 16.5 percent for the entire period.

Because of the significant association between the lethality of COVID-19 and exposure to ambient air pollution, the rise in airborne PM2.5 during this outbreak may increase the mortality rate of the disease.



A national social distancing plan started in Iran on March 28 to stop the spread of the virus, which resulted in a 50 to 90 percent reduction in traffic in cities; it not only did not reduce air pollution during spring, but the capital city is still choking on NOX pollutants during the summer.

■ **Air pollution haunting Tehran in summer**

A national social distancing plan started in Iran on March 28 to stop the spread of the virus, which resulted in a 50 to 90 percent

reduction in traffic in cities; it not only did not reduce air pollution during spring, but the capital city is still choking on NOX pollutants during the summer.

Ozone in the lower atmosphere is formed

by the reaction of sunlight on air containing hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides (NOX) that react to form ozone directly at the source of the pollution namely, cars, industry, gas vapors, chemical solvents, fuel combustion.

According to the statistics published by Air Quality Control Company, the Tehran air quality index (AQI) demonstrated 15 days of excellent air since the beginning of this year (March 21), while during the same period last year, Tehranners breathed 25 days of clean air.

An AQI is used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become.

The index categorizes conditions according to a measure of polluting matters into excellent (0-50), acceptable (51-100), moderately polluted or unhealthy for sensitive groups (101-150), polluted (151-200), heavily polluted (201-300) and severely polluted (301-500).

This is while, last year over the same period 90 days of acceptable quality air reported in the city, while this year it was reported 91 days.

During the aforementioned period last year, 21 days were moderately polluted, which increased to 29 days this year.

Since March 21, polluted air haunted the capital for 2 days which was almost dangerous for all the residents, while last year Tehranners breathed a day of polluted air.

This is while, last year over the same period 42 days were unhealthy for sensitive groups, and Tehranners did not breathe a single day of heavily polluted air. The concentration of other pollutants like PM 2.5 and PM 10 in Tehran also has increased in the first month of spring compared to the same period last year.

The leading cause of air pollution in the capital is PM 2.5, PM 10, and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2).

Iran bans trawling in Persian Gulf

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Department of Environment (DOE) has banned any trawling in the Persian Gulf, ISNA quoted Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy chief of the DOE for marine environment, as saying on Monday.



Trawling is a method of fishing that involves pulling a fishing net through the water behind one or more boats. Trawling can be divided into bottom trawling and midwater trawling, depending on how high the trawl (net) is in the water column.

Although trawling today is heavily regulated in some nations, it raises environmental concerns because of the lack of selectivity and the physical damage which the trawl does to the seabed.

Noting that the trawl fishing method was first carried out in the Persian Gulf about 10 years ago, Lahijanzadeh said that although this fishing method imposes a serious threat to the environment, nevertheless, illegal fishermen and sometimes even legal ones try to carry out the method.

In trawling, the fishing nets have very small holes, which does not allow the small fish to escape, and therefore catches any living creatures in the sea, he lamented.

Referring to the serious threat to marine biodiversity, he said that trawling may generate high income in the short term, but in the long term it will cause irreparable damage to the sea and many fishermen will lose their source of income or face job loss.

Academic co-op key element of Iran-China strategic partnership

➔ He went on to say that the science and technology section of the document was prepared and announced in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Ministry of Health, the Vice Presidency of Science and Technology.

Regarding the expansion of Persian language chairs, he pointed out that in the science and technology section, quantity has not been mentioned, and only general elements were elaborated.

Highlighting that Iran's academic knowledge is powerful, he said that many Iranian talented professors conducted researches and articles which are published in international journals. Therefore, almost every country tends to expand scientific and technological relations with Iran.

Iran and China are negotiating over a long-term cooperation agreement that is yet to be finalized. The cabinet of President Hassan Rouhani approved the draft of the 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan on June 21 and tasked Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif with negotiating with China over the plan in order to finalize it.

Golestan hosting online marriage festival of Iranian tribes

➔ This year, due to the onset of the coronavirus, the festival is held virtually with the presence of 9 tribal groups of the country and with the performance of traditional rituals, folk music, and other cultural programs, he explained.

Khosravi stated that the festival is held in cooperation with 15 NGOs active in fields related to youth.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Slavery insurance claim

(March 31, 2004)
A group of descendants of black American slaves is to begin legal action in New York. They are suing the company that insured the ships which allegedly carried their relatives across the Atlantic to work as slaves. This report from Mark Gregory:
This is a highly unusual case. Lloyds of London, the world's oldest insurance market, is **being sued for alleged complicity** in genocide and the destruction of indigenous communities in Africa two centuries ago.

A group of descendants claims Lloyds **underwriters are liable** to pay **compensation** because they provided insurance cover for ships used to transport millions of slaves to plantations in America. And **to press their claim**, the **descendants** have hired a well known American lawyer, Ed Fagan, who made his name winning compensation for victims of the Nazi Holocaust from Swiss banks. He's currently involved in **high profile** law suits against multi-national companies said to have profited from apartheid in South Africa.

Mr Fagan insisted the claim against Lloyds was **credible** because other communities had managed to win compensation in the courts for wrongs suffered in the distant past. Lloyds, for its part, refused to comment saying they hadn't seen details of the **case** yet. But a spokesman said previous compensation claims relating to slavery had been rejected in the courts.

■ **Words**
being sued: if someone is claiming money from a company in a legal case, the company is being sued
alleged complicity in: supposed involvement in
underwriters: people in an insurance company who agree to pay money to other people if they suffer losses
liable: legally responsible
compensation: money that is paid to someone because something unpleasant has happened to them
to press their claim: to strengthen their demand for compensation
descendants: people in later generations who are related to the slaves are their descendants
high profile: something that attracts a lot of attention
credible: valid, and so may succeed
case: trial that will take place

(Source: BBC)

Vegetable caviar: Quinoa new guest of Iranian cuisine

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — For the past couple of years, Iranian farmers in different provinces have been cultivating Quinoa, a healthy plant which is one of the oldest foods in the world, dating back to 5,000 years ago.

