



Iran urges UN Security Council to reject U.S. bullying **2**



Iran-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan transit corridor launched **4**



Esteghlal, Persepolis not permitted to sign foreigners **11**



Story of Sultan Mahmud, slave Ayaz inspires Iranian board game **12**

Decision made to counter oil sanctions, redirect liquidity

See page 3



© president.ir

Lebanon PM announces resignation of cabinet amid uproar over Beirut blast

TEHRAN — Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab announced the resignation of the country's government on Monday evening amid heightened political tensions over the last week's massive explosion at Beirut port.

"Today I announce the resignation of this government," the prime minister said in a live speech.

A massive explosion rocked the Leb-

anese capital city of Beirut on August 4, razing to the ground the city's port. The explosion, caused by highly explosive materials stored in a warehouse at the port, killed at least 160 people and injured around 6,000.

Diab's government came under tremendous pressure in the wake of the blast, with thousands of angry protesters storming many ministries in recent days. **→3**

European insurers should pay compensation for Ukrainian plane crash: Iran

TEHRAN — The chief of Iran's Central Insurance Organization announced on Monday that the Ukrainian plane that was mistakenly downed near Tehran in early January had been insured by European insurers and therefore they should pay the compensation for the incident.

"The Ukrainian plane is insured by European companies in Ukraine and

not by Iranian companies, therefore the compensation should be paid by those European companies," Gholamreza Soleimani told a press conference, the Mizan online reported.

The Ukrainian airliner was shot down shortly after taking off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini airport on January 8, killing all 167 passengers and 9 crew members. **→2**

Tehran Municipality to dedicate cultural centers to Muharram mourning rituals during pandemic

TEHRAN — The Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality plans to dedicate courtyards of its cultural centers to Muharram mourning ceremonies amid the pandemic.

"The decision has been made to support the mourning groups across capital while there will be efforts to observe health protocols proposed by the Health Ministry," the director of the organization,

Hojjatolislam Meisam Amrudi said in a press release on Monday.

"About 60 cultural centers and culture houses with a capacity of over 20,000 individuals will be dedicated to the groups," he said.

"One of the main problems in these hard days of coronavirus is to provide large spaces for the mourning ceremonies while observing social distancing," he added. **→12**



ARTICLE
Abir Bassam
political analyst

Beirut explosion: Hezbollah should not fall into the same trap twice

It is certainly naïve to think that the Beirut blast on the 4th of August was purely accidental. The unpleasant incident coincides with major regional changes.

Clearly, the Americans needed to pave their way back to Lebanon in a different way. The French also needed to reconfirm their footprint in Lebanon. It seems that the repetition of incidents of 2005 in 2020 has surfaced; hence, we need to watch our back.

There are lessons to be learned from the tragic assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic al-Hariri on the 14th of February 2005.

Al-Hariri was killed in an explosion that hit his parade. However, the Beirut blast was not followed by the abstractedness followed by the assassination of al-Hariri by his partisans and non-partisans, which was a great shock to the whole country and the region.

It seems that preparations were already made.

In 2005, Hezbollah broke silence with his rightful declaration that the tragedy was a national catastrophe, as it did now. Personally, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah spoke of the greatness of al-Hariri and sent a reassuring message to the Lebanese population, especially the Sunnis in Lebanon. Unfortunately, the message was twisted by many parties and was misinterpreted as a sign of weakness.

Nevertheless, the international conditions were not different from those of today. In 2004 UN Security Council approved resolution 1559, which calls for establishing sovereignty all over the Lebanese land and "calls upon the remaining forces to withdraw from Lebanon," mainly the Syrian Army, and "disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias," which was referring to the army wing of Hezbollah, in particular.

France and the United States sponsored the resolution. It brought France and the U.S. brought together which their relations had nosedived since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. It is clear that Cesar Law has created the same international conditions. **→7**

Coronavirus shuts Yazd's museums, historical sites once again

TEHRAN — All museums and historical sites of six cities in the central province of Yazd have gone on lockdown again until further notice following the increase in the number of people infected with the coronavirus, an official in charge of the province's museums and historical properties has said.

While museums and historical sites in Yazd, Abarkuh, Bafq, Meybod, Khatam, Mehriz are closed to the public to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, these places in other cities across the province can be visited observing strict health protocols, ISNA quoted Elaheh Khakbaz as saying on Monday.

