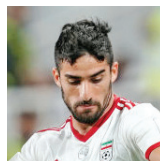




**Iranian ambassador calls for aerospace cooperation with China** **3**



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## Revenging Gen. Soleimani's blood has turned into a cause



*The Museum of General Qasem Soleimani was unveiled in a ceremony on Tuesday, August 4 in Tehran. The event was attended by senior military commanders from the IRGC and Army.*

See page 2

## Capital market provides \$23.8b of financing in 4 months

**TEHRAN** — The head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) announced that the capital market has provided one quadrillion rials (about \$23.809 billion) of financing during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21).

Hassan Qalibaf-Asl said that the figure is over three times more than that of the same period of time in the past year, Tasnim news agency reported.

"Our plan is that the prosperity in the

secondary market, which is the capital market, will be led toward the primary market and production sector", the official noted.

Qalibaf-Asl had previously announced that the amount of liquidity absorbed by the capital market reached 500 trillion rials (about \$12 billion) during the first quarter of the current year (March 20-June 20), while the total amount of liquidity entered into this market stood at 300 trillion rials (about \$7.14 billion) during the past year. **→4**

## Some 3,700 exceptional Afghan students studying in Iran

**TEHRAN** — Some 3,700 exceptional Afghan students are studying in Iranian schools, an official with the Ministry of education has said.

These students are treated the same as Iranian students and are provided with educational, rehabilitation, and physical training services, ISNA quoted Javad Hosseini as saying on Tuesday.

There are around 1,600 schools in Iran special for exceptional students, offering services to more than 82,000 students, he explained.

Last year, Mahmood Abbasi, secretary general of the national commission on children's rights, said about 500,000 Afghan students are studying in Iranian schools free of charge. **→9**

## Resistance festival receives over 370 submissions to "Health Defenders" category

**TEHRAN** — The Resistance International Film Festival has so far received 372 submissions from around the world to "Health Defenders", the organizers announced on Tuesday.

The festival initiated the category in collaboration with the Health Ministry in honor of the medical workers on the front lines of the campaign against COVID-19.

Films focusing on the endeavors health workers have made during the pandemic will be competing in this section.

Most of the submissions are from filmmakers from the U.S., Brazil and Spain.

An exhibition of photos and posters on the medical workers will be also organized on the sidelines of the festival, which will take place in Tehran from September 21 to 27. **→12**



### ARTICLE

**Salman Parviz**  
Journalist

## Foreign media reactions on Sino-Iran partnership

As the strategic Iran-China 25-year partnership moves from a leaked 18-page document in Farsi towards a full and final agreement, the deal has been a topic of debate and closely watched by foreign media analysts.

As Washington is mulling how not to punish China for violating Hong Kong's autonomy law, the global economy holding its breath over any possible thaw in the trade war. The Sino-Iran geopolitical and economic partnership plan will prove to be another thorn in the way of normalizing U.S.-China ties.

Any kind of easing of U.S. ties with Iran seems to be out of the question despite the looming November 3rd U.S. elections with contenders holding different positions on Iran. China Radio International published a report on Friday on the message of the IRGC drills, codenamed Payambar Azam 14 (Great Prophet 14), to America, saying: "You are under range of Iranian missiles, while some outlets describe the drills as 'Iran's military bragging'."

In the middle of heightened tensions between U.S. and what media outlets are referring to as "Iran-China axis", here's a look at some of the headlines and analyses of some of the foreign media outlets:

**■ The New York Times, August 2: Iran will expand nuclear program and won't talk to U.S.**

In a televised speech, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said that negotiating with Washington over Iran's nuclear program would only help Trump get re-elected. That was Trump's reason for suggesting such talks in the first place, the Leader said.

"This old man who is in charge in America apparently used negotiations with North Korea as propaganda," the Leader was quoted as saying, referring to Washington's oldest president in history.

The newspaper pointed that the Leader directed his closest economic advisers to cement a 25-year military and economic partnership with China. Quoting Ayatollah Khamenei who said European countries involved with the nuclear deal were unreliable, and that their attempt to salvage the pact — such as creating a secure financial channel (INSTEX) so that Iran could maintain a limited amount of trade — were "useless games". **→7**

## New world order in 21st century: Iran, Russia and China are forming new bloc in the East

**TEHRAN** — Defying U.S. unilateral sanctions, Iran, Russia and China are increasingly expanding their economic and political ties in a way that could lead to the formation of a new politico-economic bloc, former diplomats tell the Tehran Times.

Iran and Russia are in the process of upgrading an old bilateral treaty that could raise their cooperation in many fields to a strategic level. During his latest visit to Russia, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif discussed the issue in detail with high-ranking Russian officials including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

The treaty in question is nothing new. It was signed in Moscow between Iran and Russia on 12 March, 2001. The treaty, officially known as the Treaty of the Foundation of Mutual Relations and the Principles of Cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation Act, was initially signed for a period of 10

years. However, according to the terms of the treaty if neither party notifies the other party in black and white of its intention to terminate the treaty at least one year before its expiration, it will be automatically extended for a further period of five years. Accordingly, the treaty has been extended twice, and it's scheduled to expire in next March.

"The treaty was signed for a period of 10 years and it has been extended twice. It will be 20 years old in eight months from now. This treaty belongs to another period of international relations and our relations with Russia. We have agreed with Putin to review the treaty," Zarif said at the end of his visit to Moscow, which took place on July 21, adding that he held talks with the Russian officials for more than 4 hours, including an hour-long phone conversation with Putin, which Zarif himself described it as "very fruitful." **→2**

## U.S. protests: Teachers protest across U.S.

*By staff & agencies*

Teachers and support staff at more than 35 school districts across the United States on Monday are protesting against the reopening of schools while COVID-19 is surging in many parts of the country.

They are demanding in-person classes not be held until scientific data supports it, safety protocols such as lower class sizes and virus testing are established, and schools are staffed with adequate numbers of counsellors and nurses, according to a website set up for the demonstrations, al Jazeera reported.

On Twitter, the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association showed protesters making fake gravestones that said "Here lies a third-grade student from Green Bay who caught COVID at school" and "RIP Grandma caught COVID helping grand

kids with homework".

Teachers are also demanding financial help for parents in need, including rent and mortgage assistance, a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures, and cash assistance.

Many of these issues are at the centre of a political tussle in Washington, where Congressional Democrats and Trump administration officials will resume talks on Monday aimed at hammering out a coronavirus economic relief bill after missing a deadline to extend benefits to tens of millions of jobless Americans.

The coronavirus, first recorded in China in December, has infected 4.6 million people in the US and killed more than 155,000 Americans since February. Deaths rose by over 25,000 in July and cases doubled in 19 states during the month. **→10**

## China vows retaliation if any U.S. action against journalists

China vowed on Tuesday to retaliate if the United States persisted with "hostile action" against Chinese journalists who may be forced to leave in coming days if their U.S. visas are not extended.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters at a daily briefing that no Chinese journalist in the United States had been granted a visa extension since the United States, on May 11, limited their stay to 90 days, with an option to extend, Reuters reported.

"The U.S. has been escalating its actions against Chinese journalists," Wang told reporters. "The U.S. should immediately correct its mistake and stop its actions."

"If the U.S. persists, China will take a necessary and legitimate response to safeguard its rights," he said.

Wang did not say how many Chinese journalists were affected or what retaliation China might consider, but the editor of China's Global Times newspaper said earlier U.S. journalists based

in Hong Kong would be among those targeted should Chinese journalists be forced to leave the United States.

"Chinese side has prepared for the worst scenario that all Chinese journalists have to leave," Hu said on Twitter.

"If that's the case, Chinese side will retaliate, including targeting US journalists based in HK."

The Global Times is published by the People's Daily, the official newspaper of China's ruling Communist Party. **→10**

## Muharram rituals in Yazd to be held differently due to coronavirus pandemic

**TEHRAN** — While Iran is still fighting the coronavirus outbreak, this year's Muharram mourning rituals would be different from previous years.

Iranians, who are mostly Shia Muslims, hold special ceremonies during the first ten days of the lunar month of Muharram, which falls from August 21 to 30 this year to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his 72 loyal companions.

Mourners in Iran's central Yazd province have decided to allocate the cost of their Muharram rituals to the poor and needy families this year, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Yazd Muharram's rituals are well-known country-wide and have been held for centuries in a fixed style, which hundreds of men, all clad in black, congregate in Hosayniyas (places used for religious mourning ceremonies) to beat on their chests according to the rhythm of a sung eulogy. During recent years the ceremonies have been broadcast live on different IRIB channels and have been welcomed by people in other provinces.

According to the National Headquarters for Fighting Coronavirus gatherings and attendance in crowded places could lead to the spread of the disease, so some of Muharram mourners in the province took a different approach this year.

The ceremonies will be held limited and with less time in small neighborhoods and most of the rituals' expenses is scheduled to spend on needy families, freeing prisoners, helping their families and buying livelihood packages, as well as helping public health, the council of religious boards of Yazd province has announced. **→8**



© IRNA/ Abdollah Heydari

## Wrestlers team up to support corona-affected people

**TEHRAN** — Renowned Iranian wrestling champions and coaches joined together in a ceremony in Tehran on Tuesday to collect and dispatch packages of food for families affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Iranian Sports Minister Masoud Soltanifar and head of Iran Wrestling Federation Alireza Dabir attended the ceremony held in Ebrahim Hadi Hall at the Azadi Stadium.

Olympic gold medal winner Hassan Yazdani, six-time world champion Hamid Sourian and heavyweight freestyler Parviz Hadi were among athletes who took part in the campaign.



## IRGC Quds Force chief meets Araghchi

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Commander of the IRGC Quds Force General Esmaeil Ghaani has met with Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi to offer condolences to him over the death of his mother, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

General Ghaani wished health for Araqchi and other members of his family.



Ghaani was appointed as the chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps after the assassination of Major General Qassem Soleimani in a U.S. terrorist attack near Baghdad's international airport on January 3.

Ghaani was Soleimani's deputy.

## UAE has parted its way from Saudi Arabia: ex-diplomat

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Ahmad Dastmalchian, Iran's former ambassador to Lebanon, has said that the United Arab Emirates has parted its way from Saudi Arabia since last year.

"It seems that it has been for a while that the Emirates has distanced from accompanying Saudi Arabia and has adopted more independent strategy," Dastmalchian told IRNA in an interview published on Tuesday.

Following such a policy, he added, the UAE has reduced its role in Yemen.

The UAE has adopted more realistic policies compared to Saudi Arabia, the former ambassador said.

Dastmalchian also said, "The Emirates is aware that [Donald] Trump will not remain president of the United States forever and the United States is not a neighbor. However, Iran, as a great regional power, is their permanent neighbor."

The former ambassador said Iran has always prioritized relations with neighbors and is ready to establish best ties with them. "Currently, we have good relations with neighbors, except for one or two countries which impede good relations and are living in illusion," he explained.

He also warned the regional countries that security cannot be purchased and the U.S. does not seek to establish security and peace in the region.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that Iran and the UAE 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, the UAE foreign minister said his country attaches great importance to talks and cooperation between Abu Dhabi and Tehran.

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.

## Big powers' miscalculations root cause of surge in extremism in West Asia, Zarif says

Iran's foreign minister says miscalculations and major mistakes made by the world's big powers over the past decades are the main cause of the surge in extremism in the West Asia region.

Mohammad Javad Zarif made the remarks in a speech delivered at the Faculty of World Studies at the University of Tehran on Monday, the second part of a five-part course in international relations entitled, "World in Transition," which is being offered by Iran's top diplomat.

"Extremism was a result of miscalculations and occupation [of regional countries by world powers]. The main problem, which evolved into the existing sad conditions is the problem of 'misunderstanding' and 'miscalculation', which caused both regional powers and superpowers to make mistakes," Iran's foreign minister said.

"Miscalculations made by big powers, or in other words superpowers, with regard to the world's modern order have resulted in consequences, which are by far more disastrous than the mistakes made by other countries," Zarif emphasized.

He described the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq as one of the big powers' miscalculations, saying that there were many ambiguities surrounding the attack at its onset.

"But something was conspicuous. It was clear from the very beginning that this [U.S.] war [against Iraq] would lead to the spread of extremism in the world."

In early 2003, the United States, backed by the UK, invaded Iraq under the pretext that the regime of the country's former dictator, Saddam Hussein, possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD). No such weapons, however, were ever found in Iraq.

The invasion plunged Iraq into chaos and led to the rise of terrorist groups, including the Daesh Takfiri group, across the region.

The U.S. and a coalition of its allies further launched a military campaign against purported Daesh targets in Iraq in 2014, but their operations in many instances have led to civilian deaths.

Elsewhere in his speech, Zarif touched on the U.S. withdrawal from several international treaties, and said such a policy is just similar to those bigoted and obstinate ideas that contravene the world's realities on the ground.

# IRGC chief: Revenging Gen. Soleimani's blood has turned into a cause

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Tuesday that revenging for Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani's blood has turned into a cause.

Major General Hossein Salami said Iran will not only take revenge of the assassination of Soleimani, it will also continue his path.

Salami made the remarks during a ceremony in which the museum of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was unveiled and the "end of the Daesh ruling and the power of the Resistance Movement" was exhibited.

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

In retaliation for the assassination of General Soleimani, who headed the IRGC Quds Force, an Iranian ballistic-missile strike on January 8 targeted a U.S. base in Iraq housing U.S. forces, leaving some 110 U.S. troops suffering from traumatic brain injuries.

During the Tuesday ceremony which was attended by senior military commanders from the IRGC and Army, Salami added, "Enemies have this wrong assumption in their calculations and strategies that the Iranian people stop moving on the path of revolution by



martyrdom of greatest men. However, realities in the history of the past 40 years prove that martyrdom empowers the Iranian nation and other Muslim nations."

**■ 'Military chief marks Gen. Soleimani's counter-terror role'**

Speaking at the ceremony, military chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri said the exhibition displays a short section of the Re-

sistance Front's efforts and supports of the Islamic Republic for confronting the plots of the Global Arrogance and its regional allies, and terrorist groups created by the enemy.

The exhibition, the major general continued, shows how the enemy of humankind and Islam sought to endanger the freedom and security of regional countries by the creation of brutal terrorist groups.

Bagheri, chief of staff of Iran's Armed Forces, lauded the role of Martyr Soleimani in defeating the terrorists in Syria and Iraq, saying that those groups aimed to undermine Iran's security.

The terrorists endangered the security and sovereignty of Iraq and Syria and had not been for the advisory presence of Martyr Soleimani and other commanders, the cooperation of commanders with the nations and governments of Syria and Iraq, and the support of Maraja (top religious scholars) these countries would have been now under terror groups such as ISIL, General Bagheri said on the sidelines of the ceremony.

"Terrorists and their supporters sought to take control of Syria and Iraq to undermine the security of Iran. Those battles that ended with the defeat and elimination of enemies caused our nations to move on the path of development with peace," he said.

**■ 'Iran has countered destabilizing attempts in region'**

Addressing the same ceremony, Defense Minister Amir Hatami also said that under the commandship of General Soleimani and support of the armed forces, Iran has countered destabilizing attempts in the region.

He also said that Iran is more powerful than ever.

## Elections provide U.S. and Iran a brief window to lower tensions - think tank

*By staff and agency*

A new report from a Washington think tank has said that the United States and Iran will have a brief window between their upcoming presidential elections in which to ease dangerous tensions, Reuters reported on Monday.

The bipartisan Center for a New American Security report, co-authored by an informal adviser to Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, proposes a phased approach to easing tensions that could be adopted by Republican President Donald Trump in a second term or Biden, if he wins the Nov. 3 election.

Tensions spiked after Trump withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal negotiated by world powers during the Obama administration, when Biden was vice president.

The U.S. presidential election opens a window for easing the crisis before Iran holds a vote sometime next year

expected to result in a hard-liner succeeding President Hassan Rouhani, under whom the nuclear deal was reached, according to the report seen by Reuters.

"You are looking at a situation where you might lose... the opportunity for U.S.-Iranian engagement, and it could be years away after that," said report co-author Ilan Goldenberg, who served at the State Department and Pentagon during the Obama administration. "The risk of conflict actually exists."

The historic enemies came close to war after the United States killed a top Iranian general in early 2020 and Iran retaliated with a missile attack on U.S. troops in Iraq.

The prospects for new talks appear bleak. The Trump administration is threatening to trigger a reimposition of international sanctions on Tehran ended by the nuclear deal unless the UN Security Council extends an arms embargo

on Iran slated to lapse in October.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last week ruled out any negotiations on Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

In a phased de-escalation proposed by the report, the next U.S. president would offer to re-enter the nuclear deal — an idea Biden has embraced if Iran returned to compliance - or the sides adopt other measures that halt or roll back Tehran's breaches.

They also would commit to a regional "calm for calm" and Washington would grant Tehran limited sanctions relief, the report says.

That relief would involve "modest, unilateral confidence-building measures" including ending Trump's ban on travel from Iran and steps to ensure U.S. sanctions do not impede Tehran's ability to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Ex-diplomat urges intl. community not to keep silent over U.S. violation of human rights

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Mohsen Pakaeen, the former Iranian ambassador to Azerbaijan, has urged the international community not to keep silent over the United States' violation of the human rights when the world is battling the coronavirus pandemic.

"The international community must respond to the United States' behavior and make this country fulfil its duties regarding respect for human rights," Pakaeen told IRNA in an interview published on Tuesday.

He also said, "In a situation in which all countries in the world and international institutions, even [the United Nations] High Commissioner for Human Rights, stress the necessity of removing sanctions on countries battling the coronavirus, we are witnessing the United States' healthcare terrorism against our country."

The former ambassador also said that all countries should counter the U.S. inhuman policies unitedly.

Donald Trump's administration has refused to remove sanctions on Iran even when the country is fighting the coronavirus.

Democratic U.S. presidential nominee Joe

Biden said on April 2 that Trump's administration must ease economic sanctions on Iran as a humanitarian gesture during the global coronavirus pandemic.

Biden said the U.S. has a moral obligation to be among the first to offer aid to people in need regardless of where they live when confronting a virus that knows no borders or political affiliations, according to Aljazeera.