Quinoa's gluten-free seeds are rich in protein, dietary fiber, B vitamins, and dietary minerals in amounts greater than in many grains.

Easy cultivation, low water requirement compared to other plants, resistance to salinity, adaptation to different climatic regions, great properties, good price in the world market, and a short growing period have caused farmers to cultivate this plant.

Quinoa planting time in Iran is early March to the end of April. The product is yielded 3 to 5 tons per hectare.

Despite high protein content, the plant has no gluten at all and is recommended for people who should not consume gluten.

The proteins in quinoa offer a wide range of amino acids, which are vital for supporting muscle development and immune activity in addition to preventing cancer development, among other essential functions.



Unlike other grains, Quinoa has a low blood sugar index and diabetics can use this product safely.

Quinoa has a high fiber content compared to other grains, providing 5.18 g in a single 185 g cup. This equates to at least 15.42 percent of a person's daily requirement, depending on their age and gender.

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, consuming enough fiber can help reduce the risk of several health conditions, including constipation, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diverticulosis.

Diets rich in fiber may also promote a healthy weight. This is because foods high in fiber help people feel fuller for longer, potentially reducing their overall intake of food.

Quinoa provides vitamin E, which is an antioxidant compound that may help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, certain cancers, and several eye disorders.

One cup of cooked quinoa contains 118 mg of magnesium, which is essential for the function of more than 300 enzymatic reactions and is present in every cell of the body.

A cup of quinoa supplies 2.76 mg of iron, adequate iron intake supports healthy connective tissue and muscle metabolism.

It also can help protect against infection, heart disease, diabetes, and several cancers, including those of the skin and liver; It is also a bleeding stopper, toothache relief, treatment of urinary tract infection, and insect repellent.

Huge surge in Amazon fires risks repeat of last year, scientists warn

Brazil's devastating fires in the Amazon have increased by a shocking 28 per cent from just one year ago, the country's National Institute for Space Research has reported.

The agency said it had recorded a total of 6,803 fires in the Amazon rainforest last month, compared to 5,318 in the same month of 2019.

The enormous rise comes ahead of the traditional “fire season” for the region, which begins in August, and there are concerns Brazil could repeat the surge seen in fires in August 2019, when 30,900 fires were recorded by the institute - which represented a 12-year high for the month.

More than 1,000 fires were registered on July 30, the highest number for a single day in July since 2005, according to an analysis by advocacy group Greenpeace Brasil, the Independent reported.

“It's a terrible sign,” Ane Alencar, science director at Brazil's Amazon Environmental Research Institute told Reuters.

“We can expect that August will already be a difficult month and September will be worse yet.” The sharp increase in fires comes amid domestic and international concern over right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro's calls to clear land in Brazil's Amazon to drive economic development.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

Mental health screening scheme to be launched at schools

A scheme to determine the prevalence and incidence of psychiatric disorders in students will be implemented at schools across the country by the next school year (starting on September 23), director for education department at the Ministry of Education has said. Since last year, all students on seventh to ninth grades have undergone the mental health screening, so, we decided to conduct the tests on students on all grades, ISNA quoted Masoud Shokouhi as saying on Saturday. “The scheme will be launched by the beginning of the next school year,” he added.

For the current school year, screening of mental health was carried out in February and the results were presented to consultants for in-school or individual counseling, he said.

There are several types of screening that baseline testing is done by teachers, who record their observations on the system, he explained, adding, in the next step, specialist interventions will take place whether by the school counselor or counseling services outside the schools.

غربالگری «سلامت روان دانش آموزان» کلیه مقاطع تحصیلی از مهرماه

مدیرکل امور تربیتی و مشاوره وزارت آموزش و پرورش، اعلام کرد که از مهرماه آینده غربالگری پایه سلامت روان برای همه دانش آموزان در کلیه مقاطع تحصیلی انجام می‌شود. مسعود شکوهی در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا، افزود: تا سال گذشته همه دانش آموزان پایه هفتم، هشتم و بخشی از دانش آموزان پایه نهم مورد سنجش قرار گرفتند. وی اظهار کرد: غربالگری پایه سلامت روان برای همه دانش آموزان از سال تحصیلی جدید آغاز می‌شود.

مدیرکل امور تربیتی و مشاوره وزارت آموزش و پرورش ادامه داد: برای سال تحصیلی جاری، غربالگری اولیه سلامت روان بهمن ماه سال ۹۷ انجام شد و نتایج آن جهت استفاده مشاورین در برنامه ریزی‌های درون مدرسه‌ای و فردی در اختیارشان قرار گرفت. شکوهی افزود: چند نوع غربالگری داریم که غربالگری پایه توسط معلمان انجام می‌شود و معلمان مشاهدات خود را در سامانه همگان ثبت می‌کنند. در مراحل بعدی در صورت نیاز مداخلات تخصصی از سطح مشاور مدرسه تا هسته‌های مشاوره در سطوح استانی و واحدهای مددکاری در بیرون آموزش و پرورش صورت می‌گیرد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“heli- or helio-”

■ **Meaning:** sun or sunlight
■ **For example:** We have mentioned the newly hatched larv of the barnacle in connection with **heliotropism**.

PHRASAL VERB

Pick on somebody/something

■ **Meaning:** to behave in an unfair way to someone, for example by blaming them or criticizing them unfairly
■ **For example:** Why don't you pick on someone else for a change?

IDIOM

Dance to someone's tune

■ **Explanation:** If you dance to someone's tune, you do whatever that person tells you to do
■ **For example:** He is the company's major shareholder so the management has to dance to his tune.

Yemen Houthis said fighters shot down a U.S.-made drone

Yemen's Houthis claim they shot down a U.S.-made drone over the country's northern border with Saudi Arabia. The kingdom and the U.S. military on Monday did not immediately acknowledge losing a drone.