According to the Coronavirus Control Operations Headquarters, even in these cities, visiting all sections of the museums and some historical sites are not possible, and groups of visitors must be less than six people, she noted.

With its winding lanes, a forest of badgirs (wind catchers), mud-brick houses, atmospheric alleyways, and centuries of history, Yazd is one of the top tourist destinations in Iran.

Back in July, however, provincial tourism chief Seyyed Mostafa Fatemi announced that coronavirus outbreak has squandered all efforts made to promote the tourism capacity of Yazd province.

He also mentioned that people active in tourism and handicrafts sectors have taken a severe hit from coronavirus pandemic and their activities are closing down one by one.

The country closed cultural heritage museums and historical sites across the country in a preventive measure amid fears of coronavirus outbreak back in February, but as the coronavirus lockdown was eased, they were reopened in early May. **→8**

U.S. protests: Riot declared for Portland protest at union building

A riot was again declared by authorities Sunday night in Portland when protesters marched to a police union building, blocked a road and set dumpster fires as officers work to quell nightly unrest in Oregon's largest city.

The protest was broken up almost as soon as it formed outside the Portland Police Association building — the same building where protesters were dispersed after a fire was started inside the union's offices the night before. Demonstrators had marched to the building from a nearby park. The road was blocked with fencing, and flames were seen rising from dumpsters in the middle of the street, USA Today reported.

Police began forcing the crowd of a couple hundred away from the building. While demonstrators were being dispersed, commercial-grade fireworks were thrown at officers, injuring two, police said. The department released photos of the officers' injuries, including a photo of a

face covering that "partially melted" from the firework. The officers were treated at the scene.

Some protesters returned to the union building after officers cleared the area. Police said the road was again blocked with fencing and small fires broke out in the street. Multiple people were arrested, police stated, but specific details weren't immediately available.

Since George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, protests have occurred nightly in the city for more than 70 days. Demonstrations this past week have been violent. Many in the city had hoped for calm after federal agents withdrew more than a week ago.

Three officers were hurt, including two who were taken to a hospital, during the efforts to clear the crowd of several hundred people outside the union building late Saturday. The two hospitalized officers have since been released. Nine people were arrested during that protest, police said in an earlier statement. **→10**

Inside the West's last gambit in Lebanon

TEHRAN — As Lebanon plunges into a politico-economic turmoil in the aftermath of a massive explosion at Beirut port, the West scrambles to make a last-ditch effort to disarm the Hezbollah movement, a former diplomat who served in Lebanon told the Tehran Times.

August 4 is likely to go down in history as a day when the Lebanese capital city of Beirut was rocked by an explosion that destroyed much of the city's downtown in the blink of an eye and paved the way for some Lebanese political fac-

tions to disrupt the existing order by blaming another Lebanese faction — Hezbollah- for the worsening crisis.

Much criticism was leveled against Hezbollah immediately after the news broke that Beirut port was razed to the ground by a suspected blast despite the fact that the port was totally under the control of Hezbollah's rival faction, al-Mostaqbal.

"The head of Beirut port is closely allied to the al-Mostaqbal bloc," Amir Mousavi, a former Iranian diplomat, told the Tehran Times, adding

that al-Mostaqbal-backed officials at the port didn't inform the Lebanese government that highly explosive materials were stored in a warehouse at Beirut port. The former diplomat also said that evidence suggests that al-Mostaqbal-backed officials were probably behind the deadly explosion.

However, al-Mostaqbal and its leader Saad al-Hariri, the former prime minister of Lebanon, managed to escape criticism over the blast. Instead, they are blaming the government of Hassan Diab, which is supported by Hezbollah. **→3**



© IRNA / Morteza Aminodroayaei

New generation of running blade prosthetics unveiled

The new generation of running blade prosthetics was unveiled in a ceremony on Sunday in the presence of Sourena Sattari, the vice president for science and technology.

Blades are prosthetic lower limbs, used by amputee runners. Thanks to their curved shape and carbon fibre construction they are light and springy and allow runners to reach much higher speeds than traditional prosthetics.

Caspian Sea grappling with poor waste management

By Farnak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Waste management in the Caspian Sea is on the verge of crisis and seriously threatens the Sea's environment, Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy chief of the Department of Environment (DOE) for the marine environment, said.