Chris Murphy, the U.S. senator from Connecticut, warned on April 13 that the Trump administration could be partially responsible for "the death of innocent people" if it continues its current policies towards Iran amidst the epidemic.

"If this epidemic continues to grow and spread in Iran it will...result in the death of innocent people, partially as a result of U.S. policy that does not accrue to the national security benefit of our country," he told reporters on a conference call. The National Interest reported.

"Remember, if we don't beat it there, we don't beat it here. This virus doesn't respect borders," he added. "It's just good public health policy to help even our adversaries beat back this scourge."

Murphy had penned a March 26 letter, signed

by ten other Democratic senators, asking the Trump administration to ensure that Iran and Venezuela can import medical supplies and other humanitarian goods to deal with the coronavirus outbreak.

Murphy also wrote on his Twitter page on April 6 that Iranians are dying of coronavirus partly because of U.S. sanctions.

"Innocent civilians are dying there in part because our sanctions are limiting humanitarian aid during coronavirus," he tweeted.

On March 31, a UN human rights expert called for lifting international sanctions against countries ranging from Iran to North Korea and Venezuela in coronavirus crisis, according to Reuters.

"The continued imposition of crippling economic sanctions on Syria, Venezuela, Iran, Cuba, and, to a lesser degree, Zimbabwe, to name the most prominent instances, severely undermines the ordinary citizens' fundamental right to sufficient and adequate food," Hilal Elver, UN special rapporteur on the right to food, said in a statement.

Elver, an independent expert, said that it was a matter of "humanitarian and practical urgency to lift unilateral economic sanctions

immediately".

In a letter to the G-20 economic powers on March 24, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for rolling back international sanctions regimes around the world.

Guterres said sanctions are heightening the health risks for millions of people and weakening the global effort to contain the spread of the new coronavirus, Foreign Policy reported.

"I am encouraging the waiving of sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to food, essential health supplies, and COVID-19 medical support. This is the time for solidarity, not exclusion," he said.

"Let us remember that we are only as strong as the weakest health system in our interconnected world," the UN chief said.

Michelle Bachelet, the UN high commissioner for human rights, also said on March 24 that "in a context of a global pandemic, impeding medical efforts in one country heightens the risk for all of us."

"At this crucial time, both for global public health reasons, and to support the rights and lives of millions of people in these countries, sectoral sanctions should be eased or suspended," she said in a statement.

## New world order in 21st century: Iran, Russia and China are forming new bloc in the East

**1 →** Iran's chief diplomat added, "Of course, when the expiration date arrives, the treaty will be extended provided that no party opposes the extension. However, we think it's better to upgrade the treaty and draft a long-term comprehensive strategic agreement, which should be signed eventually and then submitted to the Parliament."

Tehran's push to sign a new long-term agreement with Moscow is in line with its new policy of cementing ties with countries that are impervious to the U.S. criticism of their dealings with Iran. In an attempt to strangle the Iranian economy, the U.S. continues to impose sanctions on Iran to scare foreign firms away from Iran. And it also tries to disrupt any economic transactions between Iran and other countries.

However, some analysts believe that Iran's efforts to sign long-term agreements with superpowers like Russia and China could deliver a major blow to the U.S. push to isolate Iran, because these agreements are indicative of the development of ties between Iran and the world.

Iran is also negotiating with China over a 25-year partnership that some Iranian officials called it "turning point" in Tehran-Beijing ties.

It's worth noting that these agreements are principally of economic importance for Iran and also for Russia and China. According to some leaks of the Iran-China deal, China would invest \$400 billion in many Iranian sectors including oil and gas. In return, Iran would ensure a steady energy supplies to China for

25 years.

The agreements with China and Russia have fueled speculations that Iran, China and Russia are building an economic bloc to boost their trade by using their national currencies in an attempt to marginalize the U.S. dollar and reduce its influence on their economies.

"China and Russia are using their national currencies in their trade with each other," Mehdi Safari, Iran's former ambassador to China and Russia told the Tehran Times, adding that the two countries have also signed agreements with other countries to use their national currencies in bilateral trade.

With Iran, Russia, and China negotiating over long-term strategic agreements, it seems that new world order is in the making in the East, Ramin Mehdanparast, the former spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, told the Tehran Times in a telephone interview.

Referring to the growing economic and political cooperation between Iran, Russia and China, the former diplomat said, "We will witness the formation of a new world order in the future."

He also told the Tehran Times that the country that helped push for such an order is the United States, whose wrong policies brought Iran, China, and Russia closer together.

When taken together, Iran's agreements with Russia and China can help Iran mitigate the U.S. sanctions' effects on its economy and further boost its bilateral ties with the two nations. At the time being, the total volume of Iran-Russia's annual trade is estimated to be

less than \$2 billion, despite the fact that the two countries have signed agreements to increase the bilateral trade to \$25 billion a year, according to Shuaib Bahman, a Russia expert.

Bahman told the Tasnim news agency on July 24 that there are many reasons behind the lack of development of economic ties between Iran and Russia including U.S. sanctions, banking and transportations issues, but the main reason remains the complicated bureaucracy of Iran.

However, it seems that Iran is taking some steps to facilitate some bureaucratic procedures. During his visit to Moscow, Zarif held extensive talks with the Russian officials on expanding cooperation between the two countries. He also delivered an "important message" from President Hassan Rouhani to Putin. Two weeks later, Iran's chief diplomat met with Leonid Stutsky, the chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the State Duma of Russia.

"Very productive meeting with Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Russian State Duma, Leonid Stutsky. Followed up on important discussions I held with Russian leaders in Moscow two weeks ago," Zarif tweeted on Sunday after a meeting with the visiting Russian legislator.

Bahman previously has told the Tehran Times that Iran and Russia are pursuing a greater plan to draft a strategic document that could shape their relations for years to come. This plan could well be a sign of the two countries' renewed efforts to expand their

economic relations. This was on full display during the latest meeting between Iranian and Russian transport officials, which was held on July 27 via video conference.

Shahram Adamejad, Iran's deputy transportation minister, described the meeting as "constructive," underlining the need to further expand transportation cooperation between Iran and Russia.

"Undoubtedly, the constructive achievements of this meeting are a great step toward further boosting transportation and transit dealings between the two countries and thus expanding the trade between them comprehensively," the IRIB news agency quoted Adamejad as saying on July 29.

For its part, Russia also seems to be intent on continuing its cooperation with Iran. Russian First Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs Vladimir Jabbarov underlined that Moscow will continue its cooperation with Iran despite Washington's sanctions.

"Moscow and Tehran will continue their trade, because we think that if a trade is profitable for Russia, then it should be continued regardless of the U.S. demands," IRNA quoted the Russian official as saying on August 1.

"Russia will not allow others to decide for its foreign policy and the Kremlin does not look at Washington ('s position to make decisions). The U.S. imposes sanctions on Russia one day and sanctions Iran the other day," he pointed out, adding that "we should take our own interests into consideration."



# Iranian ambassador calls for aerospace cooperation with China

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to China Mohammad Keshavarz-Zadeh has highlighted the opportunities for cooperation with Beijing in the aerospace industry given the recent successful launch of a Chinese networking satellite that has broken monopoly of the U.S. government-owned Global Positioning System (GPS).

In a tweet on Monday, Keshavarz-Zadeh lauded China's success in completing the Beidou-3 constellation by launching the final networking satellite.

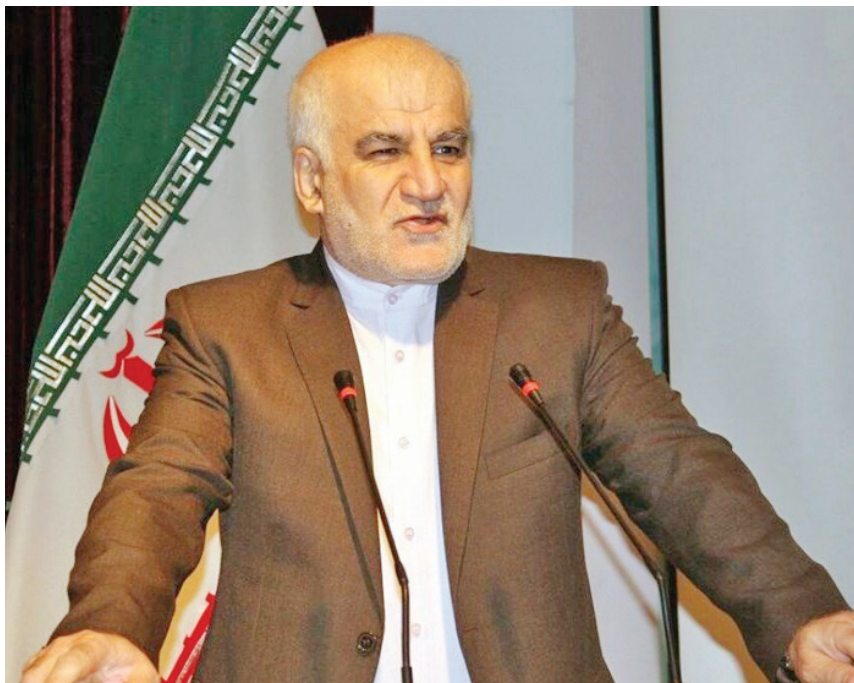
"The launch of Beidou-3 satellite completed the global covering of the Chinese company's positioning and navigation and marked an end to the monopoly of the U.S.'s GPS," he said.

"There is great potential for aerospace cooperation with China," the envoy said.

He added that talented Iranian students of aerospace technologies could work as a bridge between the two countries in this field.

In June, China launched the 58th and final networking satellite to find its way to the stars for the third phase of a satellite networking system.

The Chinese network is an alternative to



existing GPS systems. China was reliant on the U.S. government-owned Global Positioning System (GPS), Russia's GLONASS, or the European Union's Galileo.

Earlier on Monday, China said that 28-nanometre chips that enable mobile devices to receive signals from the Beidou navigation system are in mass production and mass manufacturing of high-precision 22-nanometre positioning chips will soon kick off.

China will build a complete industrial chain of chips, modules, boards, terminals, operation services for Beidou, Ran Chengqi, director general of the China Satellite Navigation Office, said at a press conference.

In the past decade, the total output value of China's satellite navigation and location services industry has been growing at an average annual rate of more than 20%, reaching 345 billion yuan (\$49.47 billion) in 2019 and is expected to exceed 400 billion yuan in 2020, Ran said.

Beidou-related services such as smart port and land mapping have been exported to about 120 countries, including those in ASEAN, South Asia, Eastern Europe, West Asia and Africa, Ran added.

## Arrest of terror group's head showed power of Iranian intelligence forces: MP

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Ebrahim Rezaee, a member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, says the arrest of the Tondar terrorist group's ringleader has demonstrated the power of Iranian security and intelligence forces to the enemies.

Jamshid Sharmahd, who was arrested two days ago by the security forces, lived in the U.S. and was being protected by the White House, Rezaee said.

MP Rezaee told IRNA on Monday that the issue of human rights among American politicians is "a joke" adding that the United States has become a haven for terrorists whose hands are stained with the blood of the people.

Sharmahd and the members of his group killed nearly 14 of our compatriots in a brutal terrorist attack in Shiraz alone, the MP said.

Rezaee hailed the successful move of the security forces in arresting individuals such as Ruhollah Zam, Siamak Namazi and Jamshid Sharmahd, saying that this arrest will definitely dishearten other forces affiliated with foreign security services.

The Intelligence Ministry announced on Saturday 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 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.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on Saturday night that the West must cease financing and harboring terrorists.



"From their safe havens in US and Europe, they promote hatred, agitate & organize murder & mayhem, and shamelessly claim responsibility for the murder of innocent Iranian civilians," Zarif wrote.

"Smokescreens can't obscure this hypocrisy," he added.

## Political analyst writes critical review of William Burns' book

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Massoud Rezaee, an Iranian political analyst, has written a review of a book by American diplomat William Joseph Burns, titled "The Back Channel", saying the White House favors only regimes and states that follow the American rules, like the regime of former Shah of Iran or the Saudi government.

In the article, which was published by Tasnim on Monday, Rezaee reminded the former U.S. deputy secretary of state that threatening Iran will get nowhere.

Rezaee wrote that the idea of a nuclear bomb was a label that the U.S. resorted to against the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to launch a strike in terminator-like style, but failed to do so.

Under the guise of such a labeling and destruction operation and adopting the policy of all options being on table, the U.S. was in fact seeking to make up for 40 years of successive defeats in the face of Iran, he said, adding that the victory of the Islamic Revolution under Imam Khomeini's leadership was a severe economic and political blow to the White House that embarrassed the U.S.

It is obviously clear that the post-Revolution Iran would be a threat to the U.S.'s illegitimate interests in the region

and the world, the expert noted, adding that Iran shattered the "Silence of the Lambs" and raised the voice of freedom, independence and justice. He said the word "impenetrable" to describe Iran is not incorrect either, because the U.S. has failed to have any deep impact on the Iranian policy and decision-makers since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Rezaee said.

"The principle of guardianship of the Islamic jurist in our Constitution and the vigilance of the Establishment's Leadership have seriously prevented the Revolution's deviation from the main path."

He further took a swipe at Burns for refusing to cite the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) organization when mentioning the U.S. intelligence community in his book, noting that the MEK members, who were spying for Washington on Iran's peaceful nuclear program, are the members of the very same organization that had assassinated two senior American military forces in Tehran less than three decades before their espionage for the U.S. and had presented themselves as the harshest anti-American forces in Iran.

Rezaee then lashed out at the U.S. for its inaction on the Israeli nuclear



activities, the regime's nuclear facilities and atomic weapons. "The sensitivity shown by the U.S. and its intelligence is completely biased and follows double standards."

He further explained that the U.S. fabricated a case on Iran's nuclear program by resorting to double standards, lies and accusations, and by employing its political and economic influence.

While Iran agreed in 2002 to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to set up online cameras at its nuclear facilities, seal its nuclear warehouses, and let the IAEA inspectors make frequent visits, the UN nuclear agency and the state

parties engaged in the negotiations refused to give a clear response to Iran or prepare the ground for the resumption of Iran's peaceful nuclear activities after two years, he added.

Such an unacceptable reaction revealed the fact that Westerners do not basically intend to provide any clear response and only seek to stop Iran's nuclear activities, he noted.

Rezaee further hit back at Burns for his assertion that neither the Joint Plan of Action nor the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) were perfect agreements, and decried the U.S. diplomat's view that in a perfect and ideal world, Iran should have been deprived of uranium enrichment and its enrichment facilities should have been dismantled.

"Mr. Trump's policy against the Iranian people's resolve and determination is nothing but recurrent and boring threats and intimidation. However; if any act of aggression is taken against Iran, what happened in Ain al-Assad (in Iraq) will be repeated again and again. Mr. Trump had better heed the valuable and correct advice from Dr. Zarif for the American officials: "Never threaten an Iranian". And I would add: Specifically if that Iranian is Ayatollah Khamenei," he concluded.

## Intelligence Ministry rejects reports on U.S.-based group ringleader's overseas arrest

**(Press TV)** — Iran's Intelligence Ministry, which recently announced the apprehension of the ringleader of a U.S.-based anti-Iran terrorist group, has rejected reports alleging that the person in question was actually nabbed in Tajikistan.

The reports "are roundly rejected," the Ministry said in a statement that was cited by Tasnim News Agency on Sunday.

Statements released by the Ministry's Public Relations Office are the ultimate source of any official information detailing the operations that are carried out by the Ministry's operatives, the statement asserted.



The Ministry announced arresting Jamshid Sharmahd, the ringleader of the Tondar (Thunder) outfit, otherwise known as the so-called "Kingdom Assembly of Iran," on Saturday, notifying that he had directed "armed operations and acts of sabotage" inside Iran from the U.S. in the past.

Upon arrest, Sharmahd admitted to providing explosives for a 2008 attack in southern Iran that killed 14 people.

"I was called before the bomb was about to be set off," he was seen confessing in footage provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran News Network later in the day.

The attack that targeted the Seyyed al-Shohada mosque in the city of Shiraz also wounded 215 others.

According to the Ministry, the group had planned to carry out several high-profile and potentially hugely deadly attacks across the Islamic Republic, but had been frustrated in the attempts owing to intricate intelligence operations targeting the outfit. These included blowing up of Sivand Dam in Shiraz, detonating cyanide-laden bombs at Tehran International Book Fair, and carrying out explosions during mass gatherings at the Mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini.

-----Details of the arrest

Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi, meanwhile, congratulated the Ministry's operatives on their success in arresting the terrorist ringleader, detailing the circumstances that surrounded the operation.

Sharmahd enjoyed "serious support" from the American and Israeli intelligence services, which "considered it to be far-fetched for the Iranian Intelligence Ministry to be able to penetrate their intelligence cover and put him under its command through an intricate operation," the minister said.

The Americans still believe that pictures showing Sharmahd in Iran after his arrest have been snapped outside the Islamic Republic, he added, saying, "They will found out about everything [concerning the operation] in near future."

Alavi differentiated between Sharmahd's outfit and other so-called royalist groups, which mostly resort to rhetoric and statements to try to establish themselves.

Tondar "was the only movement that was very violent and was after establishing itself through terrorist operation," the minister noted.

-----Iran neutralized 27 ops by Tondar

Alavi noted that the Ministry had succeeded in frustrating 27 operations by Sharmahd and his group.

The minister again highly rated the arrest operation, recalling previous remarks by Sharmahd, in which he had considered himself to be comfortably nested within the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"He considered his place to be lying on the sixth floor of the FBI [s building], and now sees himself in the grips of Iranian intelligence operatives, Alavi said.

Following the terrorist attack in Iran, the Islamic Republic notified the Interpol of Sharmahd's identity and demanded his arrest. However, he would still travel freely between countries with his real identity.

Alavi said the inaction despite Tehran's complaint "indicates the hollowness of the Americans and their European allies' claim of fighting terrorism."

The minister finally hailed that the arrest "has not been and will not be" the first such complicated operation to be averted by Iranian intelligence operatives, asserting that "they have carried out such arrests in the past, the due time for explaining which has not yet arrived."