Brig. Gen. Yehia Sarie, a Houthi military spokesman, said in a statement their air defenses downed an AeroVironment RQ-20 Puma drone Sunday over the district of Harad in Yemen's northern Hajjah province.

Footage later aired by the Houthi's Al-Masirah satellite channel showed fighters gathered around the hand-launched drone, which appeared to have bullet holes in it. The battery-powered drone had a camera, also apparently struck by a bullet.

John Hume, Nobel Peace laureate, dies at 83

John Hume, a key Roman Catholic architect of Northern Ireland's 1998 Good Friday peace agreement who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in ending 30 years of sectarian violence, died on Monday at the age of 83, his SDLP party said.

Hume, a veteran civil rights campaigner credited with kick-starting peace negotiations in a British region convulsed by bloodshed in the early 1990s, shared the Peace Prize with Northern Ireland's then-first minister, David Trimble of the Protestant Ulster Unionist Party, Reuters reported.

Lebanon's foreign minister resigns amid economic crisis

Charbel Wahbe appointed as new foreign minister

→ 1 His decision was also attributed to differences with Diab. Reuters cited sources close to the ministry as saying that the move came after a recent visit by France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, and frustration at being sidelined.

Diab appeared to criticize France's top diplomat for tying any aid to the reforms demanded by the IMF.

Lebanon is facing its worst economic crisis in decades. The Lebanese pound has continued to plummet against the U.S. dollar, losing more than 70 percent of its value over the last months while sources of foreign currency have dried up.

The economic situation is fueling inflation, which the Finance Ministry has estimated will reach 27 percent later this year.

In June, Diab condemned violent street protests, saying they were an attempt by opponents to overthrow his government and deepen the currency crisis.

The protests coincided with the unveiling of the biggest-ever U.S. sanctions package against Iran, which also targets Lebanon.

The 115-page strategy document put together by the Republican Study Committee (RSC), the largest Republican caucus in Congress, called for a halt of all U.S. security assistance to Beirut, claiming that millions of dollars given to Lebanon were being used to aid Hezbollah.

The U.S. gives about \$160 million to the Lebanese armed forces each year.

The Republican document specifically calls for sanctions against Hezbollah allies, mentioning former foreign minister Gibran Bassil and incumbent parliament speaker Nabih Berri by name.

Back in 2016, Saudi Arabia also declared that it was canceling \$4 billion in aid to Beirut, \$3 billion of which was earmarked for the Lebanese army.

Resistance News

Palestinian detainee starts hunger strike in Israeli jail

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— Palestinian detainee Khalil Abu Aram has started an open hunger strike in Ashkelon Prison, the Palestinian Prisoner Society (PPS) said on Monday.

The PPS said that the strike came in response to the Israel Prison Service's deliberate delay in allowing Abu Aram to meet his son Ahmad, who has been imprisoned administratively since September 2019 in Negev Prison.

According to the PPS, this is the only chance Abu Aram, who has been detained since 2002 and is serving a life sentence, could meet his son, whom he has not seen in years and whose release is scheduled for next September.

Abu Aram, a father of five, has been able to produce a number of books and studies during his incarceration years.

Palestinian prisoners usually resort to the open hunger strike when different methods of dialogue with the Israeli occupation authorities fail. Despite the psychological and physical dangers it poses to the life of detainees, it remains their only way to obtain their rights.

Israeli warplanes launch fresh air raids in Gaza Strip

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN**— Israel warplanes have launched new airstrikes against the positions of the Palestinian resistance movement of Hamas in the central parts of the besieged Gaza strip.

The attacks have targeted west of Deir al-Balah city, a report by RT Arabic said.

A military base belonging to Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, has also been hit by three rockets fired from the Israeli warplanes, Israeli media claim.

The sound of several explosions has also been heard from east of Khan Yunis in the south of Gaza Strip, RT reported.

The attacks came shortly after the Israeli military claimed its iron dome air defense system has intercepted a rocket fired from the besieged enclave towards the occupied territories.

The Tel Aviv regime also claimed its forces have clashed with a four-member "terrorist group" laying mines in the occupied territories' borders with Syria in early hours of Monday.

During the clashes, it said, the Israeli military's combat helicopter has opened fire and injured several members of the group.

The Israeli military's northern command center is on standby to counter any scenario, Al Jazeera TV quoted sources in the regime as saying.

Enablers of ISIL Iraq invasion must be held to account: Salih

Iraqi President Barham Salih on Sunday stressed the importance of holding those who helped facilitate the rise of the ISIL (ISIS/ Daesh) terrorist group to account, and called on the Iraqi government and the international community to help Yazidis who have returned to Shingal.

President Salih made the remarks during a conference on the genocide hosted by Yazda, a Yazidi human rights organization, on the eve of the sixth anniversary of the genocide against the community, Rudaw reported.

"Today we remember the tragedy that the Yazidis faced six years ago today at the hands of the criminals of the terrorist organization 'Daesh' after they invaded Sinjar (Shingal) and committed the most brutal crimes," Salih said during his opening speech, using the Arabic acronym for ISIS.

"We stress the importance of holding those accountable who caused the ISIL invasion of Iraqi villages and cities," he added.

Iraqi state-media announced on Saturday the release of Lieutenant Gen. Mahdi al-Gherawi, one of the military officials responsible for the fall of Mosul city to ISIL six years ago. The official was released



after two years in jail after bail was paid for his release.

In the summer of 2014, ISIL extremists swept across swathes of Syria and Iraq. In August that year, they attacked the Yazidi homeland of Shingal in Nineveh province, committing genocide against the ethno-religious minority. Hundreds of thousands of Yazidis fled from the militants, but not

everyone escaped. More than 1,000 were killed or and 6,417 were captured by the militants, with women and children sold into sexual slavery.

As of this month, 3,530 Yazidis have been rescued or escaped ISIL, and 2,887 are still missing, according to the Kurdistan Regional Government's office documenting the genocide.