He made the remarks on Monday on the occasion of Caspian Sea Day 2020, which is held annually on August 12, ISNA news agency reported.

The Caspian Sea is the largest enclosed inland body of water on Earth by area. It is bounded by Kazakhstan to the northeast, Russia to the northwest, Azerbaijan to the west, Iran to the south, and Turkmenistan to the southeast. The sea has a surface area of 371,000 square kilometers and a volume of 78,200 cubic kilometers.

Caspian Sea Day aims to raise awareness about the environmental ramifications of human interference with this valuable ecosystem. The day marks the Framework Convention, also called the Tehran Convention, signed by the official representatives of the five littoral Caspian states namely Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, and Turkmenistan in Tehran on November 4, 2003.

Emphasizing on the issue of waste management in the northern provinces as challenging the environment and affecting the Caspian Sea, he said that part of the waste enters the sea directly and the rest through rivers or the shores leading to the sea.

In addition to waste, leachate enters the sea through rivers or rainfall, and because the severity of leachate pollution is very high, it imposes a serious threat to the marine environment, he lamented. **→9**

Zarif says Iran to recover its blocked money in various ways

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that Iran will return its money blocked in other countries through various ways including barter trade.

“We negotiate to return our country’s blocked money and we will pursue the case in courts if necessary,” Zarif told ICANA in an interview published on Monday.

There are various ways to return the money such as barter and purchase, he said.

“Various ways to return our country’s money from other countries have been found during the past years and definitely, we will apply them,” Zarif noted.

Elsewhere, he said that Iran has received its money from a number of countries so far.

Maximum pressure policy has little to do with diplomacy: Russia

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia’s permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said that the United States’ policy of “maximum pressure” against Iran has little to do with diplomacy.

“Unexpected statement: an attempt to extend arms embargo ‘after years of diplomacy’. What kind of diplomacy? Maximum pressure policy has little to do with diplomacy. And in any case Washington started to raise the issue of arms embargo at the end of 2019. So months, not years,” Ulyanov tweeted on Monday.



His tweet came as response to a tweet by U.S. Secretary of States Mike Pompeo who wrote, “The GCC’s letter calling on the @UN Security Council to extend the arms embargo on Iran is a bold statement. The U.S. will introduce a resolution this week to extend the embargo after years of diplomacy. The Council must choose between arming terrorists or standing by the (Persian) Gulf.”

The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council has sent a letter to the UN Security Council, calling for extending an arms embargo against Iran, Bloomberg reported on Sunday.

The PGCC includes the six Arab countries of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain that lie on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf.

Iran has called the PGCC statement “irresponsible” and said it does not include the views of all members.

The arms embargo on Iran is set to end on October 18 under the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which Washington quit in 2018.

Ambassador: New U.S. representative for Iran showing Trump’s confusion

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Ambassador to Venezuela Hojjatollah Soltani said that the new U.S. special representative for the Islamic Republic of Iran indicates President Donald Trump’s bewilderment.

In a Twitter message on Sunday, Soltani referred to the resignation of the U.S. special representative for Iran, Brian Hook, and wrote that the appointment of Elliott Abrams for an impossible mission and putting maximum pressure on Iran shows confusion in Trump’s foreign policy.

The top U.S. envoy for Iran, Brian Hook, is leaving his post and U.S. special representative for Venezuela, Elliott Abrams, will add Iran to his role “following a transition period” with Hook, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Thursday.

In relevant remarks on Friady, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council underlined that the Islamic Republic’s active resistance against Washington’s maximum pressure has resulted in the departure of U.S. State Department’s special representative for Iran (Brian Hook), and may force his boss, Pompeo, to resign as well.

In a Twitter message, Shamkhani said Hook is leaving the office without any success in carrying out his mission, just like Donald Trump’s former national security advisor John Bolton.

The Trump administration’s maximum pressure strategy was initially aimed at bringing about a “regime change” in Iran, but finally turned into “preventing Iran from becoming rich”, Shamkhani noted.

“After Hook, Mike Pompeo may also be forced to pack and leave before Donald Trump’s departure,” he added.