## JCPOA Joint Commission may meet in the near future

**MOSCOW (TASS)** — The Joint Commission on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program is considering the possibility of holding an in-person meeting in the near future, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told TASS on Tuesday.



"An in-person meeting is possible, it is under consideration," he pointed out. "No date has been set yet but it's not a matter of distant future," Ryabkov added.

According to Ryabkov, the meeting's date will depend on the further easing of lockdown measures, including transport restrictions.

The previous meeting of the JCPOA Joint Commission, which involved political directors, took place in the Austrian capital of Vienna in February 2020.

## Iran's parliament to bolster cooperation with Turkey



**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf said that his country is resolved to develop cooperation with Turkey through the formation of a friendship group, adding that bilateral economic relations can be strengthened via removing obstacles caused by coronavirus.

Ghalibaf in a telephone conversation with his Turkish counterpart Mustafa Sentop on Monday, said that Tehran is determined to set up a parliamentary friendship group with Ankara as soon as possible to promote mutual cooperation.

The coronavirus has decreased economic exchanges

between the two countries, but we can further develop commercial relations by observing health protocols, he added.

Despite the US inhumane sanctions, we have successfully put medical and health programs into effect and achieved precious experience in this field, the speaker went on to say.

Sentop, for his part, congratulated the Iranian speaker on Eid al-Adha, expressing hope that with the blessing of this great Eid, coronavirus will be uprooted from all over the world.

Neighborliness, cultural bond and humanitarian relations between the two nations necessitate promoting ties to higher levels, he added.

The US has escalated its oppressive sanctions against some countries, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said adding that Turkey opposes these sanctions as it has stated the issue in all international forums.

In relevant remarks last month, Ghalibaf voiced pleasure over the growing trend of friendly relations with Turkey.

In a message on Wednesday July 8, Ghalibaf congratulated his Turkish counterpart Mustafa Sentop on his reelection to the post.

He also stressed the need for enhancing parliamentary relations between the two countries.

Expressing pleasure over the growing trend of friendly

relations between the two neighboring and Muslim countries, Ghalibaf said that he was sure that development of parliamentary cooperation in various fields would open a bright horizon for bilateral relations and regional peace and stability.

He also wished his Turkish counterpart and his colleague's good health and increasing success and prosperity for the government and people of the friendly and neighboring country.

Meanwhile in June, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif underlined that Tehran and Ankara have very good and close relations in different fields, including political and economic areas.

"Relations with our neighbors, especially with Turkey, are a priority for us and our region in foreign policy," Zarif said upon his arrival in Turkey.

He reiterated that Iran-Turkey relations are close in various fields.

Zarif said that his visit to Turkey is a sign of Iran's policy of giving priority to developing cooperation ties with the neighboring and regional countries.

The Iranian Foreign Minister emphasized that he considered it necessary to have a visit to Turkey for bilateral issues and discuss the resumption of economic relations and energy cooperation with that country.



## TPO holds pistachio export desk’s meeting

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) held the meeting of its pistachio export desk on Monday to investigate the challenges and barriers in the way of the country’s pistachio exports, TPO published on its website.

Addressing the meeting, TPO Head Hamid Zadboum put emphasis on the significant status of pistachio in Iran’s export basket as the top agricultural export item, and said that a national view toward removing the pistachio export barriers should be adopted.

As announced by Iran’s Pistachio Association, the country has



exported 35,000 tons of pistachio during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21).

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.

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.

## ‘Boosting investment making in tire production industry a necessity’

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — An official with Iran’s Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry said that increasing the amount of investment making for production of tire in the country is a necessity.

Kamran Kargar, the acting head of planning, supplying, and market regulating office of the ministry, said the consumption of tire is noticeable in Iran due to the country’s big transportation fleet, IIRB reported.

“Now the ground is properly prepared for the production of light and heavy vehicles tires in the country, and investment making will play a significant role both for the establishment of new production units and for launching development projects”, the official noted.

Production of tire in Iran has risen 24 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20) compared to the same period of time in the past year.

As reported, 67,734 tons of tires have been produced in the country during the first quarter.

Of the mentioned figure, 36,512 tons were the passenger car tires, which shows a 30-percent rise compared to the first quarter of the past year.

Some 5,476 tons of van tires were manufactured, indicating a ten-percent growth from the figure of the previous year’s first quarter.



Also, 12,825 bus tires were manufactured, showing an eight percent rise.

Manufacturing of the tires of agricultural machinery experienced a growth of 49 percent to stand at 5,754 tons.

Meanwhile, 1,513 tons of road building machinery tires were manufactured, with a 21-percent growth compared to the first quarter of the past year.

In terms of number, a 27-percent growth was also experienced in tire output during the first quarter of the year, as 10,525 million tires of different types were produced in the three-month period.

Having the annual production capacity of 426,000 tons of tire, Iran accounts for 41 percent of tire output in the West Asian region, according to the deputy director of the non-metal industries office of the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

Mohsen Safdari has said that 11 tire production units are active in the country creating jobs for 14,500 people.

He said 426,000 tons is the nominal capacity, while the real output is less than this figure as some units are working with 60-70 percent of their capacity.

“Iranian tire industry is dependent on foreign raw materials by 40 percent, so we are self-reliant by 60 percent in this field”, the official announced.

In a bid to nullify the U.S. sanctions, Iran is determined to strengthen its domestic production to achieve self-reliance.

Selecting the motto of “Pickup in Production” for the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020), and the slogan of “Surge in Production” for the current year indicates the Islamic Republic’s determination to achieve this goal.

To this end, the Iranian ministries besides the private sector have been outlining their programs for the surge in production.

Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has announced some seven main axes of the surge in production that are going to be pursued under 40 major programs.

Developing technology and promoting knowledge-based industries, development of domestic production in line with the Leader’s stresses on surge in production, managing imports and development of non-oil exports, improving the business environment, development of financing and investment and finally development of logistics were reported to be the seven major axes of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry’s works in the current year, which is named “Surge in Production” by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

# Capital market provides \$23.8b of financing in 4 months

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

“Until the previous week, we had just one IPO (initial public offering) on Wednesday every week, but in the previous week two IPOs were held. The value of IPOs stood at 53 trillion rials (about \$1.261 billion) in the previous [Iranian calendar] year, while

the figure has been 137 trillion rials (about \$3.261 billion) just in the first four months of the current year”, the SEO head announced on Monday.

In a press conference in late June, Qalibaf-Asl had said that about 50 companies had already requested for IPO in Tehran Stock Exchange and about 100 companies had requested for IPO in Iran Fara Bourse (the country’s over-the-counter market), which were being investigated by the SEO.

It should be mentioned that in the current Iranian year, Iran’s stock market witnessed



its largest-ever initial public offering, as Social Security Investment Company (SSIC, also known by its Persian acronym Shasta) offered eight billion shares, which account for 10 percent of its stakes, for sales in Tehran Stock Exchange on April 15.

Last week, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dehpasand announced that the value of trades in Iran’s stock market has risen 625 percent during the first four

months of the current year, compared to the same period of time in the past year.

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

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

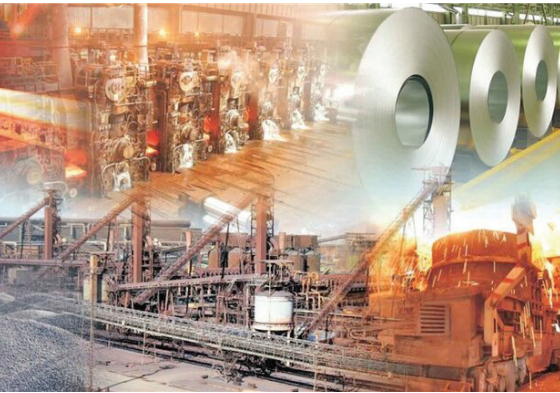
## Production of 6 major mining products rises in Q1

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The production of six major mining industry products has increased in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), the latest data released by Iran’s Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry show.

Based on the mentioned data, during the first quarter of this year, production of crude steel and steel products, copper cathode, cement, aluminum ingots, and alumina increased compared to the first quarter of the previous year, while the output of glass, glassware, coal concentrate, and chinaware was decreased.

As reported, aluminum ingots had the highest growth rate among the five products in the mentioned period with 46.3 percent rise, followed by cement, alumina, copper cathode and steel products with 10, 2.3, 2.1, and 1.8 percent increase respectively.

The production of aluminum ingots stood at 95,000 tons in the said three months, while in the same period last year, 65,000 tons of this product were produced.



As for cement, in the current year’s Q1 16,353 tons of cement were produced compared to the 14,868 for previous year’s same period.

## Quarterly exports to Greece down 70% yr/yr

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iranian exports to Greece in the first quarter of 2020 fell nearly 70 percent compared to the same period in 2019, Head of Iran-Greece Joint Chamber of Commerce Majid Movafeq Qadiri said.

Iran exported \$1.7 million worth of commodities to the European country in the said three months, while the figure stood at \$5.3 million in Q1 2019, ILNA quoted Qadiri as saying.

According to the official, Iran’s imports from Greece in the first quarter of 2020 amounted to \$2.7 million, registering a more than 60 percent decrease compared to the same period in 2019.

Imports from Greece stood at \$7.2 million in Q1 2019, while the figure was about \$9.8 million in 2018.

Underlining the fact that all the mentioned figures are related to the pre-coronavirus period and does not show the impact

of the pandemic on the two country’s trade, Qadiri noted that the U.S. sanctions have had a more significant impact on the Iranian exports compared to the country’s imports.

Iran’s top exported goods to Greece in the mentioned period were polystyrene polymers, minerals or chemical fertilizers, nuts, glassware, Vaseline and raisins, and the top imported goods from Greece include dairy machinery, and transportation machinery.



## Govt., private sector discuss SMEs entering capital market

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The 97th meeting of the Dialogue Council of Government and Private sector was held in Tehran on Monday in which facilitation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) listing on the stock exchange was discussed.

As reported by the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), the meeting was attended by senior officials including Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dehpasand, and ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie.

In the meeting, which was chaired by Dehpasand, the performance of the single-window system, which was launched on June 30 to accelerate the process of private companies’ acceptance to the stock market, was also discussed and assessed.

The financing of semi-finished projects from the resources of the capital market was also another issue that was explored in the gathering of the government and the private sector representatives.

Speaking in the meeting, Dehpasand mentioned the positive impact of the single-window system on the process of private companies’ acceptance into the capital market and noted that in the current Iranian calendar year 50 private companies are expected to



Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dehpasand (2nd L), and ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (c) attend the 97th meeting of Dialogue Council of Government and Private sector in Tehran on Monday.

be listed on the stock exchange market.

The Iranian government has been recently placing significant importance upon the country’s capital market for offsetting the country’s budget deficit, as the U.S. sanctions on the county’s oil industry and

the decline in global oil prices due to the coronavirus outbreak have created some problems for realizing the country’s provisioned budget.

On June 30, ICCIMA, Iranian Association of Internal Audits (IAIA), Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), and Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for launching a single-window system to facilitate the listing of new companies on the stock market and to encourage new private companies to join this arena.

Although the Iranian stock market is a newly developed market and people have only recently gotten acquainted with its activities, this market has been booming in recent years.

In the past Iranian year 1398 (ended on March 19), the performance of the Tehran Stock Exchange, which is the main stock market of Iran, was unprecedented, as its main index, TEDPIX, which had closed at 178,000 points at the end of the calendar year 1397, climbed to 512,000 points at the end of last year.

Many domestic companies have already offered their shares in the market, while much more are getting ready to join.

## Iran exports 2nd non-oil cargo to Oman via Sirik Port

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iran exported the second non-oil cargo to Oman via Sirik Port in southern Hormozgan province, Governor of Sirik County announced on Monday.

This is the second time in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) that non-oil cargo is exported from Iran to Oman via Sirik Port.

Ahmad Jamaledini put the weight of the second cargo at 22 tons, including fresh fruits and vegetables, dried nuts and mineral water, which were dispatched to the Omani port of Khasab, Mehr news agency reported.

The first cargo with a capacity of 120 tons, including mineral water and nuts, was dispatched to Oman on June 2, the official added.

In late April, Hamid Zadboum, the head of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), referred to the increase in trade volume between Iran and Oman and said,

“Last month the two countries launched a container shipping line to transit cargoes between the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas and Port Sultan Qaboos in Oman.”

“The line is used to transit container cargoes, mainly fruits, and vegetables, between the two countries,” the official said.

Iran and Oman had signed a maritime cooperation agreement in December 2019 for boosting maritime transportation between the two countries.

Based on the agreement, Iranian traders and businessmen would be able to interact constructively with their Omani counterparts, and regular shipping lines were to be established between the two countries, while the two sides also pledged to provide facilities for using each other’s ports.

Even before the container line, the two neighbors had already launched four direct shipping lines between their ports.

The first shipping route between the

two countries was put into operation in March 2015 between Iran’s Bandar Abbas and Oman’s Sohar.

Later in December 2016, the two neighbors inaugurated direct shipping routes from two Omani ports to the Iranian port of Shahid Bahonar.

In December 2017, they launched another shipping line to connect Iran’s port city of Khorramshahr to the Omani port of Sohar.

On July 22, Omani Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Masoud al-Sunaidi said that ties between Iran and Oman had been on the rise even during the coronavirus pandemic, which showed efforts on the two sides to strengthen relations.

“When the relations between countries have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic and have been reduced, Oman’s relations with Iran have not been reduced and have even been expanded, which shows the two countries’ efforts to boost ties,” he said during a meeting with



Iran’s Ambassador to Muscat Mohammad Reza Nouri Shahroudi.

The Iranian diplomat praised the efforts to increase cooperation and relations.

Oman dispatched a batch of sanitary and medical items to Iran in May to help the country in the fight against the coronavirus.

The consignment, weighing some 40 tons, was comprised of medical equipment and medicine for preventing and curing COVID-19, ISNA reported.



# Iran's petchem income to rise 80% by Mar. 2021: NPC head

**ENERGY DESK** **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) has said that the inauguration of 17 new projects in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021) is going to increase the revenues of this sector by 80 percent, Shana reported.

According to Behzad Mohammadi, the petrochemical sector is currently the country's leading industry and the top source of revenues, which is constantly growing and excelling.

The deputy oil minister said that the Oil Ministry and NPC are taking necessary measures to improve the petrochemical industry's output, both in terms of quality and quantity.

"By increasing the production capacity of high-quality products such as propylene and, by identifying market needs, petrochemical incomes will be guaranteed," he noted.

The official emphasized that the global market for petrochemical products is constantly evolving, so most of the plans and programs in this industry should be short or mid-term plans.

"Unfortunately, for long, we have been over-focusing on some sectors of the industry while completely neglecting other areas and this is not a good thing."

"In the development of the industry, we moved from resources to development and



did not pay attention to the market needs," he regretted.

Mentioning propylene as an example for the neglected sectors of the industry, Mohammadi said: "By completing the propylene chain, we are trying to create some balance in the industry."

Only five percent of Iran's petrochemical production portfolio is related to propylene, while this number is 17 percent in Saudi Arabia, 18 percent in the United States, and 16 percent in the world, he noted.

With the implementation of new projects, the share of this product in Iran's petro-

chemical portfolio will reach 10 percent in the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025).

The official finally underlined the need for the development of the oil and gas industry as the mother industries for the petrochemical sector and said the development of the petrochemical industry is interlinked with the development of oil and gas industries because it receives its feedstock from upstream industries, so the lower the oil production, the lower the petrochemical output will be.

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

The total revenue of the country's petrochemical industry in the previous [Iranian calendar] year was \$15 billion, of which about 85 percent was returned to the country's domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA).

Earlier in June, Mohammadi had said that all the goals set, based on the country's Sixth Five-year National Development Plan, for the petrochemical sector will be realized by the end of the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 20, 2022).

## Oil industry activities continuing strongly despite sanctions: Zanganeh

**TEHRAN (Shana)** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has said Iran's oil industry activities have been going on strongly in the past two years since the U.S. pulled out of the nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions.

Addressing a ceremony to launch gas supply to 77 Iranian villages on Monday, Zanganeh hailed the amount of Iran's export of petroleum products, saying gas distribution projects had facilitated exports of petroleum products.

"The amount of the exports of petroleum products in Iran have been unprecedented thanks to gas distribution projects," he said.

The official further said, "Activities in the oil industry have continued vigorously for more than two years since the sanctions were imposed."

"We stand firm and buoyant to serve the goal of serving the people," Zanganeh said. "There are many problems, but we have kept the activities in the oil industry alive during the two years that have passed since the sanctions were imposed."

He said that now two years and three months have passed since the severe sanctions against Iran were imposed and during this period not only no plans in the oil industry had halted, but "we have also started new plans."

Zanganeh said that thanks to the increase in gas production and gas supply in the country, the numbers for exporting products are unique, adding: "I cannot announce any figures because of national interests, but the numbers are really unique and have brought income to the country."

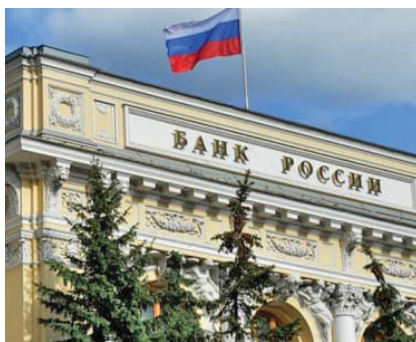


## Russia wants extra \$1.9 billion in taxes from oil sector in two years

Russia's finance ministry is looking to raise as much as \$1.93 billion (143 billion Russian rubles) in taxes from the oil industry over the next two years, as the oil price crash has shrunk Russia's key revenue stream—oil.

According to a document on a Russian government website, cited by Reuters, the finance ministry is looking to receive more tax proceeds by amending the tax code and the recently implemented profit-based tax.

The government and the Russian oil industry are heading for a dispute over the proposed tax amendments. Russian business daily Kommersant reported on Monday, citing sources familiar with the



matter. According to Kommersant's sources, the proposal — if passed — would negatively affect mostly Gazprom Neft,

the oil division of gas giant Gazprom, and Rosneft, the biggest oil producer in Russia.