Afghan forces besiege jail seized by ISIL, hundreds of prisoners missing

Afghan security forces laid siege to a prison seized by ISIL (Daesh) Terrorist group fighters in the eastern city of Jalalabad on Monday, with at least 29 people killed after the militants' overnight assault led to a mass jailbreak.

More than 300 prisoners were at large, Attaullah Khugyani, spokesman for the governor of Nangarhar province, said. Of the 1,793 prisoners, more than 1,025 had tried to escape and been recaptured and 430 had remained inside.

"The rest are missing," he said.

After detonating a car bomb at the entrance on Sunday evening, IS gunmen overran the prison where many IS militants captured during a campaign in the past month were being held, along with Taliban fighters and common criminals.

Mohammad Idres, one of the prisoners trapped inside and contacted by cellphone, said he could see could around four bodies on the ground outside.

"We are very hungry, it's very hot and we don't have water," he told Reuters.

"Sometimes it is quiet and then firing starts," he said. "The security forces cannot seem to advance because the



attackers hold strategic points, including the watchtowers." IS claimed responsibility for the attack, which came a day after the Afghan intelligence agency said special forces had

killed a senior IS commander near Jalalabad, the provincial capital of Nangarhar.

According to Reuters, officials said Afghan Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen Yasin Zia arrived on Monday to oversee the operation, involving special forces, to clear the IS fighters holed up inside the prison.

Khugyani said civilians, prisoners and members of security forces were among the 29 dead and more than 50 wounded.

"Eight gunmen were killed as some areas, where the attackers had taken positions, were cleared," he said.

As the siege dragged through the day, the normally bustling city was placed under a curfew.

"Jalalabad is completely empty," Qaderi said.

Some 130 km (80 miles) east of Kabul, Jalalabad lies on the highway leading to the Khyber Pass and the Pakistani city of Peshawar.

A United Nations report last month estimated there are around 2,200 IS members in Afghanistan, and that while the group has lost territory and its leadership has been depleted, it remains capable of carrying out high-profile attacks.

EU eyes softening key state aid demand in Brexit talks

The European Union is willing to compromise to help break a deadlock in Brexit talks by softening its demand that Britain heed EU rules on state aid in the future, diplomatic sources told Reuters.

They said Brussels could go for a compromise entailing a dispute-settling mechanism on any state aid granted by the UK to its companies in the future, rather than obliging London to follow the bloc's own rules from the outset.

Provisions to ensure fair competition pose the biggest stumbling block in the troubled talks aimed at sealing a new trade accord from 2021 following Britain's exit from the EU in January after 46 years of membership,

Reuters reported.

The 27 EU countries have long demanded so-called "level playing field" guarantees from Britain if it wants to continue selling goods freely in the bloc's lucrative single market of 450 million people - after Britain's standstill transition period following Brexit expires at the end of this year.

Without an agreement, trade and financial ties between the world's fifth largest economy and its biggest trading bloc would collapse overnight, likely spreading havoc among markets, businesses and people.

But Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government refuses to be bound by EU state aid rules, environmental standards or labour



laws, saying the essence of Brexit was to let Britain decide alone on its own regulations.

Both sides still say they hope to avoid the most economically damaging "no-deal" rupture.

"The room for compromise lies in some-

thing that will let the UK decide on its own since 'regaining sovereignty' is such a big Brexit thing," said a EU diplomat close to the Brexit talks.

"We would reserve the right to decide on any consequences vis-à-vis access to the single market for UK companies as a result."

Another diplomatic source said such a dispute resolution mechanism could be a way to overcome the impasse.

A third diplomat, also speaking on condition of anonymity, acknowledged the EU was ready to ease its earlier demands that Britain agree to a "dynamic alignment" of its competition rules in the future with the bloc's own.

There may never be a 'silver bullet' for COVID-19, WHO warns

The World Health Organization warned Monday that, despite strong hopes for a vaccine, there might never be a "silver bullet" for COVID-19, and the road to normality would be long.

More than 18.14 million people around the world are reported to have been infected with the disease and 688,080 have died, according to a Reuters tally, Daily Star reported.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and WHO emergencies head Mike Ryan exhorted all nations to rigorously enforce health measures such as mask-wearing, social distancing, hand-washing and testing.

"The message to people and governments is clear: 'Do it all'," Tedros told a virtual news briefing from the UN body's headquarters in Geneva. He said face masks should become a symbol of solidarity round the world.

"A number of vaccines are now in phase three clini-

cal trials and we all hope to have a number of effective vaccines that can help prevent people from infection. However, there's no silver bullet at the moment - and there might never be."

Ryan said countries with high transmission rates, including Brazil and India, needed to brace for a big battle: "The way out is long and requires a sustained commitment."

The WHO officials said an advance investigative team in China, where the virus originated, was not yet back.

A larger, WHO-led team of Chinese and international experts is planned next to study the origins of the virus in the city of Wuhan, although the timing and composition of that is not yet clear.

Tedros also urged mothers to continue breastfeeding even if they had COVID-19, as the benefits "substantially" outweighed the risks of infection.



'Germany, France to end dependence on U.S. in arms production'

Germany and France have reportedly decided to end their dependence on U.S. technology in arms production and to produce fully European-made military hardware, amid a strain in transatlantic relations.

According to a report by German Newspaper Welt am Sonntag, the push to drop American technology is driven by the desire to be able to freely export military hardware to any third party that Germany and France find fit.

Currently, U.S. law prevents the provision of hardware consisting of sensitive American technology from export by the United States' European partners to certain other countries. Under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), the U.S. maintains control over any equipment using its technology and can therefore block arms exports.

The decision to produce fully European-made products will also help maintain sensitive European data inside Europe.

Welt am Sonntag said that with the new decision, arms manufacturers in France and

Germany would phase out U.S. technology in helicopter construction, make a new assault rifle for the German military, and build a new fighter jet under a joint program.