In relevant remarks, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi tweeted that “no difference between John Bolton, Brian Hook or Elliott Abrams; when it comes to the US #Iran policy, American officials have been bitten off more than they could chew. Same applies to Mike Pompeo, Donald Trump AND their successors”.

Alireza Miryousefi, spokesman for Iran’s mission to the United Nations in New York, also played down Hook’s departure, saying it “does not concern us and is not something we consider as a game-changer”.

“The so-called ‘maximum pressure’ campaign waged by the U.S. government has failed,” he added.

Miryousefi reiterated that Iran is not on its knees, and will not do so regardless of who is in charge of implementing this bankrupt policy due to active resistance.

In his Thursday comments, Pompeo did not give a reason for the change, but wrote in a tweet that Hook was moving on to the private sector. He described him as a “trusted adviser and a good friend”, claiming he had achieved “historic results” in countering Tehran and securing the release of U.S. prisoners in Iran.

The New York Times debunked the claim, saying Hook “departs with his main goal still elusive”.

Hook, 52, was appointed to the top Iran role at the State Department in late 2018 and has been the point man in Washington’s so-called “maximum pressure” campaign on Tehran after Trump pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the world powers.

Hook’s surprise departure comes at a time when Washington has been intensely, but in vain, lobbying at the United Nations to extend an arms embargo on Iran, which is to expire in October as per the UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

The Security Council prepares to hold a vote on the U.S. resolution next week.

UNSC is facing a big test, Vaezi says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said on Monday that the United Nations Security Council is facing “a big test” to show its independence in countering violation of the 2231 resolution.

“The members of the Security Council are facing a big test to show their independence and response to the United States’ pressure to impose its will against Iran and violate the 2231 resolution and collapse the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal],” Vaezi tweeted.

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

For a second time the U.S. is submitting its draft resolution to the UN Security Council for a vote on extending arms embargo on Iran. The council is set to vote on the draft resolution on Tuesday.

The ban on arms deals with Iran is set to expire in October under terms of the 2015 agreement, which President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of it in 2018. The U.S. is seeking a permanent arms embargo against Iran.

Several diplomats say that France, Germany, the UK, Russia and China are trying to negotiate a solution that might prevent



the U.S. from taking such a step.

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

Russia’s Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia slammed the U.S. for pursuing a “maximum suffocation” foreign policy against Iran, saying Washington’s goal was to “achieve regime change or create a situation where

Iran literally wouldn’t be able to breathe”.

“This is like putting a knee to one’s neck,” said Nebenzia, in a veiled reference to the death of black man George Floyd in Minneapolis after a white police officer knelt on his neck.

China also voiced opposition to the anti-Iran move, urging Washington “to stop its illegal unilateral sanctions” on Iran.

In a statement to the UN Security Council,

European insurers should pay compensation for Ukrainian plane crash: Iran

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

The incident happened a few hours after Iran fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a U.S. airbase inside Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani.

The airplane had been mistaken for an invading missile.

The victims of the crash included 82 Iranians, 63 Iranian-Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans, and three British nationals.

Last month, Iranian and Ukrainian officials held talks on the compensation, with another round set for October.

Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said last week that next round of talks over the incident will be held in Tehran.

In a July report, Iran’s Civil Aviation Organization blamed a chain of mistakes - such as a misalignment of a radar system and lack of communication between the air defense operator and his commanders - for the plane crash.

Minister of Transport and Urban Development

Mohammad Eslami said on Sunday that the final report on the Ukrainian plane crash will be published soon.

“Information gathered by investigation team of the Civil Aviation Organization and also observations have been conformed to data of the black box, and Iran is supposed to reach a final conclusion at the presence of an Ukrainian delegation and issue the final statement,” Eslami told reporters.

Asked about the accurate date of publishing the final report, he said Iran is waiting for coordination with the Ukrainian team.

Maduro calls Iran-Venezuela relations ‘unbreakable’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has said that relations between Iran and Venezuela are “deep” and “unbreakable”.

“Deep, brotherly and unbreakable relations have been formed between the two countries during recent years and have been boosted through defending sovereignty,” Maduro said in a statement on the occasion of 70th anniversary of Iran-Venezuela diplomatic ties, IRNA reported on Monday.

Maduro said Venezuela is proud of this history.

Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said in July that Iran respects the Venezuela government and people and welcomes expansion of ties and cooperation with the Latin American country.