The profit-based tax, introduced as an experiment last year, has led to the Russian budget not receiving \$2.9 billion (213 billion rubles), according to the sources.

The Russian companies, however, strongly disagree that they should repay that sum under a new tax amendment, and the issue could be escalated to President Vladimir Putin, Kommersant reported.

The possible changes to the tax code would be harmful to the fundamentals of Russia's oil industry, Reuters quoted VTB Capital as saying in a note.

Currently, Russia's economy is suffering

the consequences of the oil price crash it helped create with the temporary rift with its OPEC+ partner Saudi Arabia in March. The Russian ruble crashed, and Russia's oil income shrank as a result of the plunge in oil prices.

The oil price crash, along with the coronavirus-driven global recession, will result in Russia's economy shrinking this year by 6 percent, or by the most in 11 years, the World Bank said in its latest economic report on Russia earlier this month.

Russia is said to be considering whether to adopt a kind of state oil hedging program, similar to Mexico's oil hedge, to protect government revenues from oil price crashes in the future.

## Asian LNG prices are way too low for U.S. exporters

By Nick Cunningham

A massive wave of investment has poured into LNG export terminals around the world in recent years, and nearly all of the projects have China at the center of their business plans. While China has been the largest source of LNG demand growth for quite some time, and will likely remain a key buyer going forward, Chinese demand may not be large enough for all of the LNG projects on the drawing board. More than a few LNG projects face investment risks as China balks at prices needed for many export terminals to make sense, according to a new report. The LNG market went into a tailspin this year due to the pandemic, but in reality, the global market for natural gas was heading into a downturn at the start of 2020, before the coronavirus led to widespread shutdowns. A substantial increase in export capacity in 2019 outpaced demand growth, pushing down prices. Against a weak backdrop, the pandemic-related demand destruction knee-capped the market, leading to LNG prices in Asia (JKM) to collapse below \$3 per million British Thermal Units (\$/MMBtu) and even below \$2/MMBtu for a period of time.

LNG has been the worst-performing commodity during the pandemic, trailing even crude oil and coal.

The pain of the LNG supply glut has been felt most acutely by U.S. exporters. The gas glut in Asia led to storage filling up in Europe, and ultimately the flexibility of American LNG translated into cancelled cargoes from the United States. Dozens of cargoes were cancelled in each of June, July and August.

Still, JKM prices have edged up and fewer U.S. cargoes are slated to be cancelled for September, perhaps a sign that the worst is over.

But hopes of a rebound in global LNG markets should be tempered. In the long-term, China may not absorb all of the gas that LNG developers expect. "A China-led rebound for the U.S. LNG industry will face stiff price resistance from Chinese buyers," according to a new report from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

The report did a deep dive into the Chinese market,



and the authors found that Chinese importers were losing money on imported LNG. For example, PetroChina lost money on importing LNG every year between 2015 and 2019. The IEEFA analysis is not based on trade war concerns, but instead only focuses on the internal market in China.

China has expanding gas connections via pipeline from Central Asia, ample coal and renewable capacity, and it also has infrastructure constraints that prevents imported LNG from serving all parts of the domestic market. This limits the "long-term upside for a U.S. LNG boom," wrote Clark Williams-Derry and Ghee Peh, authors of the IEEFA report.

Any expansion in LNG imports going forward would need to be done on the basis of import prices below \$7/MMBtu. Anything above that threshold may not work out financially for Chinese companies, IEEFA found.

But here's the problem. \$7/MMBtu is likely to be too low for U.S. LNG exporters. The cost for LNG to arrive in Asia requires somewhere around \$2/MMBtu for Henry Hub gas, plus \$3/MMBtu for liquefaction, plus another \$1/MMBtu for transportation. That means it roughly costs \$6/MMBtu at a minimum to ship gas to Asia.

Complicating that equation is that Henry Hub is at unusually low levels, and certainly at unsustainably low levels if U.S. shale gas drillers ever want to make any money. So, Henry Hub will likely need to rise above \$2/MMBtu. For instance, Goldman Sachs has repeatedly forecast U.S. natural gas prices in 2021 will exceed \$3/MMBtu. On top of that, any increase in shipping costs would further negatively impact the equation.

That means that American gas may need to fetch well above \$7/MMBtu in the long run if the trade is to be profitable. "Given recent U.S. gas feedstock and shipping costs, U.S. LNG imports barely price into the Chinese gas markets; and even modest increases in gas or shipping costs could render U.S. LNG imports entirely uneconomic," the authors wrote.

These pricing dynamics don't necessarily apply to existing facilities with contracts and sunk costs. But any new U.S. LNG export facility now faces significant investment risk. Indeed, new facilities are generally not built on spec; they require buyers to sign on before the FID is made. As a result, new U.S. LNG projects may not go forward.

A separate report from the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies (OIES) recently came to a similar conclusion. OIES said that because of the glut, buyers would balk at signing long-term contracts with rigid terms. "It is therefore clearly relevant to ask whether we should expect to see any new U.S. LNG investment decisions being taken in the foreseeable future, especially with buyers not rushing to sign new long-term contracts," OIES wrote in a July report.

Many scenarios for American gas exporters bake in the assumption of an inexorable and unstoppable rise in Chinese gas demand — something along the lines of "if we build it, they will come."

But "bullish demand projections for LNG demand in China and Southeast Asia tend to ignore the price sensitivity of these markets, as well as the many logistical, economic, and political obstacles to the development of LNG and gas infrastructure," the IEEFA analysts said. "The most optimistic LNG demand scenarios are simply unrecognizable to experienced analysts of the Chinese energy sector."

## Iran to launch 3 petchem projects by weekend

**TEHRAN (Shana)** — The Iranian Oil Minister said on Monday that the country would launch Kaveh Methanol, Pars Kimia Middle East and Lorestan Catalyst projects on Thursday (August 6), saying inauguration of 17 petrochemical projects is planned by the end of this calendar year.



Bijan Namdar Zanganeh on the sidelines of the opening ceremony of gas supply to 77 villages, talked to reporters.

In response to a question about the opening of three petrochemical projects on Thursday this week, he said: "Kimia Pars Middle East with a daily production capacity of 5,000 tons of methanol, Kaveh Plant with a daily production capacity of 7,000 tons of methanol and Lorestan Catalyst Plant will be inaugurated this week."

The volume of Lorestan catalysts is not high, but this plant is strategically important because if there is no catalyst, the operation of many processes will not take place, he explained.

The Iranian Ministry of Petroleum further said that 17 petrochemical projects were planned to come online by March 2021 which would add 25 million tons to the country's petrochemical production capacity.

## Hottest part of the fossil fuel market starts to cool

The liquefied natural gas market contracted a third month in July as countries continue to struggle with the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, Bloomberg reported.

Global exports of the fuel last month dropped 9.4 percent from the previous year, the steepest year-over-year decline since at least December 2017, according to ship-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg. The biggest cuts came from the U.S. and Australia. On a monthly basis, exports inched up 2.5 percent from June levels.

The pandemic has thrown cold water on the fastest-growing fossil fuel, with demand seen possibly extending its decline through 2021. A slew of once-promising export projects are struggling to find financing as the LNG market's breakneck expansion stalls, threatening a worse supply glut over the next decade.

Royal Dutch Shell Plc and Total SE are among the world's top LNG suppliers, and have invested billions of dollars into export facilities in order to capture the fuel's burgeoning demand.

Some of the world's biggest buyers of LNG have struggled to make room for contracted shipments this summer as Covid-19 stalled economic activity and left stockpiles near capacity. This has forced exporters to make the difficult decision to lower output and withhold cargoes from the market in a bid to balance global supplies.

U.S. exports fell about 40 percent from a year earlier due to customers potentially canceling over 50 cargoes slated to load from Gulf Coast projects after the arbitrage opportunities to Europe and Asia collapsed.

Spot prices in Asia, the biggest demand region for the fuel, have started to recover from record low levels amid speculation that onset of the winter heating season will boost consumption. However, a steady stream of exports from cornerstone suppliers like Qatar and Nigeria have so far capped the rebound.

Meanwhile, imports of the fuel fell by 5.1 percent from a year earlier as Covid-19 measures forced buyers to reduce deliveries. It was the second-straight month for declining imports, after June marked the first year-over-year drop since at least December 2017.

South Korea's imports for July dropped by more than 800,000 tons compared to last year, the most of any nation, as its top buyer requested to delay shipments on high inventory levels. While Japan imported nearly 5.7 million tons last month, the most since March, it is still lagging 2019 levels by about 9.3 percent.

## OPEC raised supply last month as Persian Gulf nations ended extra cuts

OPEC's crude production rose last month as Persian Gulf members phased out extra supply cutbacks, but the cartel largely persevered with its strategy to revive the global oil industry, Bloomberg reported.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait restored the additional output taken offline in June, when they had amplified efforts to disperse an oil glut left behind during the coronavirus crisis.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries increased output by 900,000 barrels a day to 23.43 million a day, according to a Bloomberg survey. It's based on information from officials, ship-tracking data and estimates from consultants including Rystad Energy AS, Petro-Logistics SA, Rapidan Energy Group and JBC Energy GmbH.

OPEC and its partners are continuing to restrain output in accordance with their pact to limit production to tackle the steepest collapse in demand ever seen. Their labor has helped almost triple crude prices from the two-decade low in late April, lifting Brent futures in London to about \$43 a barrel.

As oil consumption recovers with the restart of economic activity worldwide, the coalition of producers is poised to open the taps even further this month. The group will return 1.3 million to 1.5 million barrels a day to the market this month, according to Saudi Arabia.

Still, there are concerns as many countries struggle to contain the epidemic and some are being forced to reinstate lockdown measures.

Saudi Arabia, OPEC's biggest producer, is moving with caution. While it boosted output by 920,000 barrels a day last month, the average remained below the limit it's allowed to pump under the agreement, at 8.45 million a day.

Other members aren't showing the same discipline.

Iraq and Nigeria made no progress in implementing their promised supply cutbacks, let alone the additional curbs they had pledged in compensation for earlier non-compliance.

Russia, the biggest non-OPEC member in the OPEC+ alliance, also increased production in July, according to preliminary data from the Energy Ministry.



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National Iranian Drilling Company	12,310,077	Tender No.: FP/11-99/013-2 Indent No.: 01-22-9846013	7,509,190,000

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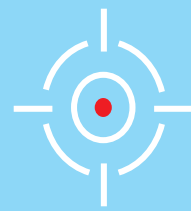
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تهران، ۲۰ آبان - وزیر امور اقتصادی و دارایی، محمد شمس، در جلسه‌ای با حضور اعضای هیئت مدیره و مدیران عامل شرکت‌های تابعه، با موضوع تعیین دستمزد کارگران، گفت: دولت متعهد است تورم را کنترل کند و دستمزد کارگران را به صورت منصفانه تعیین کند.

**قاجاق سوخت**

تهران، ۲۰ آبان - وزیر امور اقتصادی و دارایی، محمد شمس، در جلسه‌ای با حضور اعضای هیئت مدیره و مدیران عامل شرکت‌های تابعه، با موضوع تعیین دستمزد کارگران، گفت: دولت متعهد است تورم را کنترل کند و دستمزد کارگران را به صورت منصفانه تعیین کند.

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

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

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# Professor says U.S. oil deal with Syrian Kurds can be viewed as stolen property under American law

By Mohammad Mazhari

**TEHRAN** — The Syrian government, confirmed on Sunday, August 1, that an American oil company in an illegal deal aimed at stealing Syria’s crude, had signed an agreement with Kurdish-led rebels who control northeastern oilfields.

The formal statement released by the Syrian state media said that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) had signed an agreement with an unnamed U.S. company to extract and export oil.

The move has faced Turkey and Syria’s condemnation, calling it “looting the Syrian people’s national resources.”

Before Syria’s statement, Pompeo and Sen. Lindsey Graham hinted at a U.S. agreement to extract the oil during a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week, stirring up frantic speculation and driving a wedge between the Kurds and the Syrian central government.

In this regard, Nader Entessar, professor emeritus of political science from the University of South Alabama, tells the Tehran Times that the deal is an illegal one under international law, Syrian law and can even be viewed as stolen property under American law.

“This is not the first time that a U.S. corporation has signed an oil agreement with a segment of another country without the required permission of that country’s



central authority,” Entessar points out.

“In 2013, for example, the U.S. oil giant Chevron announced that it had signed an agreement with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq to explore the Qara Dagh field. This was Chevron’s third oil agreement with the KRG.”

At the time, Iraq’s central government slammed the Chevron agreement as illegal because the country’s Oil Ministry had not approved them.

“In the case of Iraq, Chevron was undermining the authority of an American ally, but in the Syrian case, the agreement is

even more brazen,” Entessar notes.

He says if the U.S. administration decides to justify the agreement on legal grounds, it would probably argue that the Syrian government does not exercise de facto authority over the Kurdish region and that the real authority is in the hands of the Kurdish forces.

“This is a weak argument because the Syrian government is the internationally recognized authority and thus exercises de jure control over all of Syria,” the American academic says.

In December 2018, Donald Trump

announced that U.S. troops involved in the fight against the Daesh (ISIS) in northeast Syria would be withdrawn imminently. With such a surprise decision, Trump tried to show that Washington’s policy in West Asia is going to be overturned.

However, after a while, Trump couldn’t keep his word and said that he wants to keep U.S. forces in Syria to “secure the oil” held by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces. But the actual development of the oilfields has been mired in legal roadblocks and competition for a contract.

About possible withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria after the deal, Entessar seems doubtful.

“I don’t think so. There is no organic link between the oil deal and a possible U.S. withdrawal from Syria. In all likelihood, U.S. military operations in Syria will continue, although we will see ebbs and flows,” he argues. “The U.S. may reposition its forces and even reduce the size of its military presence in Syria, but I do not believe it will withdraw from that country anytime soon.”

Pointing to U.S. withdrawal from international treaties unilaterally, Entessar emphasizes that the U.S. administration is not trustworthy in its deals.

“The record of the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from its international obligations and long-cherished treaties, especially in the past three years, speaks for itself,” the professor notes.

## How much annexation can Palestinians survive?

By Mariam Barghouti

Palestinians have resisted Israeli occupation and colonization for decades. But erasure is still a looming threat.

Despite the raging pandemic and Israel’s ever-increasing restrictions on Palestinians’ movements, a few friends and I still manage to meet occasionally to chat and catch up. As we sit, drinking tea and coffee, my phone would buzz with constant updates sent by journalists, activists, or friends about the rising number of infections and developments surrounding Israel’s annexation plans.

As I read one depressing message after the other, the faces around me would go blank. These occasional gatherings - meant to distract us from the suffocation of living in a pandemic and an occupation - often sink into the generally somber mood dominating the Palestinian experience.

Although we do not know what will happen next, we are terribly afraid that it is going to be perilous. Every now and then, we would ask each other, “Do you think we will survive what is coming?”

We know some of us will not. We are constantly reminded of that. On June 23, 27-year-old Ahmed Erakat was executed at an Israeli checkpoint near Bethlehem. Two weeks later, 29-year-old Ibrahim Abu Yacoub was also shot and killed by Israeli forces north of Salfit in the West Bank. In a trigger-happy occupation, none of us is safe.

As international media is abuzz with speculation about Israel’s intent to formally annex parts of the West Bank, and as world governments prepare to issue their n-th statements of empty words against Israel, we in Palestine wonder how much more annexation we can survive.

### ■ Decades-long annexation

For decades, before Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made his formal call to annex Palestinian lands, we have been experiencing persistent annexation. Illegal Israeli settlements spring up so quickly, you would think they were built overnight. And just as quickly, they continue to expand, creeping ever closer towards our villages and towns.

“When was this settlement so close? I can see the houses’ insides!” has become a common refrain across the occupied and colonized West Bank.

“They never built the settlements in a temporary fashion,” a friend from Jerusalem once told me.

In parallel, Israeli checkpoints have also proliferated throughout the West Bank to provide security for colonization activities. “Flying checkpoints” operated by Israeli soldiers in armored vehicles would sporadically appear and disappear, obstructing Palestinian movement at every step, causing millions of dollars of damage to the Palestinian economy. The 25km trip between Ramallah and Bethlehem, for example, can take Palestinian hours.

There are also the more permanent checkpoints, such as the infamous Qalandia, which separates Jerusalem from the West Bank and through which Palestinians can enter the rest of historic Palestine (present-day Israel) if they have permits. In 2019, the Israelis added a massive structure to the checkpoint. Shortly after, I went through Qalandia checkpoint for the first time. My jaw dropped when I saw it. It looked like an airport terminal, rather than a checkpoint.

I recalled how not that long ago, we were protesting in front of its scattered concrete structures and metal barriers and getting shot at live ammunition.

What I saw in 2019 was a massive building with electronic doors, surveillance cameras, and Israeli soldiers sitting behind large glass windows, barking orders: “Move further, come closer, you can enter, you cannot, you need to be checked!”

Beyond taking our freedom to move within the West Bank, Israel has also annexed our freedom to leave. Allenby bridge, connecting the West Bank with Jordan, was once meant to be an interim humanitarian crossing. Today it is the only port of entry/exit for West Bank Palestinians, and it is operated by the Israeli Airport Authority, which can deny Palestinian travelers the right to leave.

### ■ A divided Palestinian people

The Palestinian population is facing the looming annexation divided, not just politically and geographically, but also in their experience of occupation. Palestinians



### Many Palestinians live in destitution due to the occupation and their expulsion from their lands that their main concern is physical survival.

in Area C - de facto under the control of Israel - or in Gaza have a different reality than those of us residing in Areas A and B.

Living in Ramallah, I recognize that the imminent threat to be expelled is less acute than for Palestinians living in Area C or in East Jerusalem, who are regularly evicted. Their land and property are confiscated to make way for Israeli settlers. I also know that unlike Palestinians in Gaza, I am safe from Israeli bombardment, because Israeli settlers and settlements surround the West Bank. Bombing is not an option.