"Without ITAR and other U.S. regulatory systems, Europe gets more freedom in who to supply with military products," the newspaper quoted Florent Chauvancy, the sales director of the Helicopter Engines Department of the French manufacturer Safran, as saying.

"One of the advantages of 100-percent European-made products is that these enterprises' data remains in Europe and does not fall into the hands of non-European countries," Chauvancy added.

The report comes as Washington is pulling out some 12,000 troops from Germany in a move that Berlin says will weaken the NATO military alliance.

U.S. President Donald Trump has described the pullout as a punishment for Germany over failing to meet NATO's defense spending target. Trump announced his plan for the withdrawal last month.



Alexander Nouri denies Esteghlal link

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — German-Iranian coach Alexander Nouri has said that he has received unofficial offers from several Iranian clubs like Persepolis and Tractor in previous years but, contrary to recent rumors, Esteghlal club have not made an offer for him.

Nouri, 40, is a retired footballer and current coach. He played professionally for 14 years with several clubs such as Werder Bremen and, among others, Seattle Sounders.

“My father is an Iranian native who was born in Rasht, and my mother is German. I have been to Iran three times so far, and I love the Persian language,” Nouri said in an interview with Radio Tehran.

After working at German club VfB Oldenburg as an assistant coach and then head coach, he was appointed as the head coach of the first team of Bundesliga side Werder Bremen in 2016.

In 2020, Alex was assistant coach of the German legend, Jurgen Klinsmann, at Hertha BSC and then replaced him on an interim basis.

“I have a friendly relationship with



Klinsmann, and we talk a lot with each other during these days that are affected by coronavirus pandemic. We worked together at Hertha BSC,” he said.

In recent years, Alexander Nouri has always been one of the candidates to sit on the bench of the prominent Iranian teams and even Iran national team. However, no

Iranian team have never reached an agreement with coach so far.

The young German coach emphasizes that he would like to sit on the bench of the Iranian national team one day.

“So far, no negotiation has been made with me to lead the Iranian national team, and it seems that my name has just been suggested as one of the candidates. I will be happy if this happens, but I believe that everything must happen at the right time,” he confirmed.

Nouri also clarified that he had been contacted for coaching in some IPL clubs.

“Tractor and Persepolis were the clubs that contacted me in the past. I talked to them, but the negotiations were not serious, and I was not officially offered by these clubs,” said Nouri.

In recent weeks, after some poor results of Esteghlal, local media reported that Nouri will replace Farhad Majidi as the next head coach of the Blues.

“It’s not true, and no one has contacted me in recent weeks. I have not negotiated with Esteghlal Club. I wish the current technical staff of this team the best,” he reacted.

Mes Rafsanjan promoted to Iran Professional League

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Mes Rafsanjan football team promoted to Iran Professional League (IPL) for the first time ever on Sunday.

Mes defeated Fajr Sepasi 1-0, thanks to Hamid Golzari’s 80th-minute goal and gained promotion to IPL with two games to go.

One of Mes Kerman, Aluminium Arak and Khooshe Talaei Savah teams have also the chance of promotion to Iran Professional League.

Mes Rafsanjan Football Club, founded in 1997, owned by the National Mes Company.

Two IPL teams will be relegated from the competition.

“I would like to thank my players, coaching staff and the fans who sup-



ported us to secure promotion to Iran Professional League. We worked hard and deservedly promoted to the IPL. I am so happy because we made our fans happy,” Mes Rafsanjan coach Mohammad Rabiei said.

Ex-Iran wrestler Navaei passes away

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Iran freestyle wrestler Mohammadreza Navaei died on Monday.

Navaei passed away at the age of 72 in his homeland Tehran.

Navaei claimed two bronze medals at the 1973 World Wrestling Championships and 1974 Asian Games in 62kg weight class.

He also represented Iran at the 1976 Summer Olympics.

Navaei headed Iran wrestling team in 1988 Summer Olympics and served as assistant coach at the 1992 Olympics.

He coached Iran at the 1990, 1991, 1993 and 1994 World Wrestling Championships and headed Indonesia at the 1978 World Wrestling Championships as well.



Iran’s sports society has lost an encyclopedia of wrestling.

Navaei will be laid to rest in Tehran’s Behesht-eZahra Cemetery on Tuesday.

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to Navaei’s family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Treble within Al Hilal’s reach, says Lucescu

Al Hilal SFC are determined to continue from where they left off as the reigning AFC Champions League holders get set for the resumption of the Saudi Pro League on Wednesday.

Al Hilal held a six-point lead at the top of the Saudi Pro League when the tournament was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and head coach Razvan Lucescu said his team are geared up to seal the title for a record-extending 16th time.

With eight matches remaining, Al Hilal resume their campaign with an enticing home clash against defending champions Al Nassr on Wednesday.

“We start the second phase of the season as the champions of Asia, leading the league table with six points and we are in the semi-finals of the King’s Cup,” said Lucescu. “All of this will give us more confidence and determination.”

A tight calendar awaits as the Saudi Pro League is scheduled to end on September 10 with Al Hilal to resume their defense of the AFC Champions League four days later.

“We have trained with huge motivation and determination,” said Lucescu. “We are used to playing matches with the same schedule and we are used to pressure so we know how to deal with this situation.”



Lucescu said the target is not just to win the Saudi Pro League title as he wants Al Hilal to defend the AFC Champions League and win the King’s Cup, with the last of their eight triumphs coming in 2017.

Al Hilal kicked off their defense of the AFC Champions

League with wins over Islamic Republic of Iran’s Shahr Khodro FC and UAE’s Shabab Al Ahli Dubai and are scheduled to face Uzbekistan’s Pakhtakor in a top-of-the-table clash at home on September 14.

They face Abha in the King’s Cup semi-final, with the date to be determined.

“We are in a good position in all the tournaments and this should motivate the players to aim for all the titles,” said the 51-year-old Lucescu.

However, the Romanian said Al Hilal will take each match as it comes as there is still a lot to do.