“Iran’s political determination is supporting the legal Venezuelan government and helping the people of this country solve their problems,” Vaezi said during a meeting with the Venezuelan president’s special envoy Jorge Marquez.

Vaezi also noted that the United States

seeks to exert pressure and hatch plots against the freedom-seeking people, especially Iran and Venezuela.

“We have to prevent any harm to the people’s well-being by the enemies’ sanctions through solidarity and expansion of cooperation and relations,” the presidential chief of staff said.

The Venezuelan envoy delivered a written message from Maduro to President Hassan Rouhani.

Marquez said that Iran and Venezuela have very good relations, calling for expansion of ties.

He also praised Iran’s support for Venezuela.

Rouhani has said that Iran and Venezuela should deepen “strategic” and “friendly” ties.

He made the remarks in a message to Maduro on the occasion of the anniversary of Venezuela’s independence.

“Stressing the necessity of deepening friendly and strategic relations between the two countries, I am sure that we will witness the Venezuelan people’s victory in overcoming the current problems in the near future,” Rouhani predicted.

Tehran calls PGCC’s anti-Iran statement irresponsible

Foreign Ministry says the council has turned into a ‘mouthpiece for anti-Iran elements’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi late on Sunday denounced an anti-Iran statement issued by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) as “irresponsible” and said the council has turned “into a mouthpiece for anti-Iran elements”.

The reaction came after the PGCC Secretariat announced that the council’s newly appointed secretary general had demanded arms embargo on Iran be extended and levelled several accusations against the Islamic Republic.

The statement is completely in line with the relentless campaign launched by the Trump administration to extend arms embargo against Iran in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 which endorses the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

According to Resolution 2231, arms embargo against Iran ends on October 18. Even the European allies of Washington in the UN Security Council have opposed the U.S. move to extend arms embargo against Iran.

Mousavi expressed regret at the unconstructive approach

adopted by certain PGCC states vis-à-vis Iran.

The PGCC includes the six Arab countries of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain that lie on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf.

Analysts and politicians are unanimous in their views that the PGCC is under the influence of Saudi Arabia. In fact, Saudi Arabia bullies small countries in the council.

“Unfortunately, it seems that the so-called Persian Gulf Cooperation Council has turned into a spokesperson for some narrow-minded people both inside the council and outside the region, and that the council’s secretariat, swayed by the wrong and destructive policies and behavior of certain member states, has turned into a mouthpiece for anti-Iran elements,” the spokesman said, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

“The PGCC, which is at the apex of its incompetence, and whose internecine differences as well as unrealistic policies have rendered the council ineffective, has, with this move, led to ignoring realities in the region and turning a blind eye to realities and priorities at this sensitive

Takht-Ravanchi urges UN Security Council to reject U.S. bullying

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, has said that the UN Security Council should reject the United States’ bullying and unilateralism.

“At the #UNSC, the US is actively resorting to Iran-phobia & coercion to gain support for its unlawful anti-2231 resolution, illegally seeking to extend an arms embargo on Iran. The Council must reject bullying & unilateralism—again—as it did when US first introduced its draft,” Takht-Ravanchi tweeted on Monday.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday that the UN Security Council will vote this week on a U.S. bid to extend the arms embargo on Iran, despite warnings by some diplomats that the measure lacks support. Reuters reported.

If the U.S. is unsuccessful in extending the embargo, it has threatened to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran under a process agreed in the 2015 deal.

President Hassan Rouhani said in July that the remaining parties to the JCPOA should know that “if they fail to act wisely



under the influence of the United States, it will be a blow to international law, multilateralism and respect for international law.”

In an address to a virtual UN Security Council meeting on June 30, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said, “The international community in general—and the UN Security Council in particular—are facing an important decision: Do we maintain respect for the rule of law, or do we return to the law of the jungle by surrendering to the whims of an outlaw bully?”

junction,” Mousavi noted.

“The irresponsible statement by the secretary general has been dictated and issued unilaterally at a time when some members of the council have not stopped purchasing and stockpiling weapons even at a time of economic problems, and are among the biggest buyers of arms in the region and in the world,” he added.

“Indisputably, the United States’ interests are contingent upon further sales of weapons to these countries with such approaches and empty claims,” he asserted.