Preserving my identity and the Palestinian character of my immediate surroundings is relatively easier than it is for Palestinians with Israeli citizenship. The systematic erasure they face within the Israeli state is coupled with a broad range of laws, ensuring they remain second-class citizens.

Living in Ramallah also means that I do not face the hostility of a host nation, denied the right to work, or receive healthcare, like millions of Palestinian refugees in Arab countries. Living in Ramallah, also means that I do not experience the discrimination faced by Palestinians living in the West.

Yet, I too face the violence of the occupation and the precarity of being Palestinian in this world. If I am not shot randomly at a checkpoint, my home can still be raided at an Israeli official’s whim, or attacked by settlers surrounding our villages. And if not that, then the Palestinian Authority (PA) may decide I am a political threat and detain me.

In this sense, the annexation will be felt differently by different Palestinian communities. And this is probably what the occupier is counting on - that divided in our experiences, we will not be able to unite in our response.

### ■ Economic debilitation

Many Palestinians live in such destitution due to the occupation and their expulsion from their lands that their main concern is physical survival. This further erodes their ability to mobilize politically.

The 1994 Paris Protocol, meant as an interim measure, has effectively ensured Palestinians’ economic insecurity through its “customs union” model, making the Palestinian economy dependent on Israel. This allowed Israel to rein in the Palestinian resistance.

In the West Bank and Gaza, hundreds of thousands of families depend on salaries from the PA, which de-

### In the West Bank and Gaza, hundreds of thousands of families depend on salaries from the PA, which depends on Israel to allow the transfer of its budget and its Western backers to donate the funds.

pends on Israel to allow the transfer of its budget and its Western backers to donate the funds. The private sector is completely dominated by and dependent on the Israeli economy and political mercy. The PA’s talk about “economic disengagement” from Israel is simply laughable.

Palestinians who cannot make a living in the economically underdeveloped West Bank and Gaza are forced to seek employment in Israel, where they are thoroughly exploited and left at the mercy of their Israeli employers. They face the risk of their work permits being revoked if they or their relatives show any sign of political resistance.

After 13 years of a military-imposed siege aided by Egypt and the PA and several murderous Israeli assaults, Gaza is a living human catastrophe. The Strip is unlivable, and its economy is in shambles. The Palestinian population there is left in permanent economic, health, nutritional, and sanitation crises. In the Arab neighborhood, Palestinian refugees are barely scraping a living.

The occupier hopes to starve us into apathy. But just in case, it has also deployed military force, political oppression, and control.

### ■ Resisting occupation and its supporters

Palestinian resistance is more than 100 years old. We have fought the British empire, Israeli colonialism, and international complicity with Israeli crimes.

As Palestinians, we have tried to stop Israeli colonization of our lands by any means available to us.

We have tried armed resistance, and have been met with the brutal response of a nuclear army; we have attempted peaceful protest only to be shot at, arrested and tortured; we have appealed to international institutions and law and have been foiled by Israeli and American diplomatic bullying; and we have also tried to promote the non-violent boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement, which has been viciously attacked with various laws seeking to criminalize it as “anti-Semitic.”

Nothing has worked on the ground for the Palestinians. Nothing has stopped Israeli encroachment on our rights and theft of our land. We have been abandoned by friendly governments and Arab allies, while the international community has continued to maintain its complicity in Israeli crimes.

Apart from Israeli colonialism, we have also had to face the authoritarianism of our own Palestinian leadership. The Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza have deliberately quashed our ability to mobilize by imprisoning political activists, violently repressing protests, and pumping more resources towards their security forces rather than community development and empowerment.

Under these conditions, a 1987 or 2000-style mass uprising seems unlikely. Israel has learned its lessons and has worked hard to undermine our ability to mass mobilize.

This, of course, does not mean we will not resist. The Great March of Return of 2018 demonstrated to the Israelis and the world that we could and will march for our rights even as live bullets rain on us. The Al-Aqsa protests of 2017 proved we could mobilize momentarily without or even despite the Palestinian political factions. The Bedouins of Araqib rebuilding their homes after they were bulldozed 173 times by the Israelis shows we can persevere. Resistance will most likely be carried out at a community level. The residents of the Jordan Valley have already vowed to remain on their land, no matter what.

I admit, with all that is happening in Palestine, freedom seems to be increasingly more distant. It is a heart-breaking experience to drive between Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank and observe how blatant the occupation’s violence has become in taking over what little remains of Palestine.

It makes me think of cities like Yaffa, Safad, and Haifa. They, too, were once Palestinian cities, but now almost no one remembers that. They have been annexed, Israelized, their Palestinian population, ethnically cleansed, their Palestinian character and flavor completely scraped off.

I can see the Tel Aviv skyline from my balcony, and I wonder, will Ramallah wake up one day to the glitzy new buildings of a European colonial city, thoroughly sanitized and scrubbed free of its Palestinian identity? And will I survive the violence that this process will entail?

(Source: Aljazeera)

## Foreign media reactions on Sino-Iran partnership Leader’s Eid message to U.S. system

**1 →** In conclusion, the writer points out that since the U.S. pulled out of the nuclear deal in May 2018, Iran’s currency has dropped sharply and inflation has surged, with budget deficits of nearly 30 percent this fiscal year and oil sales plummeting to 300,000 barrels a day.

### ■ TIME magazine, July 29: What China’s new deal with Iran says about its ambitions in the region

The writer talks about partnership between “America’s principal global rival and its long-term antagonist in the Middle East (Iran) undermining White House attempts to isolate Iran on world stage.”

The op-ed says about the leaked document in Farsi, whose authenticity is not confirmed yet, but which “could boost Chinese investments in Iran to \$400 billion”, pointing that Majlis approval will be needed.

Pointing out that comments from China on the deal has been scarce, the article throws light on January 2016 origins of the deal during China’s Xi Jinping’s visit to Tehran just a year after JCPOA was signed and before U.S. pullout from the deal.

“Beijing invested less than \$27 billion in Iran from 2005 to 2019, according to American Enterprise Institute, and annual investment has declined every year since 2016. Last year China invested just \$1.54 billion in Iran – a paltry sum compared to the \$3.72 billion it invested in the UAE or the \$5.36 billion in Saudi Arabia.”

Pointing out that China’s oil imports from Iran plummeted 89 percent year-on-year this March, the author asks a few questions:

Why does Iran want a deal with China now? The writer goes back to “maximum pressure” sanctions and how this move has failed to achieve its objectives, including eliminating Iran’s ballistic missile program; blocking Iran’s regional influence; ...” However, the writer points out that the sanctions have pushed Iran into a deep recession but fails to underline the main objective of sanctions: to topple the Islamic Republic.

What’s in it for China: The article mentions that as of 2017 China is the world’s largest crude importer and has sought to diversify its sources of supply. Iran’s geography opens “an additional terrestrial route for Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative” and it complements “sprawling global infrastructure development strategy adopted by Chinese government in 2013.”

Quoting Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East Program at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), TIME says: “China does not need Iran, but Iran is useful to China.” This is in part for Tehran’s enmity with Washington, points the article.

Where else is China engaged in the Middle East? Iran is one of the five principle partners China has in the Middle East: Saudi Arabia (largest trade-wise), UAE comes second as it sees itself a logistics hub for BRI; Egypt for Chinese concerns for transit through the Suez canal; China cooperates with Israel on security and counterterrorism; and Iraq which is China’s third largest oil supplier.

Will China overtake U.S. as dominant global power in Middle East? With trillions of dollars spent on wars since 2001, more than 800,000 killed, the U.S. desires to downsize its military presence in the region and this policy will continue no matter who wins November’s elections. “But that doesn’t mean China wants to fill the void.”

Pointing to studies, the article says, “China’s interest in Iran are predominantly economic, and take priority over security and geopolitical interests.”

### ■ Al-Monitor’s, July 29 piece: Potential China-Iran pact has major implications for Pakistan

Specializing in news and analysis from the Middle East, Al-Monitor site talks about various reports about the 18-page leaked document fed by the media hype. Mahmoud Vaezi, the chief of staff for President Rouhani, has been quoted as saying the final agreement could be reached by the end of the current Iranian year in March 2021.

The article points out that since Iran and Pakistan are neighbors the deal will have main implications and benefits for Pakistan.

The writer goes on to compare Sino-Iranian \$400 billion partnership with \$46 billion Beijing has set out to invest in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Quoting Iranian envoy to Pakistan Mehdi Honardoost who has said: “We are ready to be part of CPEC with all our capabilities and resources,” Honardoost added. “maybe without the energy and transit support of Iran, the multi-billion dollar project will not reach its final stages.”

Secondly, the implication that China could be developing Chabahar port could be beneficial for both port cities of Gwadar and Chabahar.

The writer talks about China’s plans to develop more ports in Iran, including Bandar-e-Jask port - 350 km from Chabahar- which is situated outside the Gulf of Hormuz and is critical to global oil transit.

The comment concludes that Iran may be looking for support from UN Security Council members to avoid economic sanctions rather than merely “looking east”.

### ■ BUSINESS INSIDER, July 29: What a fake aircraft carrier reveals about how Iran plans to take on the U.S.

Based in New York City, Business Insider is an American financial business news website. It analyzes if a military intervention by the U.S. would be feasible under the circumstances.

It refers to the recent drill by the IRGC Navy (IRGCN) named “The Great Prophet 14” in which a replica of a U.S. Navy Nimitz-class carrier was destroyed. The military exercises were held in the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf region which the article in the conservative outlet described:

“Iran’s waters are divided between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. They are connected by the Strait of Hormuz, which is only 21 miles wide at its narrowest point and is the busiest shipping lane for petroleum in the world. The region as a whole has over half of the world’s proven crude oil reserves.”

The analysis points out that in the event of war Iran’s Navy and IRGC Navy “would most likely immediately set out to mine the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf. Thousands of Iran’s estimated 5,000 mines would be deployed as quickly as possible.”

The article anticipates that the next step would be deployment and launch of Iran’s ballistic missile arsenal, the largest and most diverse in the Middle East with some reportedly able to reach as far as 2,000 kilometers.

“Regardless, any conflict with Iran will be extremely costly,” the writer also pointed to the geographical advantage of Iran, dedicated soldiers, and the “number of proxies willing to create chaos in neighboring counties like Iraq and Yemen.”

The article concludes by quoting an expert from The Washington Institute Farzin Nadimi: “The IRGCN is dug in and will be difficult enemy to destroy. It won’t be easy for the U.S. to turn the tide.”



## Historical churches in West Azarbaijan undergo rehabilitation works

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Three historical churches, dating back to different historical eras in the north-western West Azarbaijan province, have undergone restoration, a provincial tourism chief has said.

Petrus Polis, Chamaki's Saint Merry and Nakhjavan Tappeh's Saint Merry churches due to their damages and destructions are being restored, CHTN reported Jalil Jabbari as saying on Tuesday.

Located eight kilometers to the east of the provincial capital of Urmia, in Klisakendi village, Petrus Polis Church was built in the 8th century. The church, which is considered one of the oldest Assyrian churches in the country, was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 2001.



Saint Merry in Chamaki village is also one of the oldest Assyrian churches in the region. Around 600 Assyrian populated the village, who speak in Modern Assyrian.

Saint Merry Church in Nakhjavan Tappeh, 22 Kilometers to the northeast of Urmia, was built in the 17th century and is still used by the Armenians living in the village.

Iran is home to several ancient and historical churches. Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are the most significant religious minorities in the country with Christians constituting the bulk.

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.

## Project to restore Sassanid-era fortress started

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – A team of cultural heritage experts and restorers has started a project on Qaleh Kohneh, aiming to rehabilitate parts of the ruined Sassanid-era (224 CE–651) fortress, which is situated in Meshkinsahr county, northwest Iran.

"A 23-meter-long stone foundation is being amended on the east side and the tower on the east side of Qaleh Kohneh in order to preserve and revive this important historical monument of the city," Meshkinsahr's tourism chief Imanali Imani said on Monday, CHTN reported.



Due to the significance of this historical monument, the eastern side of the fortress was urgently restored over the past two years with a credit of two billion rials (about \$47,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) in order to prevent its destruction and lay the ground for it being a tourist destination, the official noted.

The fortress bears a sole inscription inscribed in the Sassanid Pahlavi script, which shows the importance of this fort and its strategic location, he said.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan that are amongst highlights of the ensemble.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region" -- to its World Heritage list.

## Niyavaran Cultural-Historic Complex

**(Lonely Planet)** — In the Alborz foothills is the palace where Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and his family spent most of the last 10 years of royal rule. It's set in 5 hectares of landscaped gardens and has six separate museums, the best of which is the elegant 1960s Niyavaran Palace, with its clean lines, opulent interior and sublime carpets.



Tickets must be bought before entering at the main gate. There's also a pleasant cafe with outdoor seating.

Apart from the Niyavaran Palace, you can also explore the Sahebgharanieh Palace, where the shah kept his office; the Ahmad Shahi Pavilion, Reza Pahlavi's residence when he was crown prince; and the Automobile Museum, which houses a small collection of stately vehicles. Note that at the time of writing, the Sahebgharianieh Palace was closed for renovations.

There are also a number of other museums, including the art-filled Jahan-Nama Museum & Gallery, and the Imperial Library Museum.

To get here, take a shuttle taxi or bus east of Tajrish Sq. and ask to be dropped at Shahid Bahonar Sq. near the museum entrance.

# Muharram rituals in Yazd to be held differently due to coronavirus pandemic

**→ 1** Every year thousands of foreigners flock to the country to see with their naked eyes and record with cameras the Iranian fervor during Muharram that reaches its climax on its 10th day, also known as Ashura.

They could witness various ceremonies such as Tazieh, a passion play inspired by historical and religious narrations, Sineh-Zani [beating the chest] and Nazri, food offerings during Muharram in every village, township, city or metropolis, which are usually sponsored by wealthy benefactors.

However, this year, one of the main features of Yazd Muharram ceremonies, "Nakhl gardani", the act of carrying the Nakhl -- a wooden structure used as a symbolic representation of the Imam's coffin-- from one place to another, resembling an Imam's funeral, as well as other ceremonies will not be held.

Yazd, the cradle of Zoroastrianism, is now one of the unavoidable points of Islamic Iran. Home to thousands of small and big mosques and Hosayniyas, Yazd has earned the title "Iran's and world's Hosayniya".

A Hosayniya is a congregation hall for holding Shiite Muslim commemoration ceremonies, especially those associated with the mourning month of Muharram, the month in which Imam Hussein (AS) was martyred by the then ruler Yazid.



From a theological approach, religious rituals are perhaps a recreation of collective memories that help to shape what is known as collective identity, an essential foundation

for sense of belonging. One such ritual is the mourning ceremony. Rich with symbolism, most of which have historical values, these ceremonies are a platform where communal

## COVID-19 negative PCR test needed for Iraqis visiting Iran

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Iranian authorities have announced that the COVID-19 negative PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test is required for all Iraqi travelers to enter the country, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

All Iraqi passengers coming to Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKIA) from today need to provide proof they have tested negative for coronavirus to gain entry, the report added.

Although issuing visas on arrival for tourists has been suspended, Iraqis with Iranian spouses and their children, Iraqis residing in Iran or those seeking medical treatment in Iran, as well as students and businessmen can travel to the country following the new regulations, the report said.

Last week, new regulations and instructions for traveling to Iran were announced.

Not issuing visas on arrival for tourists, specific mandates for testing, tracing, receiving of a traveler test/vaccine certificate, identifying infected travelers, and removing them from the travel ecosystem and putting them in quarantine were among the regulations.

Iran has suffered an average 15.8 percent fall in foreign arrivals during the first three months of 2020 compared to

the same period last year, according to data released by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that analyzes the impact of the COVID-19 on international tourism.

The worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 has brought the world to a standstill, and tourism has been the worst affected of all major economic sectors.

Back in March, the UN specialized agency for tourism announced that it expected international tourist arrivals would be down by 20 percent to 30 percent in 2020 when compared with 2019 figures.

Iranian deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri has said that international tourism could be recovered soon because it is mostly relying on potential travelers and pilgrims from the neighboring countries.

"Given the policies of the country's tourism industry over the past two years to focus on tourism markets in the neighboring countries, the possibility of recovering and reviving international tourism in the shortest possible time is predictable," Teymouri told the Tehran Times in May.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bath-



houses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

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

## Iranian archaeologists find new clues on enigmatic Laodicea Temple

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – A team of Iranian archaeologists has found further evidence to unearth the enigmatic Laodicea Temple in the city of Nahavand, west-central Hamedan province.

"The fifth season of excavation for possibly unearthing the Laodicea Temple from Dokhaharan region of Nahavand city came to an end after some new clues on the ancient sanctuary was found," Nahavand cultural heritage chief Mohsen Janjan announced on Sunday.

A total of 12 trenches were dug during this archaeological survey, which the aim of lessening the size of a previously demarcated area



which adds up to 12 ha. And the month-long survey ended on July 24, the official explained.

According to Janjan, the survey was tightly

based on speculations and discoveries made during the four previous seasons, which had uncovered capital column heads, related shafts, and bases as well as striking pieces of engraved pottery dating from the Seleucid era.

Some archaeologists believe that the core of an ancient Greek temple is buried beneath many residential units built by the locals on the site over the years. In 1943, archaeologists discovered an 85x36 centimeter ancient inscription of 30 lines written in Greek calling on the people of Nahavand to obey the laws of the government. The inscription indicated the existence of the Laodicea Temple, which had been built by the Seleucid king who ruled

Asia Minor, Antiochus III the Great (223-187 BC), for his wife Queen Laodicea.

The Seleucid Empire was a Hellenistic state ruled by the Seleucid dynasty which existed from 312 BC to 63 BC; Seleucus I Nicator founded it following the division of the Macedonian Empire vastly expanded by Alexander the Great. Seleucus received Babylonia (321 BC) and from there expanded his dominions to include much of Alexander's near-eastern territories. At the height of its power, the Empire included central Anatolia, Persia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and what is now Kuwait, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

## Obsolete textiles being revived in South Khorasan province

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – Several [once] obsolete ways of making traditional textiles and their related businesses and workshops have been revived across the eastern South Khorasan province.