“We will start the league with the same level as all the other teams who stopped playing for about four months due to COVID-19.”

“We have to play matches strongly to win the league. The competition will not end after our next match so all the remaining matches are important.

“However, we have great enthusiasm and I’m very confident about the players’ abilities.

“I know the history of Al Hilal very well and we can win several titles this season.”

(Source: the-afc)

Players sent off for deliberately coughing at referees

Footballers who deliberately cough at opponents or referees can be shown red or yellow cards under new guidelines issued by England’s Football Association (FA) amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The instructions to referees taking charge of games when coronavirus restrictions are

in place will come into force immediately and be applied at all levels of the game.

The FA document for referees said action should be taken when “the referee is certain someone deliberately, and from close range, coughed into the face of an opponent or match official.”

It also said that the offence would fall under the category of “using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures.”

“If the incident was not severe enough to merit a sending-off, a caution could be issued for ‘unsporting behavior -- shows a

lack of respect for the game.”

The document added that referees must not look to punish “routine” coughing and should remind players to avoid spitting on the ground, although it is not an act of misconduct.

(Source: ESPN)

From Cape Town to Iran, Patosi still dreams of playing for Pirates

Bafana Bafana midfielder Ayanda Patosi has disclosed his dream of playing for Orlando Pirates, the club he has supported since his childhood.

The 27-year-old is currently on loan at Iranian club Foolad until the end of the season but is contracted to Cape Town City FC.

In an interview with the South African Football Journalists Association (Saffa), Patosi didn’t hide the fact that he still entertains hopes of donning the famous black and white jersey of Pirates.

“At the moment I’m contracted to Cape Town City and I’m here on loan. We are in negotiations with Cape Town City to make my deal a permanent one, but I would really love to play for the top three in South Africa. Pirates would be my preference because I grew up supporting the team,” Patosi said.

There is no doubt that Patosi is one of the most talented South African footballers but he has nevertheless been missing in the Bafana set-up for some time.

“With regards to Bafana, it is up to the people that are involved (in the team selection),” said Patosi.

“When (former Bafana) coach Stuart Baxter selected the Afcon team, I was doing well, scoring goals left, right

and center, but I was overlooked. They didn’t even call me to come for training ahead of the tournament.

I thought I was going to be called in the list of 30 players (later trimmed to 23 for the tournament) as a South African that was doing well abroad, but it didn’t happen,” lamented Patosi.

The Cape marksman rose to prominence for the senior national men’s team back in 2012. He has since achieved 12 international caps and has netted three goals for his country.

“It is up to those in charge whether they like my style or not. If they like your style, you will get more caps,” Patosi continued.

“I don’t know if they do watch all the overseas players - I’m not sure how it works.

“At the moment, I’m doing my best where I am. Hopefully the new coach (Molefi Ntseki) can give me a chance, even if it is for training so that he can see if he likes me or not because it feels like no one is watching me. Every time they select a squad I’m looking (that my name will be there). The best way is to keep on working hard.”

Iran is not a prominent footballing nation but the



game there is financially stable.

“The dollar is good this side but mine is not that big,” Patosi chuckled. “It is good... I’m not getting a big salary but, yes, I’m here because of money. We play football to take care of our families.”

(Source: iol.co.za)

Tokyo 2020 sitting volleyball competition schedule confirmed

The Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games has confirmed the men’s and women’s sitting volleyball competition schedule for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games that will be held at the Makuhari Messe Hall A from August 27 to September 5, 2021.

Sitting volleyball is among the most popular events that have been scheduled at family-friendly times to allow as many people as possible to experience them.

The men’s and women’s preliminary round will be held from August 27-September 1, 2021. The first four days of the preliminary round will feature both men’s and women’s events, followed by a full day of the men’s event on August 31 and a full day of the women’s event on September 1.

The men’s classification and semifinal matches will be on September 2, while the women’s classification and final four will be on September 3.

The women’s bronze medal match and the men’s medal matches are scheduled on September 4, and women’s gold medal match will be one of the highlight events on the closing day of the Paralympic Games on September 5.

Iran are the most decorated team in the Paralympics with six gold medals.

(Source: worldparavolley.org)

Haji Safi hopes Iran’s return to heyday under Skocic

MNA — Iran national football team left-back Ehsan Haji Safi hopes that Dragan Skocic could revitalize the team in the path to 2022 World Cup.

In an interview with the Iranian Football Federation’s magazine, Haji Safi, who has played for Iran in two World Cup and three AFC Asian Championship events, expressed hope that Iran qualify for the prestigious event.

“I hope that Iran would return to their heyday with Skocic. The condition in the group stage is very tough. I hope that our conditions would improve and we would advance to the next round and win the World Cup quota like previous editions,” he said, highlighting “Wait for us in the World Cup.”

The Croatian Skocic took the reins at Iran in February after parting company with Iranian top-flight team Sanat Naft. He replaced Belgian Marc Wilmots who had failed to obtain good results and had problems with the Iranian federation regarding payment issues. Skocic’s appointment had brought some backlash as some fans and experts believed that he may not be capable of managing the Team as he has no experience in national teams. Meanwhile, others believe that his experience as a coach in an Iranian club and his familiarity with the country can lead to his success.

Iran are third in Group C, five points behind Iraq, and must win their four matches to qualify for the 2022 World Cup qualification next stage. The matches have been postponed to October and November because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Hadipour secure position in World Taekwondo ranking

IRNA — Iranian taekwondo fighter Armin Hadipour has secured his 5th position in the recent World Taekwondo ranking list.

Speaking to IRNA, head of Gilan taekwondo committee Mohsen Setorgi said based on World Taekwondo Federation’s recent Olympic ranking list, Hadipour is still standing on the 5th position.

He added that Iranian taekwondoka in the weight category of – 58 kg and with 270.38 points ranks 5th in the world.

He said that South Korea, Italy, South Korea and Spain ranked 1st to 4th respectively.