"Our country has a major role in the development of the world's textile industry during important historical periods and it is a cradle of the textile industry and its developments.... A significant number of traditional textile fields, which had been deserted for long, have been revived and are being flourished with the support of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts," deputy provincial tourism chief Hossein Abbaszadeh said on Monday.

"For instance, since the early Islamic centuries, the variety of traditional textiles with the usage of various raw materials has been widespread in the area now known as South Khorasan [province]. This art-industry has been revived and expanded after years of recession since [the Iranian year] 1380 (2001-2002) with the support and strategies from the local and administrative cultural heritage bodies."



"The revive scheme, which focuses on preservation and originality of [the indigenous] handicrafts, has increasingly been welcomed by people of all walks of life and particularly the youth, leading to an increase in individual and group workshops of manufacturing the traditional textile," the

official explained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Abbaszadeh reminded of the village of Khorashad, which was designated in 2018 by the World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR) as the world hub for 'Toebafi' (traditional hand-woven fabrics), adding it was a turning point in the development of traditional textile across the province.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19), tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said earlier in June.

Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, the minister said.

According to official data, some 295 fields of handicrafts are currently practiced across Iran with more than two million people engaging, the majority of whom are women... Handicrafts also play an important role in the economy in our rural villages.

## Survey to examine role of saffron in tourism development

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – A case study is being carried out on the central city of Natanz to find out how saffron farming may contribute to the development of agritourism in the region.

Over that past couple of years, a relatively new field of tourism named "agritourism" is thriving in the region that is aimed most broadly to involve any agriculturally-based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch, Alireza Hassanzadeh, the head of a local anthropology research laboratory.

Iranian saffron is known as the "red gold". Saffron is a magical ingredient in Persian culture, from aromatic foods and colorful desserts to the physical and spiritual medi-

cine. Every year, the saffron harvest season begins in early November. While most other vegetation is gone, the bright purple flowers cover the fields and create an outstanding landscape in dry regions in Iran.

Major saffron producers of Iran are located on the east side of the country. If you would like to see the biggest market, head to Mashhad, which is also known for its religious importance.

"Considering that saffron is the most valuable plant in Iran and it has special characteristics in prevention and treatment of some diseases, farming it by the means of proper planning and investment holds a significant potential to attract many domes-

tic and foreign visitors," the official noted.

Agritourism and nature-tourism enterprises might also include outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife study, horseback riding), educational experiences (cannery tours, cooking classes, or tea or coffee tasting), entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances), hospitality services (farm stays, guided tours, or outfitter services), and on-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).

Today, agritourism is regarded as a stimulus to the imbalanced economy of agriculture sectors and the tendency for emotional and nostalgic roots of the modern world citizens and due to factors such as visitor participation



in farm activities, direct purchase of products, spending a night at a farm, curiosity and learning about the farm and agriculture products has been able to create a wide target population.



# Capable health system helps Iran contain coronavirus, Hamelmann says

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — The World Health Organization Representative in Iran, Dr. Christoph Hamelmann, has said that the country's capable health system has greatly helped it contain the coronavirus outbreak.

"In recent decades, Iran has attained many achievements in the production of medical equipment and medicine. Such progress is now helping the country manage the coronavirus pandemic," IRNA quoted Hamelmann as saying on Monday.

Boosting the capacity for diagnosing the disease by laboratories and taking a dynamic approach to identify patients were among the significant measures in dealing with the coronavirus, he added.

He also referred to the development of social distancing protocols as another policy that was effective in the prevention of the disease.

"However, the incessant work of health-care workers has made them exhausted. This is a serious problem that should be resolved," he stressed.



In May, Hamelmann told the Tehran Times that Iran is benefiting from strengths in fighting against the coronavirus epidemic, including a strong primary healthcare system, production surge in a reasonable time, and multisectoral response.

"Looking back to the early days of the outbreak, the virus was almost unknown and there were not quite successful experiences worldwide, however, Iran was among the few countries with a self-sustaining plan in the fight against the epidemic, after China and South Korea.

One of the very important early achievements in Iran was the rapid establishment of a decentralized laboratory testing for Covid-19," he explained.

On the other hand, Iran, to a certain degree, is a good experience to learn from by other countries due to the strong primary health care system, which focuses on promoting healthcare in rural areas, he said, adding that Iran was one of the few countries in the world which developed test kits as soon as possible despite problems such as licensing and evaluation.

## Elephants, rhinos and giraffes among endangered species facing fresh threat during global pandemic

A global wildlife emergency is developing in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Independent recently revealed the potential scale of the crisis after tourism collapsed and philanthropic donations plummeted, impacting the livelihoods of hundreds of frontline rangers and the thousands of other people who work in and around conservation, the Independent reported.

Almost a third of conservationists fear that the pandemic will increase threats to species and habitats, including increased poaching due to reduced law enforcement presence and tourists, along with the greater reliance on hunting by vulnerable local communities, the MBZ Conservation Fund reported.

It highlights the urgency of our Stop The Illegal Wildlife Trade campaign, which was launched by The Independent's largest shareholder Evgeny Lebedev to call for an international effort to clamp down on the illegal trade of wild animals, one of the greatest threats to future biodiversity.

Reports are emerging of upticks in poaching around the world: Three, critically endangered giant ibis birds were recently poisoned in Cambodia (1-2% of the entire population); at least four tigers and six leopards have been killed since lockdown in India. In Uganda, Rafiki, the country's rare and beloved silverback mountain gorilla, became collateral damage of hunters seeking out smaller animals.

Here, we examine some of the endangered species facing increased threats during our global health crisis.

### Rhinos

Nine rhinos have been poached in South Africa since the lockdown, conservation group Rhino 911 reports, amid fears the numbers may be higher. Across the border, Rhino Conservation Botswana reported the killings of six rhinos.

Rhinos are susceptible to poachers for their horn, sought for ornamental value and to be ground into traditional medicines.

Half a million rhinos roamed Africa and Asia at the beginning of last century but today as few as 29,000 remain in the wild. Three species of rhino - black, Javan, and Sumatran - are critically endangered.

In Africa, the western black rhino is now extinct in the wild. The two remaining northern white rhino are kept under 24-hour guard at a Kenyan conservancy.

Cathy Dean, CEO of Save The Rhino, told The Independent that the pandemic's full impact of poaching on rhino populations was still being assessed.

"There have been rhino poaching incidents but, apart from in Botswana, it's been relatively quiet, likely due to the restriction of movement within and between countries, and possibly because criminal gangs have found other forms of illicit income," Ms Dean said.

"For example, we think lockdown prohibitions on alcohol and tobacco in South Africa are responsible for a reduction in poaching as criminal gangs have found less dangerous ways to make money by brewing moonshine and smuggling tobacco."

The crisis is mounting due to economic losses caused by



the total absence of tourism in Africa this year, and a drop in philanthropic donations in the face of a looming global recession.

At just seven conservation sites in Kenya supported by Save The Rhino, the projected deficit for 2020 was more than \$2million. Ms Dean said: "If these conservancies go bust and can't afford to manage and protect their wildlife anymore, we will lose that habitat."

"It will be converted to agriculture and settled. Hundreds of thousands of acres will be lost to wildlife and that impacts conservation efforts forever."

### Elephants

Conservationists are sounding the alarm for elephants. In June, a shocking mass killing of six elephants took place in one day in Ethiopia's Mago National Park. (Ten elephants were killed across the entire east African nation in 2019).

Two elephants were reportedly electrocuted by poachers on the Champua range in the state of Odisha, India the same month.

An estimated 415,000 elephants are left in Africa with the species regarded as vulnerable due to poaching. Numbers continue to decline in parts of central Africa and East Africa. Between 2007 and 2014, an average of 55 elephants were killed each day in Africa, mainly for their high-value tusks.

Less than 50,000 Asian elephants remain in the wild and the species is classified as endangered. Their numbers have dropped by 50 per cent in the last three generations.

There has been positive steps to protect elephants including bolstering frontline ranger protection and strengthening laws against poaching in Africa. China's significant step of banning the ivory trade in 2017 also led to a crash in demand.

The pandemic risks all of the gains. Dr Max Graham, founder of international conservation charity Space for Giants, told The Independent: "There is increasing illegal activity in protected areas largely in bushmeat poaching, an indicator of reduced law enforcement and eyes on the ground."

"We're worried that the opportunity which that presents is clear to the international wildlife trafficking syndicates."

"There are still significant illegal markets for ivory in Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, often funnelling into China. To feed

those markets, syndicates could well take massive advantage of the dip in security in elephant habitat in Africa, coupled with growing economic hardship in society, to increase their demand for ivory."

### Pangolins

The world's most-trafficked mammal has harnessed global attention after being identified as a potential link in the spread of the coronavirus.

All eight pangolin species are banned in international trade under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

An estimated 200,000 pangolins are taken from the wild every year across Africa and Asia, according to WildAid. Poachers target pangolins for meat, a delicacy in parts of Asia, and keratin scales, an ingredient in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

Professor Ray Jansen, chairman of the African Pangolin Working Group recorded 97 tonnes of pangolin scales leaving Africa in 2019 but that volume has dropped to around 30 tonnes since the pandemic. The number of live pangolins intercepted by the charity has also declined: From 43 pangolins in 2019 to 12 so far this year.

He told The Independent: "Shutting down borders and the closing of cargo ports, along with the inhibition of people's movements across borders and within countries has led to a huge reduction in the trafficking of pangolin scales and other pangolin products."

However he doesn't believe that poaching has declined and instead pangolin parts were being stockpiled in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Vietnam.

"When we open up and the seas are full of cargo ships again, I think we're going to see movement of illicit pangolin products next year," said Dr Jansen. "I think it's going to be a lot easier to stick a few tonnes of pangolin scales in between Nike shoes."

He added: "I don't think it's gone, I just think it's waiting in the wings for global trade to go back to normal. I really hope that I'm wrong."

### Jaguars

Jaguars are listed as 'near threatened' on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red List, though their status may be elevated to "vulnerable" due to recent disturbing trends.

Around 173,000 jaguars are left in the wild today, having been wiped out from 40 percent of their historic range in Latin America and now extinct in Uruguay and El Salvador.

Some 18,000 jaguars were killed each year until 1973, when CITES intervention dramatically reduced the trade in skins. In 2010, evidence emerged that illegal trade in jaguar parts was increasing driven by demand for jewellery, meat and medicinal products. Between 2012-2018, more than 800 jaguars were killed for their parts and trafficked to China, according to a study in June.

## China-Iran Sinology Development and Culture Forum held online

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — The fourth roundtable on China-Iran Sinology Development and Culture after the COVID-19 Pandemic was held online on Tuesday.



The meeting was held through video conferencing with scholars and researchers from the two countries in attendance, IRNA reported.

Center for China studies in Tehran's Allameh Tabataba'i University in collaboration with Beijing Language and Culture University organized the event.

Professor Song Xian, member of Chinese Academy of History and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Dr. Liu Hui, member of Shanghai International Studies University and Director of Persian Faculty; Dr. Shahla Bagheri, member of Kharazmi University's Department of Social Sciences; and Dr. Zahra Mirhosseini, member of Alzahra University of Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics were the keynote speakers of the forum.

The cultural attaché of the Iranian Embassy in China, and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization participated in holding the meeting.

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 cooperation 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.

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.

## Some 3,700 exceptional Afghan students studying in Iran

**1 →** Over the past four decades, Iran has hosted over 4 million foreign nationals, especially Afghans, he noted, IRNA reported.

Meanwhile, Gholamreza Karimi, head of the international affairs department of the Ministry of Education, said that the Ministry of Education has allocated 10 trillion rials (nearly \$240 million) for the education of refugees, while international donations constitute only 2-2.5 percent of this amount.

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Iraq media wars

(April 1, 2004)

The ways in which the national media in different countries reported the Iraq war reflected the polarisation of opinion, especially in Europe, for and against the war strategy of the US and its allies. This report from William Horsley:

A traveller a year ago might almost have judged, from the media in different European countries, that two different wars were taking place. **Much of the reporting** in France and Germany, where the governments and people were both strongly against the war, **was pervasively negative**. There was a **strong focus** on stories of reverses suffered by the coalition forces, hostility to the invaders among ordinary Iraqis, and **vivid reporting** about the death and suffering of innocent civilians.

In Britain, where **public opinion was evenly split** for and against the war, the focus was more varied. The official comments of military spokesmen, who naturally stressed coalition successes, were a **regular part of the coverage**, alongside reports for example from Iraqi hospitals filled with victims of the war. The media in Britain **became the forum for an impassioned public debate**. And the BBC found itself at odds with the British government over its reporting of the postwar security problems inside Iraq, as well as some reports questioning the way the case for war had been made.

Research by Cardiff University in Wales found that the **raw, first-hand reports** by so-called **"embedded" reporters**, mostly American and British, added realism to the picture of the war given to the British public. Reporters from countries outside the coalition were excluded from that system. This, combined with the **mood of public indignation**, contributed to an **unusual conformity of view** in mainland Europe, among most, though not all, of the main newspapers.

### Words

**Much of the reporting**: was pervasively negative: anti-war opinions ran through many of the reports  
**a strong focus**: reports concentrated on this topic  
**vivid reporting**: clear detailed and lively presentation of news  
**public opinion was evenly split**: the attitude of the public was divided with half in favour, half against  
**a regular part of the coverage**: often reported  
**became the forum for an impassioned public debate**: provided an opportunity for people to express their views with great feeling  
**raw, first-hand reports**: reports giving immediate impressions from people actually there  
**so-called 'embedded' reporters**: the term 'embedded reporters' became used for reporters actually accompanying the soldiers  
**the mood of public indignation**: emotion at this time was one of shock and anger  
**an unusual conformity of view**: a surprising number of people thought the same thing

(Source: BBC)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

## Iran Association of Social Workers holds two seats in IFSW

Iran Association of Social Workers holds two seat in the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and has a great potential to become a role model for other countries, the association's head Seyed Hasan Mousavi Chalak has said.

Mousavi Chalak who is also Asia Pacific Regional Representative for the IFSW Global Committees and Ethics Committee went on to say that social services know no boundaries and Iran is capable of and willing to share its first-hand experience and achievements in this field.

## اختصاص دو کرسی به ایران در فدراسیون جهانی مددکاری اجتماعی

سید حسن موسوی چلک رئیس انجمن مددکاری اجتماعی ایران با تأکید بر اینکه ایران قادر است تا الگوی کشورهای دیگر در این عرصه باشد از اختصاص دو کرسی به ایران در فدراسیون جهانی مددکاری اجتماعی خبر داد.

موسوی چلک که به عنوان کمیسر اخلاق و عضو هیئت رئیسه فدراسیون جهانی مددکاری اجتماعی در منطقه آسیا و اقیانوسیه در فدراسیون جهانی مددکاری اجتماعی انتخاب شده است همچنین گفت: گسترش خدمات اجتماعی نباید محدود به مرزهای جغرافیایی باشد، و ایران قادر و مایل است تا دستاوردها و تجربیات خود در این حوزه را در جهان ترویج کند.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “-burg, -burgh, -boro, -berg”

■ **Meaning:** to form name of a city or town  
 ■ **For example:** Each year The City of **Harrisburg** hosts almost 100 family-oriented events.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Have somebody up

■ **Meaning:** to make someone go to a court of law to prove that you think they have committed a crime  
 ■ **For example:** Last year he was had up for stealing his neighbor's car.

### IDIOM

#### Burden of proof

■ **Explanation:** the necessity imposed by the law to prove that what one says is true.  
 ■ **For example:** The burden of proof lies with the claimant.



## UK risks twice-as-big second COVID wave without better testing, study finds

Britain faces a second wave of COVID-19 this winter twice as widespread as the initial outbreak if it reopens schools without a more effective test-and-trace system in place, according to a study published Tuesday.

Researchers from University College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine modeled the impact of reopening schools either on a full- or part-time basis, thus allowing parents to return to work, on the potential spread of the virus, Daily Star reported.

They concluded a second wave could be prevented if 75 percent of those with symptoms were found and tested and 68 percent of their contacts were traced, or if 87 percent of people with symptoms were found and 40 percent of their contacts tested.

"However, we also predict that in the absence of sufficiently broad test-trace-isolate coverage, reopening of schools combined with accompanied reopening of society across all scenarios might induce a second COVID-19 wave," said the study, published in The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health.

"Our modeling results suggest that full school reopening in September 2020 without an effective test-trace-isolate strategy would result in R rising above 1 and a resulting second wave of infections that would peak in December 2020 and be 2.0-2.3 times the size of the original COVID-19 wave."

The lead author of the study, Jasmina Panovska-Griffiths, said the test-and-trace system in England was currently reaching only about 50 percent of contacts of all those testing positive for COVID-19.

## Afghan grand assembly on fate of hundreds of Taliban prisoners set for Friday

Afghanistan will convene a grand assembly of elders, known as the loya jirga, in Kabul on Friday to decide the fate of hundreds of prisoners the Taliban insist should be released before entering peace talks with the government.

A pact reached by U.S. and Taliban negotiators in Doha in February had agreed that 5,000 Taliban prisoners should be released from Afghan jails as a precondition to the militant movement holding talks with the government, Reuters reported.

President Ashraf Ghani's government has released all but 400, saying their crimes were too grave.

On Sunday, it declared a loya jirga, a traditional consultative gathering of elders, community leaders and politicians was needed to debate what to do with the remaining prisoners. And on Tuesday, the government fixed the date.

"These 400 are those who have been convicted in killings from two to 40 people, drug trafficking, those sentenced to death and involved in major crimes, including kidnapping," Sediq Sediqqi, a spokesman for the president, said.



He said a loya jirga, regarded in the constitutional as the highest expression of the Afghan people, was required as the president was not empowered to release prisoners convicted of such crimes.

Held under a giant tent, the loya jirga is a centuries-old institution used to build consensus among competing tribes, factions and ethnic groups and to discuss matters of national importance, traditionally convened under extraordinary circumstances.

On Sunday, as the government and Taliban were observing the last day of three-day ceasefire for Muslim Eid holidays, Islamic State militants launched a brazen attack at a prison in eastern Nangarhar province and freed hundreds of inmates.

The violence comes at a sensitive time for Afghanistan as the U.S. attempts to usher a peace deal between Afghan government and the Taliban to end 19-year-old war.

Since the U.S.-Taliban agreement in February, 3,560 Afghan security forces personnel have been killed in attacks by militants, thousands more have been wounded, Ghani said last week.

In the same week, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a report that more than 1,280 Afghan civilians had been killed in the first six months of the year, mainly as a result of fighting between Afghan government forces and Taliban insurgents.

## Resistance News

### Hamas: Resistance will not allow Israel to export its crises to Gaza

**INTERNATIONAL** **TEHRAN**— The Hamas Movement has described Israel's airstrikes on Gaza on Monday as "a message of escalation and aggression" and "an attempt to export its internal crises to the Strip."

In press remarks on Monday, Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said that the renewed Israeli aggression was also aimed at deflecting attention away from the deteriorating political situation inside Israel.

"The valiant resistance, which is well aware of the occupation's plans and way of thinking and knows how to deal with it, will not allow it to make Gaza an arena for exporting its crises," the spokesman underlined.

Israeli warplanes, after midnight on Monday, waged airstrikes on different areas in southern Gaza.

# Turkey: Oil deal between SDF, U.S. firm 'terrorism financing'

Turkey has denounced a deal recently signed between the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and an American company aimed at stealing oil in northeastern Syria, describing it as equivalent to 'financing of terrorism'.

"We regret the U.S. support for this step that ignores international law and that targets Syria's territorial integrity and sovereignty," Turkey's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Monday.

It considered the deal to be "the financing of terrorism" and "unacceptable."

The Foreign Ministry accused the Syrian Kurdish militants of advancing the SDF's "separatist agenda by confiscating, with this step, Syrian people's natural resources."

"Syria's natural resources belong to Syrian people," the Turkish statement added.

The Syrian government on Sunday also condemned the agreement, which Turkey has also described as "unacceptable."

Damascus says the deal is "an affront to national sovereignty" that amounts to "theft."

The Syrian Foreign Ministry has slammed Washington for hindering the Syrian government's efforts for rebuilding what has



been destroyed by the foreign-led terrorism, which is "mostly backed by the U.S. administration itself."

Al-Monitor, citing unnamed sources, also named the company in a report on Thursday

as Delta Crescent Energy LLC, a corporation organized under the laws of the state of Delaware, without giving further details.

On July 30 and during his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Commit-

tee, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo confirmed for the first time that an American oil company would begin work in the SDF-controlled northeastern Syria.

A U.S.-led military coalition has been bombarding what it claimed was positions of the Daesh Takfiri terrorists inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate.

According to Press TV, the strikes have on many occasions resulted in civilian casualties and failed to fulfill their declared aim of countering terrorism.

The White House has long been providing the SDF with arms and militant training, calling them a key partner in the purported fight against Daesh. Many observers, however, see the support in the context of Washington's plans to carve out a foothold in Syria.

That support has also angered Washington's NATO ally, Turkey, which views militants from the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) – the backbone of the SDF – as a terrorist organization tied to the homegrown Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

## Russia warns U.S. global deployment of missiles will meet response

Russia has warned the United States against its controversial plan to deploy land-based missiles in various countries around the world, saying the move would be met with an immediate response from Moscow.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said on Monday that the planned "deployment of American land-based short- and intermediate-range missiles globally seriously undermines regional and global security and will provoke a new dangerous phase of the arms race."

It suggested that strategic nuclear missiles could be deployed in response.

"Russia cannot ignore appearance of more missile threats for its territory, which will be seen as strategic for us," the Russian ministry said. "This will require an immediate reaction, irrespective of what missiles will be

deployed, nuclear or not."

The remarks were made on the first anniversary of the United States' withdrawal from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) with Russia, which had banned land-based missiles with a range of between 500 to 5,500 kilometers.

Moscow warned at the time that the U.S.'s withdrawal would provoke another arms race among world powers.

Immediately after the withdrawal, the U.S. said it was planning to place ground-launched intermediate-range missiles in Asia. It also asserted last month that the Pentagon was moving forward with plans to acquire ground-launched missiles that fly distances that had been banned under the INF.

The Russian Foreign Ministry further said that Moscow "remains open to equal and constructive work to

restore trust and strengthen international security and strategic stability."

"We are hoping for a similar interest and responsibility from the U.S. side," it added.

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) accord, which expires in February 2021, is the last major nuclear arms control treaty between Moscow and Washington that puts a limit on the number of strategic nuclear warheads each country can have.

The U.S. and Russia signed the New START accord in 2010 and agreed to reduce the number of strategic nuclear missiles by half and restrict the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550.

The New START can be extended for another five years by mutual agreement.

## N. Korea has 'probably' developed nuclear devices to fit ballistic missiles: UN

North Korea is pressing on with its nuclear weapons program and several countries believe it has "probably developed miniaturized nuclear devices to fit into the warheads of its ballistic missiles," according to a confidential UN report.

The report by an independent panel of experts monitoring UN sanctions said the countries, which it did not identify, believed North Korea's past six nuclear tests had likely helped it develop miniaturized nuclear devices. Pyongyang has not conducted a nuclear test since September 2017.

The interim report, seen by Reuters, was submitted to the 15-member UN Security Council North Korea sanctions committee on Monday.

"The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is continuing its nuclear program, including the production of highly enriched uranium and construction of an experimental light water reactor. A Member State assessed that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is continuing production of nuclear weapons," the report said.

North Korea is formally known as



the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). North Korea's mission to the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the UN report.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said last week there would be no more war as the country's nuclear weapons guarantee its safety and future despite unabated outside pressure and military threats.

The UN report said one country, which it did not identify, assessed that North Korea "may seek to further develop miniaturization in order to allow incorporation of technological improvements such as penetration aid packages or, potentially, to develop multiple warhead systems."

## Iraq president welcomes PM Kadhimi's call for early elections

Iraq President Barham Salih welcomes a call by Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi for Iraq to hold early elections next year as a means of meeting a key demand of the protesters seeking economic reforms.

Kadhimi proposed on Friday that the general elections be pushed forward by almost a year and held on June 6, 2021.

According to Press TV, Salih praised the decision, calling "free and fair" early elections one of the necessary requirements of political reform and a national right.

The country held its last such elections in 2018 that featured no more than a 44.5-percent voter turnout, the lowest since the 2003 ouster of former dictator Saddam Hussein.

The polls were followed by sometimes thousands-strong rallies across the country, with protesters decrying various shortcomings, including reported corrupt practices at high political levels and economic hardships.

The protests were intervened by instances of deadly violence blamed on suspicious elements trying to take advantage of the existing social and political turmoil.



Former prime minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi was forced to step down amid the rallies last November. His resignation was followed by two unsuccessful attempts at appointing a premier, who would secure the long-term mandate of the political elite, until Kadhimi was appointed in May.

The United Nations also praised the premier's announcement, saying it would promote "greater stability and democracy."

Salih added that Iraq could not keep withstanding the political crisis that it has for the past several years.

"Resolution of the crisis entails a courageous national decision" that materializes in the form of holding the elections, he added.

## China vows retaliation if any U.S. action against journalists

→ 1 The two countries, whose relations have deteriorated sharply recently over various issues including trade and the novel coronavirus, have exchanged several tit-for-tat actions involving journalists in recent months.

The United States in March slashed the number of Chinese nationals allowed to work at the U.S. offices of major Chinese state-owned media to 100 from 160. China expelled U.S. journalists working for three

U.S. newspapers - New York Times, Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post - this year and has threatened to match any more U.S. action against Chinese journalists.

### Visual point of view



## U.S. protests: Teachers protest across U.S.

→ 1 Donald Trump has made school reopenings for classroom instruction, as they normally would in August and September, part of his re-election campaign. The Republican president is trailing in opinion polls against Democratic candidate Joe Biden ahead of the November 3 election.

«Cases up because of BIG Testing! Much of our Country is doing very well. Open the Schools!» Trump tweeted on Monday.

While reported case numbers may be linked to more testing, recent increases in hospitalizations and deaths have no connection to more people being tested for the virus.

The United States is in a new phase of the outbreak with infections in rural areas as well as cities, Deborah Birx, the coordinator of Trump's coronavirus task force, said on Sunday.

«What we are seeing today is different from March and April. It is extraordinarily widespread,» Birx said on CNN's State of the Union programme.

On Monday, Trump lashed out at Birx for her comments. Trump accused Birx of capitulating to criticism from Democrats

that the federal government's response to the pandemic has been ineffective.

«So Crazy Nancy Pelosi said horrible things about Dr. Deborah Birx, going after her because she was too positive on the very good job we are doing on combatting the China Virus, including Vaccines & Therapeutics. In order to counter Nancy, Deborah took the bait & hit us. Pathetic!» Trump wrote.

According to Reuters, House of Representatives Speaker Pelosi said on CNN on Monday that Birx has «enabled» Trump, who played down the seriousness of the virus in the early stages and pushed for a quick reopening of the economy and schools following weeks of lockdowns.

«I don't have confidence in anyone who stands there while the President says swallow Lysol and it's going to cure your virus,» Pelosi said in a reference to Trump at a coronavirus briefing in April with Birx present.

Trump had asked whether injecting disinfectant into the body could be a treatment for the virus, leading makers of those products to issue warnings against doing so.



# FIFA president Infantino to find solution for transferring funds of Iran

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — FIFA president Gianni Infantino has said that the international governing body of football tries to find a solution for transferring funds of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI).

In the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) online webinar, attended by Infantino, AFC President, Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, and the CAFA member associations, including the acting president of the FFIRI, Heydar Baharvand, the FIFA president gave a report on the latest decisions of the international football federation regarding the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.

"In this special condition of the world, we must work harder than ever to develop football. FIFA and the AFC stand beside you to work together for football and help each other. We will surely continue to support the member associations," said the FIFA president at the webinar.

Heydar Baharvand was also among the



lecturers of the webinar, he talked about the problems of money transferring for the Iranian football federation.

"Club competitions in Iran, are continuing activities despite the outbreak of the Coronavirus, by observing the health protocols. However, the major issue of the FFIRI is the problem of transferring FFIRI funds in FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation due to unfair sanctions against our country. We expect FIFA to stand up to these political sanctions and resolve the problem of transferring the funds of the FFIRI as an enthusiastic footballing country and an old member association of the FIFA family," said the acting president of Iran football federation.

The president of FIFA reacted to Baharvand's demand and said: "Iranian football is undoubtedly one of the best in Asian football. FIFA, with the coordination of the Asian Football Confederation, will definitely try to find a solution to solve the problem of transferring the funds of the FFIRI."

## Rangers and Leeds battling for Milad Mohammadi



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Rangers and Leeds football clubs are reportedly interested in signing Cent defender Milad Mohammadi this summer, just one season after the Iranian international moved to Belgium.

Mohammadi, 25, impressed in his first season in Belgian football and although he only managed 24 appearances in all competitions due to the early end of the Jupiler League. He also played three times in the Europa League, Het Nieuwsblad reported.

The 26-year-old Iranian has competed at a very good level this season at KAA Gent, who he signed for last summer from the Russian side Akhmat Grozny.

Amongst the Belgian league and the Europa League, Mohammadi has played 24 matches with one goal and one assist. The deal could be done for around 7 million euros.

Mohammadi's performances this campaign have caught the eye of newly-promoted Leeds, who are believed to be keen to bring him to Elland Road.

According to Football Insider, Whites boss Marcelo Bielsa wants to provide competition at the back for Stuart Dallas, who missed just one Championship game all year.

Mohammadi is highly-rated in Belgium, with the defender being named in the Jupiler Pro League's team of the season.

Mohammadi - who has featured 25 times for the Iranian national team - went viral at the 2018 World Cup after he attempted a somersault throw-in during the 1-0 defeat against Spain.

But after performing the acrobatic maneuver, he decided against launching the ball into the box, and instead opted to just throw the ball back to his team-mate, wasting 30 seconds during second half injury time.

## Former Real Madrid and Spain goalkeeper Casillas retires from football

Former Real Madrid and Spain goalkeeper Iker Casillas has retired from football at the age of 39.

Casillas made 725 appearances for Real during a 16-year career at the Bernabeu, winning three Champions League titles and five La Liga crowns.

He also helped Spain win the 2010 World Cup and two successive European Championships in 2008 and 2012.

Casillas joined Porto in 2015 but has not played since suffering a heart attack during training in April 2019.

During his recovery he was given a role on the club's coaching staff in July 2019.

He made 156 appearances for the Portuguese side, winning two Primeira Liga titles and one Portuguese Cup.

Casillas won 167 international caps for Spain between 2000 and 2016. Only Sergio Ramos has made more appearances for the national side.

Real Madrid defender Ramos posted a photo of himself with Casillas on Twitter as a tribute to his former team-mate.

Announcing his retirement on Twitter, Casillas said: "The important thing is the path you travel and the people who



accompany you, not the destination to which it takes you.

"I think I can say, without hesitation, that it has been the path and the dream destination."

Real Madrid said Casillas, who joined the Spanish giants at the age of nine, was the best goalkeeper in the 118-year history of the club.

"Real Madrid wants to show its appreciation, admiration and love for one of the greatest legends of our club and world football," read a statement on the club's website.

"Iker Casillas belongs to the heart of Real Madrid and will be so forever."

(Source: BBC)

## Rose still hungry and raring to go after turning 40

Justin Rose says turning 40 last week gave him the opportunity to "press the reset button" after a disappointing year and the Briton is looking forward to challenging for seven majors over the next 11 months.

Rose, who won the U.S. Open in 2013 and the Olympic gold three years later, has not won a tournament in the last 18 months and heads into the PGA Championship at Harding Park on Thursday hoping to turn things around.

"... My golf has been poor for the last year. But I've been in a work phase for the last three, four months and you don't always see the results," Rose, who split with his swing coach Sean Foley in June, told The Telegraph.

"But I know they're coming and feel in a much better place than 12 months ago. I was 40 last Thursday... I skipped the WGC in Memphis because I needed that milestone - it's allowed me to press the reset button.

"My 30s were amazing, having kids and building the bulk of my career, but although outsiders might think, 'well, he's got a great life, the major, the gold



medal, the Ryder Cup status... what's left? it's nothing like that. I'm still very hungry."

The world number 16 said he was looking to hit top form in the three remaining majors this year - the PGA Championship, the U.S. Open and the Masters - and use it as a launch pad for 2021.

"We have seven majors in 11 months. That's a career's worth of opportunity and we're lucky to be playing for it," Rose said.

"... I get miserable when I'm not playing well and it's in everyone's interest I rebound... I can come across as laidback, but I'm driven and get very frustrated."

(Source: Reuters)

## Late wrestler Navaei laid to rest

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Former Iran freestyle wrestler Mohammadreza Navaei was laid to rest in Tehran's Behesht-e-Zahra Cemetery on Tuesday.

Navaei passed away at the age of 72 in his homeland Tehran on Monday. He claimed two bronze medals at the 1973 World Wrestling Championships and 1974 Asian Games in 62kg weight class.

Navaei also represented Iran at the 1976 Summer Olympics. He headed Iran wrestling team in 1988 Summer Olympics and served as assistant coach at the 1992 Olympics.

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

## Draw ceremony of Iran volleyball league to be held on Aug. 10

**Volleyball.ir** — The Organizing Committee of Iran Volleyball Super League revealed that the draw ceremony for the competition will be held on Aug. 10.

The ceremony will take place at the Iran's National Olympic and Paralympic Academy in Tehran.

The 31st edition of Iran volleyball league will start on Sept. 5 with stringent health protocols due to a coronavirus outbreak. A total of 12 teams have declared their readiness so far and two more teams will be added to the league.

Director of Competition and Events of Iran volleyball federation Shahram Azimi said the clubs will have to introduce their representatives for taking part at the draw ceremony until Wednesday.

The Iranian Super League (ISL) is a professional volleyball league in Iran at the top of the Iranian volleyball league system. It was founded in 1975 as the Pasargard Cup, but after the Iranian Revolution it was renamed to the first Division. In 1997 the league system was revamped and the Iranian Super League was established.

Paykan Tehran have won the most titles in the new Super League with 12 titles.

## Khatam completes the signing of Rajko Strugar

**Tasnim** — Iranian volleyball club Khatam Ardakan completed the signing of Montenegrin setter Rajko Strugar.

The Iranian club have signed the 25-year-old player on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

Khatam Ardakan, headed by Farhad Nafarzadeh, prepare for the 21-2020 Iran Volleyball Super league.

The league is slated to begin on September 5.

Another Iranian volleyball club Shahdab Yazd have recently signed Brazilian middle blocker Victor Babugia Araujo "Babu".

## Ex-Persepolis Stokes set to snub fifth tier East Kilbride talks amid India interest

Ex-Persepolis forward Antony Stokes is "unlikely" to choose East Kilbride as his next club amid interest from India, according to reports.

Last week the Lowland League side opened the door for shock swoop for the striker with boss Stevie Aitken stating "if we could make a pitch and a deal could be done, we would do it."

However, it emerged yesterday that newly-formed Indian Super League side ATK Mohun Bagan has entered the race for the Irishman's signature.

With the news of a potential move to Kolkata, it is being reported that Stokes is "unlikely to drop down to the fifth tier of Scottish football."

It has been a bumper summer for Kilby so far, with Aitken adding the likes of Chris Erskine, Paul Paton and Kyle Hutton to the ambitious outfit.

ATK Mohun Bagan, who are chasing the 32-year-old, officially formed on June 1 as a merger between former Indian Super League (ISL) outfit Atlético de Kolkata and Mohun Bagan of the rival I-League.

The former Hibs hero had been without a club since leaving Iranian outfit Persepolis earlier this year.

(Source: daillyrecord.co.uk)

## China PR's Yang Zhi calls time on career

Former China PR goalkeeper Yang Zhi has announced his retirement from football at the age of 37, bringing the curtain down on a career that saw him help Beijing FC to the Chinese Super League title in 2009.