Earlier, International University Sports Federation (FISU) named Iranian karate fighter Armin Hadipour as the best athlete of the decade, according to the head of the karate committee of Gilan Province.

Hadipour has secured a quota for Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

He was one of the Iranian four-member team that had participated in the 2019 World Taekwondo Grand Prix in Moscow, and managed to get an Olympics quota by reaching the semifinals.

Criminal proceedings against Infantino grotesque and absurd, says FIFA

BERN (Reuters) — Global soccer body FIFA has described the decision by Swiss authorities to open criminal proceedings against its president Gianni Infantino last week as grotesque and absurd.

Swiss authorities said on Thursday that proceedings had been launched against the current FIFA boss by a special prosecutor looking into meetings he had with Swiss Attorney General Michael Lauber. Lauber and Infantino have already denied wrongdoing. “There is no factual basis whatsoever for this criminal investigation,” FIFA deputy general secretary Alasdair Bell told a news conference held by video on Monday.

“There is no description of criminal conduct of any kind that has been communicated to FIFA. There is something a little grotesque and unfair in all this because we are 100% confident there will never be a criminal charge against the FIFA president,” he added.

“But we have a situation where, objectively, there is damage to both FIFA and the FIFA president simply because of the existence of this criminal investigation.”

The AB-BA watchdog, which oversees the Attorney General’s office (OAG), said Thursday that special prosecutor Stefan Keller had found indications of criminal conduct related to their meetings. Keller was appointed in June to review complaints against the two men and others.

The proceedings concerned abuse of public office, breach of official secrecy, assisting offenders and “incitement to these acts,” it said.

“If someone opens a criminal investigation there needs to be a good reason and we don’t have any reasons,” said Bell. “We have some anonymous complaints but we don’t know who made them.”

FIFA said that, at the time of the meetings held in 2016 and 2017, the OAG was conducting investigations in more than 20 cases related to a scandal in which FIFA became embroiled before Infantino was elected president in 2016.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

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» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com

» Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79

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No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran

P.O. Box: 14155-4843

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The world is a road for going to the next one, and if it had been created for itself, man would have lived eternally in it.
Imam Ali (AS)

Georgian scholar Murman Tavdishvili novelizes life story of Persian poet Ferdowsi

→1 Tavdishvili has written the book based on the real-life of Ferdowsi, however, in some parts, he let his imaginations fly across the social and cultural atmosphere dominating Iran a thousand years ago to embellish his story on the icon of classical Persian literature.

The book also provides the readers with a window into a part of Iranian history and also gives a deep insight into the cultural affinities between Iran and Georgia.

Persian literati believe that the Shahnameh (Book of Kings) can be considered as a preserving force for keeping the culture and customs of the Iranian people alive.

In a verse from the book, Ferdowsi wrote, "I toiled much over thirty years, by the Persian language I remade Iran." It refers to the fact that Ferdowsi spent 30 years writing the Shahnameh over a millennium ago.

Tajik writer Satim Ulugzada has previously authored the novel "Firdavsi" on Ferdowsi.

A Persian translation of the novel by Mohammadreza Marashipur has recently been published by the Nilufar publishing house in Tehran.

Taiwanese festival picks Bahman Kiarostami's "Exodus"

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Bahman Kiarostami's documentary "Exodus" will go on screen in the Taiwan International Human Rights Film Festival, Iran's Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) announced on Monday.

Films from Hong Kong, Austria, France, Denmark, Germany and dozens of other countries will be competing in the festival which will be held online during September.



A scene from Bahman Kiarostami's documentary "Exodus".

"Exodus" surveys the impacts of the deep recession facing Iran following the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal on the return of undocumented Afghan migrants from the country.

According to a recent report published by the International Organization for Migration, 13,644 undocumented Afghans spontaneously returned or were deported from Iran through the Milak (Nimroz) and Herat (Islam Qala) border crossings from December 2 to 8, 2018.

Afghan migrants are usually employed to do the difficult jobs from which Iranians shrink.

Reading an article about the Imam Reza Immigration Center, a Tehran-based organization that registers those undocumented Afghan migrants who want to return their homeland, also pushed Kiarostami to make the documentary at the center.

"Thousands of Afghans were interviewed at the center every day and we were not allowed to have any control over the conditions at all, and the questions were those asked by the center's agents," he said.

"As the director of the documentary, I had minimal intervention in the inquiries made during the shooting," he noted.

It seems that the investigative process at the center turns into an inquisition. "They were asked a lot of questions from their identities to personal and religious issues," Kiarostami stated.

Kiarostami views the documentary typically as a sequel to his books "Photo Riahi" and "Golshahr".

Bahman, a son of the celebrated filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, said that he was inspired by his father in making "Exodus". "The film owes a debt to Abbas Kiarostami's 'Homework' and 'First Graders'."

Kashan named capital of Nahj-ul-Balaghah of Imam Ali (AS)

C U L T U R E **TEHRAN** — The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has selected the central Iranian city of Kashan, famous for its rosewater and historical monuments, as the capital of the Nahj-ul-Balaghah of Imam Ali (AS).

The choice will be officially announced by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi next week, Deputy Culture Minister Abdolhadi Feqhizadeh said on Monday.

"We hope a series of important and positive events in the religious-cultural arena will begin after Kashan has been named the capital of the Nahj-ul-Balaghah," he said.

The Nahj-ul-Balaghah (The Peak of Eloquence) was compiled by Seyyed Razi (d. 1015). It has been translated into many languages, including English, French, Russian and Spanish.

"Kashan enjoys a rich cultural and scientific background and Allameh Qutbeddin Rawandi, as an eminent commentator of the Nahj-ul-Balaghah, was from Kashan. In addition, the city has been home to one of the most influential cultural institutes of the Quran, as well



A view of the Borujerdi House in Kashan.

Pakistani publisher acquires rights to "Kiss the Lovely Face of God"

Literary Agency in Tehran, the agency announced on Monday.