Yang, who also played 38 times for China, made the announcement on Monday, bringing an end to a 17-season stint between the posts. He had been without a club after leaving Beijing at the end of 2019.

While Yang made his name with Beijing, he started his career in his native Guangdong province with second tier side Guangdong Xiongying before moving to the nation's capital in 2005.

He was Beijing's first choice for the next 13 seasons and his form established him as China's leading goalkeeper, prompting regular speculation he would return south to join Guangzhou Evergrande.

Yang, however, remained loyal to Beijing and played more than 400 times for the club before ceding his place to Hou Sen at the start of the 2018 campaign.

The highlight of his club career came in 2009 when he played all 30 games as Beijing won the Chinese Super League title for the first time, claiming the trophy by a point from Changchun Yatai.

On the international stage, Yang made his debut for China against Thailand in 2006, and was the starting goalkeeper for Gao Hongbo's side at the 2011 AFC Asian Cup Finals in Qatar as well as being a member of the squad that won the East Asian Championship title in Japan in 2010.

Yang also appeared in six AFC Champions League campaigns, helping Beijing to the Round of 16 in 2013 and 2015.

(Source: the-afc)

## Riedmann dies aged 17 after training accident

German cyclist Jan Riedmann, a talented member of WorldTour team Bora-Hansgrohe's feeder squad, has died aged 17 from head injuries sustained in a collision with a car, his team announced on Monday.

Riedmann, who rides for Team Auto Eder Bayern, the Under-19 feeder squad of the WorldTour outfit, was training with his team mates in Sugenheim in southeastern Germany when the accident occurred.

"It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Jan Riedmann ... after a tragic accident this weekend,"

Bora-Hansgrohe said on Twitter. "In honor of Jan, our riders will wear ribbons at Milan-San Remo."

The International Cycling Union (UCI) paid tribute to the young German on Twitter.

"The UCI is deeply saddened by the loss of Jan Riedmann, part of the next generation of professional cycling. Our thoughts are with Jan's family, friends and all those at Bora-Hansgrohe," the world governing body said.

(Source: Reuters)



## Dutch FA to allow woman to join men's first team



The Dutch Football Association announced a pioneering scheme on Tuesday, allowing a woman to play competitively at a men's team in the country's ninth tier in the hope of greater womens' participation in the men's game in future.

Ellen Fokkema, 19, is the first player to participate in the pilot and will play for VV Foarut's first team.

Girls and young women are able to play Category A mixed football up to under-19 level but after that have to play with Category B teams.

"It's fantastic that I can continue to play in this team," Fokkema said in a statement.

"I've been playing with these guys since I was five and I was sorry that I wouldn't be

able to play with them in a team next year.

"From the KNVB [Dutch FA] I was always advised to continue playing with the boys for as long as possible, so why shouldn't it be possible? It is quite a challenge, but that only excites me more.

"I asked the club if something was possible and together we submitted the request to the KNVB. My teammates also reacted enthusiastically that I can stay with them. I can't say how it will go, but I am very happy anyway that I can participate in this pilot."

The Dutch FA said they will monitor the progress of the pilot and should it be successful, look at permanently changing the regulations to allow women to play alongside men.

"Every year there is a request from an association to let a woman play football in their first men's team," director of football development at the KNVB Art Langelier said.

"In my opinion it is special that girls at all levels can play mixed football, but as soon as boys move on from under-19 to Category A of the men, they have to play football without the woman in their team.

"The KNVB stands for diversity and equality. We believe that there should be room for everyone in every way."

Women's football was first recognized in the Netherlands in 1971 while mixed football was introduced in 1986.

(Source: ESPN)



INTERNATIONAL DAILY  
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian  
■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
editor@tehrantimes.com

» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

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» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com

» Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran  
P.O. Box: 14155-4843  
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

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Imam Ali (AS)

## Allegorical gardens in Persian poetic tradition: Nezami, Rumi, Hafez

By Julie Scott Meisami

A striking feature of medieval Persian poetry is the abundance of nature imagery that permeates every poetic genre, and especially imagery relating to gardens.

The royal gardens and parks evoked in the descriptive exordia of the qasida, the luxuriant gardens of romance that provide settings for tales of love, the spiritual gardens of mystical writings, the flowery haunts of rose and nightingale in the courtly ghazal, all provide eloquent testimony to the importance of the garden in Persian culture.

Several studies have discussed various aspects of nature imagery in Persian poetry in relation to various periods, poets, and genres.

One important aspect of such imagery that has yet received little detailed treatment, is its allegorical function.

In earlier discussion of Hafez, I have indicated that garden imagery constitutes an important allegorical construct in this poet's ghazal.



Mausoleum of Hafez in Shiraz.

The present study proposes to extend these earlier investigations by placing Hafez within the most general contexts of the Persian poetic tradition and comparing his allegorical use of garden imagery with that of two of his most important predecessors in this respect, Nezami Ganjavi and Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi.

Although significant difference of genre separate the romances of Nezami from the ghazal of Rumi and of Hafez. The three poets are linked by a common interest in the use of allegorical imagery based in an analogical mode of thought.

Comparison of their styles with respect to a single model, their use of garden imagery, may serve to furnish insights into the complex nature of figurative language in Persian poetry.

It is a commonplace of criticism that all gardens are, in some measure, reflection of Paradise, "the place of perfect repose and inner harmony is always remembered as a garden, an earthly paradise," observes Angelo Bartlett Giamatti (1938-1989), an American professor of English Renaissance literature and the president of Yale University.

Through the gardens, he builds (in physical or in mental space), man express not only his conception of and his longing to recapture that ideal state, but also his perception of his relationship with nature, of the design of the cosmos, and of his own place in it.

The earthly gardens function both as an object of man's contemplation and as a setting for important human activities, it differs from a natural landscape by virtue of being an artifact, constructed according to design (a fact not less true of literary gardens than of real ones) as well as by the frequent opposition of the garden world to the wilderness beyond it (gloomy forest).

Julie Scott Meisami is a Lecturer in Persian at the Oriental Institute, Oxford. She has coedited "The Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature" along with Paul Starkey.

"The Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature" is an authoritative reference source on the most important authors, works, genres, key terms, concepts and issues in the Arabic literary tradition.

The encyclopedia covers the classical (pre-Islamic to 1258), transitional (1258-1798) and modern periods within a single work.

In over 1300 separately-authored entries, many of the world's experts combine current research with traditional study to provide authoritative analysis and commentary on a wide range of areas.

These include major authors, important works, and a variety of literary terms. Also covered are forms such as poetry, drama and newspaper writing and key critical concepts of Arabic literature.

"Medieval Persian Court Poetry" is her other noteworthy credit.

The author discloses previously neglected stylistic qualities and ethical purposes in medieval Persian court poetry, and shows that court poets were also moral instructors who examined and celebrated the values they shared with their audiences.

The book also takes into account the close relationship between Persian and Arabic court poetry.

\* This article has earlier published by Cambridge University.

# Actor Faramarz Qaribian to receive lifetime achievement honor at Hafez Awards

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet

TEHRAN — Actor Faramarz Qaribian will be honored for his lifetime achievements at the 20th edition of the Hafez Awards.

He has left memorable images in Iranian cinema by his portrayal of various characters in dozens of acclaimed movies such as "Tall Shadows of the Wind" and "Dancing in the Dust".

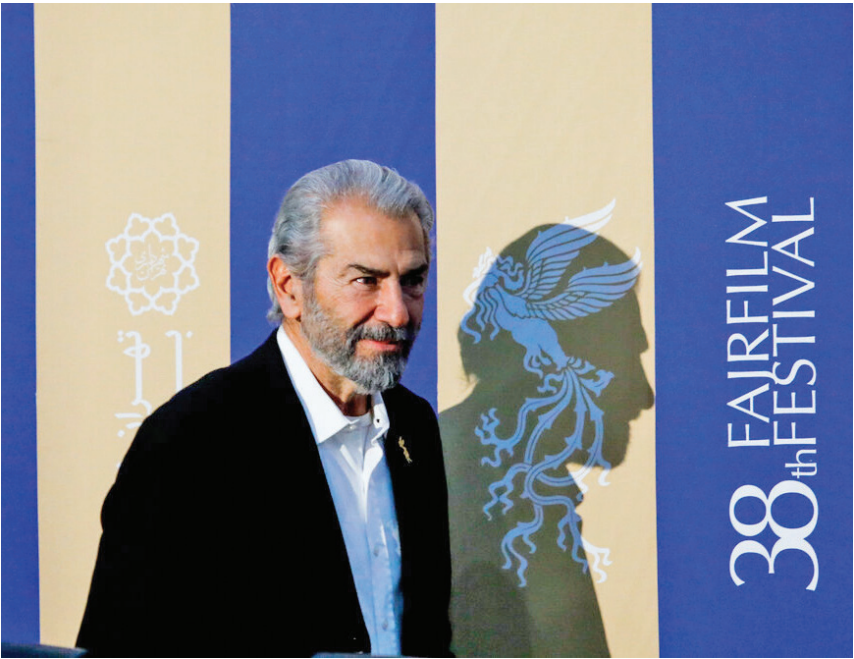
His acting career spanning over 50 years commenced in 1968 with "Come Stranger" by Masud Kimiai, a filmmaker of Iran's new wave cinema.

He also played roles in "The Messenger" by Fariborz Saleh, "Rubble" by Sirus Alvand, "The Deer" by Kimiai, "Beautiful City" by Asghar Farhadi and many other memorable movies.

He also tried his hand at filmmaking with "The Law" in 1995, "Her Eyes" in 1999 and "The Sinners" in 2012. However, as a director, his films failed to win wide acclaim.

Meanwhile, his brilliant acting in "Train" in 1987 and "Misty Harbor" in 1992, both by Amir Qavidel, and "The Rain Man" by Abolhassan Davudi in 1999 brought him best actor awards at various editions of the Fajr Film Festival, Iran's major film event.

His latest collaboration in Ebrahim



Actor Faramarz Qaribian attends a press conference for his latest film "Exodus" at the 38th Fajr Film Festival at Tehran's Mellat Cineplex on February 7, 2020. (ISNA/Hadi Zand)

Hatamikia's peasant protest movie "Exodus" left a bad taste in his mouth after journalists and critics poured scorn on the

director during a press conference at its premiere at the Fajr festival in February. In the meantime, the 78-year-old actor

said at the press conference that he has done his final performance in the Iranian cinema with the movie.

"I believe this film is the highlight of my acting career," said Qaribian who had returned to cinema after a seven-year hiatus.

"I've read lots of screenplays during the past seven years but I didn't like any of them. I was waiting for something valuable to end my career with," he noted.

"I knew playing this role would be very difficult, but as it was the role of a protester and I've been playing protesters' characters since the beginning of my career in movies like Masud Kimiai's 'The Deer'," he added.

"I've become weary of the negative attitude of Iranian cinema officials, therefore, I announce that 'Exodus' is my final film," he concluded.

Hatamikia praised Qaribian's performance in the film and said, "I've never seen such a literate and disciplined actor in my life, I bow down before him."

However, the surprise retirement was snubbed in the wake of controversies over the movie.

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 coronavirus pandemic.

## Resistance festival receives over 370 submissions to "Health Defenders" category

➔ Earlier last week, the organizers announced that the festival has been warmly welcomed internationally as they have received over 1200 submissions from filmmakers from around the world.

They said that they have received 1260 submissions from filmmakers in Central America, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

With 460 films, Asian filmmakers have sent the most submissions. With 248 films, Indian filmmakers are on the top of the list.

The festival has also received 325 films from European filmmakers. Most of the movies are from Spanish directors who have sent 30 submissions to the event.

Cinema Organization of Iran director Hossein Entezami has asked the organizers to put their focus on plans for promoting the culture of resistance in the region.

"Iran is the motherland of resistance, and the Resistance festival can and must be the promoter of the culture of resistance in the region," he said.

"This festival should play a key role in developing and naturalizing the culture of resistance, and also provide patterns for producing films in the future," he added.

The organizers also plan to honor innovative filmmakers with the Rasul Award named after the Iranian war film director, Rasul Mollaqlolpur.

## Kayhan Kalhor's online concert postponed over technical issues

A R T TEHRAN — Kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor's fans and music aficionados have to wait a day for his free of charge, online concert, which was postponed due to technical problems on Monday a few hours before its performance.

Songs from "Silent City", an album he produced in 2008 along with the New York City-based string quartet, Brooklyn Rider, will be performed during the concert, which will stream on [instagram.com/kayhan\\_kalhor](https://www.instagram.com/kayhan_kalhor), [kayhankalhor-official](https://www.instagram.com/kayhankalhor-official)

on YouTube and [instagram.com/hacoupianinc](https://www.instagram.com/hacoupianinc) on Wednesday at 10 pm, Kalhor announced.

He will be performing in company with Iranian string quartet Miniator, which accompanied him during the concert tour "Silence City" that commenced in April 2019 from Tehran's Vahdat Hall. However, the tour remained unfinished due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Therefore, we decided to resume our performances live, online and free of charge for everybody," four-time Grammy Award

nominee Kalhor said earlier on Saturday.

The concert is scheduled to be held in the courtyard of Ettehadieh Edifice, a Qajar era monument in downtown Tehran.

The album features "Ascending Bird", "Silent City", "Parvaz" and "Beloved, Do Not Let Me Be Discouraged".

Kalhor plans to repeat the concert in the central Iranian city of Isfahan on August 9.

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



Kayhan Kalhor (L) performs during his concert tour "Silence City" with the Miniator string quartet at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on April 15, 2019. (IRNA/Marziah Musavi)

## John Bolton's White House memoir rendered into Persian

C U L T U R E TEHRAN — "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir" written by John Bolton, President Trump's former National Security Advisor, has been translated into Persian.

Mohammad Khojasteh is the translator of the book, which will be published by Negah Publication in Tehran in the near future.

Bolton spent many of his 453 days in the room where it happened, and the facts speak for themselves.

The result is a White House memoir that is the most comprehensive and substantial account of the Trump administration, and one of the few to date by a top-level official.

With almost daily access to the president, Bolton has produced a precise rendering of his days in and around the Oval Office. What Bolton saw astonished him: a president for whom getting reelected was the only thing that mattered, even if it meant endangering or weakening the nation.

"I am hard-pressed to identify any significant Trump decision during my tenure that wasn't driven by reelection calculations," he writes.

In fact, he argues that the House committed impeachment malpractice by keeping their prosecution focused narrowly on Ukraine when Trump's Ukraine-like transgressions existed across the full range of his foreign policy — and Bolton documents exactly what those were, and attempts by him and others in the administration to raise alarms



Front cover of the Persian translation of John Bolton's book "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir".

about them.

He shows a president addicted to chaos, who embraced the enemies and spurned the friends, and was deeply suspicious of his own government.

In Bolton's telling, all this helped put Trump on the bizarre road to impeachment. "The differences between this presidency and previous ones I had served were stunning," writes Bolton, who worked for Reagan, Bush 41 and Bush 43.

He discovered a president who thought foreign policy is

like closing a real estate deal—about personal relationships, made-for-TV showmanship, and advancing his own interests. As a result, the U.S. lost an opportunity to confront its deepening threats, and in cases like China, Russia, Iran and North Korea ended up in a more vulnerable place.

Bolton's account starts with his long march to the West Wing as Trump and others woo him for the National Security job. The minute he lands, he has to deal with Syria's attack on the city of Douma, and the crises after that never stop. As he writes in the opening pages, "If you don't like turmoil, uncertainty, and risk — all the while being constantly overwhelmed with information, decisions to be made, and sheer amount of work — and enlivened by international and domestic personality and ego conflicts beyond description, try something else."

The turmoil, conflicts, and egos are all there — from the upheaval in Venezuela, to the erratic and manipulative moves of North Korea's Kim Jong Un, to the showdowns at the G7 summits, the crazy plan to bring the Taliban to Camp David, and the placating of an authoritarian China that ultimately exposed the world to its lethal lies.

But this seasoned public servant also has a great eye for the Washington inside game, and his story is full of wit and wry humor about how he saw it played.

Simon & Schuster published the original book on June 23, 2020.

## Movies from Iran competing in Rhode Island festival

A R T TEHRAN — Three Iranian movies are competing in the 38th edition of the Rhode Island International Film Festival, which opened today in the U.S. cities of Providence and Newport.

"Coup 53" directed by Taqi Amirani is one of the films.

While making a documentary about the Anglo-American coup in Iran in 1953, Amirani and editor Walter Murch ("Apocalypse Now", "The Godfather", "The English Patient") discover never-seen-before archive material hidden for decades. The 16mm footage and documents not only allow the filmmakers to tell the story of the overthrow of the Iranian

government in unprecedented detail, but also lead to explosive revelations about dark British secrets buried for 66 years.

What begins as a history documentary about 4 days in August 1953 turns into a live investigation, taking the filmmakers into uncharted cinematic waters. "Coup 53" is Amirani's debut feature.

The film has been screened at numerous international events and received honors, including the award for best international documentary at Vancouver IFF.

"Untimely" directed by Puya Eshtehardi and "Termites" by Masud Hatami have also been selected to be screened at the event,

which will be running until August 9.

"Untimely" tells the story of Hamin, a young private who is doing his military service in a watchtower on the borderline of Iran and Pakistan. Impatient for a day off to attend his sister's wedding ceremony, he gets into a fight with his commander. Up in the watchtower, Hamin reviews the past years and the things that happened to him and his sister since their childhood.

In "Termites", Tara and Payman, a young married couple who have recently begun their life together, are traveling to their hometown to sell their old estate. They are actors and actresses of a narrative, in which

the edge of reality is confused, and fiction is interwoven in reality. During their journey, decisions, secrets and lies leave them with a different understanding of themselves and their surroundings. Their narrative is the story of a decision to survive or lose. During the journey, the past, the present and the future haunt everyone, even its recorders.

"Termites" was crowned best film at the Figueira da Foz International Film Festival in Portugal last September.

The Rhode Island festival was founded by George T. Marshall, the founder of the Flickers Arts Collaborative. Flickers organizes the event in collaboration with several other institutes.