The translator of the book is Ahmad Shahriar, a Pakistani poet residing in Iran.

"Kiss the Lovely Face of God" is about Yunes Ferdows, a student of sociology who poses questions about man and his faith in God, creation, and the paradoxical relationship between wisdom and emotions.

The original version of "Kiss the Lovely Face of God" has so far been republished for over 90 times and about 250,000 copies have been sold.

The book has previously been translated into English, Italian, Russian, Indonesian, Arabic and several other languages.

In February 2012, Mastur voiced his objection to the title of Homayun Asadian's drama "Kissing the Moon-Like Face" due to its similarity to the title of his novel "Kiss the Lovely Face of God" in its Persian expression.

"The media and readers of my works have asked me about the relation between the film and my novel 'Kiss the Lovely Face of God' that was published about ten years ago," Mastur said.

"I deny any relation between the film and my novel and, in an optimistic view, naming the film as such is an abuse of my novel in order to draw people into the cinema," he added.

"Due to the atmosphere [of chaos] dominating in the Iranian cultural field, particularly the Iranian cinema, it is not surprising, but it is shameful," he stated.

Mastur said, "Such is the type of treatment our literature receives from the cinema. It is rooted in our improper cultural traditions, and is the result of the lack of cultural development and disregard for the rights of others."

"Thus, these improper traditions cannot be improved by means of some specific articles, provisions and bylaws," he noted.

Polish embassy expresses sympathy over filmmaker Sinai's death

C U L T U R E **TEHRAN** — The Embassy of Poland in Tehran has expressed sympathy over the death of the celebrated Iranian filmmaker Khosro Sinai who died from COVID-19 on Saturday.

On its Twitter, the embassy pointed to the 1983 acclaimed documentary "The Lost Requiem", for which Sinai was honored with the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland in 2008.

The film was about the story of the wartime exodus to Iran of thousands of Polish citizens after being released from the Soviet labor



Cover of a DVD copy of Khosro Sinai's documentary "The Lost Requiem".

camp of Siberia during World War II.

In a letter published on Monday, President Hassan Rouhani also extended his condolences over the death of Sinai.

"With his attachment to the national and Islamic culture and his deep understanding of social concerns during his professional life, this artist made honorable social documentaries and left an eternal profile," he wrote.

Sinai made many documentaries, including "The Melody Which an Antique Hears", "Beyond the Clamor", "The Coldness

of Iron", "Haj Mosavvar al-Maleki" and "Hossein Yavari".

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

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

Historical Museum of Belarus ready to expand ties with Iran: envoy

C U L T U R E **TEHRAN** — Iran's cultural attaché in Belarus Abolqasem Mokhtarian has said that the National Historical Museum of the Republic of Belarus is willing to expand cultural relations with Iran.

He made the remarks in his meeting with the managing director of the museum, Pavel Sapotko.

In his recent visit to the museum, Mokhtarian held talks with Sapotko and discussed bilateral cultural cooperation between the two countries.

"The museum of history in any country preserves the national identity of that country, and the great and noble men of each nation make up the historical roots of the nations. Great personalities like Persian poet Ferdowsi and Belarusian book printer Francis Skaryna are the individuals whose influences are still clear in the world of today," he said.

He also said that cooperation between the museums of the two countries goes back to the agreements signed earlier



A view of the National Historical Museum of the Republic of Belarus.

Six docs shortlisted for Hafez Awards

A R T **TEHRAN** — Six documentaries are competing in the 20th edition of the Hafez Awards as the organizers announced the nominees for this category on Monday.

The Hafez Awards, Iran's first and only private awards in the film industry and TV productions, will be held online this year due to the pandemic.

"Mysteries of the Lake" by Armin Isarian, a documentary about Takht-e Soleiman, an ancient site located in northwestern Iran and its mysterious lake, is one of the nominees.

The documentary is bound with secrets, myths and legends partly left from real historical events and partly made by the creative minds of the locals. The depth of water has kept the lake out of reach, making the secrets and mysteries even more enigmatic. The bottom of this mysterious lake is untouched because of its poisonous water and mountainous location.

Reza Farahmand's acclaimed documentary "Women with Gunpowder Earrings" has also received a nomination.

The film produced at Iran's Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), is about Noor, a young Iraqi female journalist, who finds herself and her camera on the frontline of the Iraqi army's move into Daesh territory. She evocatively reveals the painful stories of women and children from Daesh families. But when she begins to question the treatment of them by the Iraqi army Noor soon becomes part of the story.

"All That's Missing" by Zeinab Tabrizi has also been shortlisted.

The documentary is about Mahnaz and Jamileh, both of whom are diagnosed with breast cancer. After a long battle with the disease, Mahnaz passes away, while Jamileh fully recovers. Jamileh begins to attend charities and other breast cancer awareness efforts, while Mahnaz narrates the movie along with Jamileh's struggles.

Also included are Babak Behdad's "Baharesan, the House of the Nation" that explores the formation of parliament in the country, Mohammad-Hossein Heidari's "Mahin" about a series of murders by a woman named Mahin, and Mina Akbari's "Former Javanan Square" about a group of Iranian journalists.

According to the director of the celebration, Omid Moallem, the awards event will experience its 20th edition this year where COVID19 has overshadowed many cinematic events in the world leading to the shutdown of movie theaters and festivals.

"The Hafez Awards is no exception and we decided not to cancel the program, but rather to hold it online and announce the nominees and the winners in an online program," he had said.

He had hoped that with the collaboration of people and the cineastes, an online celebration would be held.

"We will probably have some changes in



A scene from "The Mysteries of the Lake" by Armin Isarian.

the nominations and the awards, which will be announced later. The health of people and cineastes is our main concern while we also care about preserving the excitement and happiness, which have always been felt in this celebration and take it to the virtual world this time," he had noted.

The awards are organized every year by the Persian cinematic monthly Donya-ye Tasvir (Picture World).