The Foreign Ministry official went on to say that the Saudi-led war on Yemen, which started in March 2015, speaks volumes, proving the reckless policies followed by certain countries member to the six-member council.

“The killing of defenseless people and children in Yemen is a textbook example of wrong policies adopted by certain PGCC members, which have resulted in Yemeni people being killed every day before the eyes of the world by different Western weapons by leaders of this very council,” he said.

Global arms industry not to heed PGCC’s anti-Iran remarks: expert

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — International affairs expert Sabah Zanganeh has said that the world’s arms industry will not heed the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council’s call for extending arms embargo on Iran.

In an interview with IRNA published on Monday, Zanganeh said that the attempt is just propaganda and will not affect Russia and China’s approach.

Zanganeh, a former Iran’s representative at the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), also said, “The Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region have economic interaction with China and Russia, and Saudi Arabia has close ties with Russia in oil industry, however, these countries are rivals in arms race.”



“When arms embargo on Iran expires, China and Russia are willing to have a market in Iran and the region. So, they will not listen to position adopted by secretary general of the Persian Gulf Cooperation

Council,” he noted.

He added, “In a situation in which the United States seeks to own all the world’s arms industry, China and Russia will not lose the market because it is profitable.”

Zanganeh also said that the PGCC member states seek to continue tension with Iran.

They should know that these methods will not have positive effects on region, he noted.

In a report published by Bloomberg on Sunday, it is said that the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council has called on the United Nations Security Council to extend an arms embargo against Iran.

In a letter to the Security Council sent Saturday and obtained by Bloomberg News, the PGCC called on the Security Council to

extend the embargo and “further impose any additional measures necessary to prevent the destabilizing proliferation of Iranian weapons, such as a targeted asset freeze and travel ban on individuals involved in the supply, sale or transfer of arms or related materiel to or from Iran.”

Sunday’s letter is the first significant joint statement released by the group since the rift, said a person familiar with the matter.

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

Under the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, arms embargo against Iran expires in October.

Decision made to counter oil sanctions, redirect liquidity

Heads of three branches of government attend Supreme Council of Economic Coordination

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In a meeting of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination attended by heads of the three branches of government on Monday afternoon, it was decided to draw up plans to counter oil embargo and redirect the high liquidity, which is partly blamed for the high inflation rate.

In addition to President Hassan Rouhani, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi, the administration's top economic figures including central bank governor Nasser Hemmati, Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) director Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht, the president's deputy for economic affairs Mohammad Nehavandian, Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh were present.

Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, presidential chief of staff Mahamoud Vaezi, and Interior Minister Rahmani-Fazli were also present at the economic coordination council meeting.

Also, Raisi's top deputies attended the session. Two top MPs also were present.

It was the first meeting of the heads of the three branches of government in which



Ghalibaf was present. All the three officials now running the executive, judicial and legislative powers were rivals in the 2017 presidential elections.

At the session, Rouhani elaborated

on ways to counter oil sanctions and manage liquidity.

“Overcoming the complex conditions imposed by the outbreak of the coronavirus and enemies’ sanctions on the country requires

the adoption of measures and policies that can create improvement in the economy and livelihood of the people, and in this regard, all three branches work together in harmony and convergence,” the presidential website quoted Rouhani as saying at the meeting.

The proposal by the government's Economic Task Force to counter oil sanctions and manage liquidity was discussed and welcomed. Necessary decisions were also made to finalize it.

The U.S. imposed sweeping economic sanctions on Iran, including a total ban on Iran's oil exports, after the White House unilaterally withdrew from a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers on May 8, 2018.

Rouhani also said that in addition to imposing sanctions, enemies make efforts to drive the Iranian people to despair through propaganda, adding that the enemies also try to sow discord among Iranian officials.

“All officials must be careful in their speech and behavior so that we can thwart the conspiracies of the enemies and spread hope and joy in the society,” the president stated.

Trump, U.S. face pivotal UN vote on Iran: The Hill

The Trump administration's Iran strategy will face a key test this week as the United States calls for a vote at the United Nations on its resolution to extend an arms embargo against the Islamic Republic.

If the resolution fails — which experts say is the most likely scenario — the Trump administration has threatened to invoke snapback sanctions, which supporters of the Iran nuclear deal fear will be the agreement's death knell.

The gambit also risks further alienating the United States from its allies, which continue to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal and have rebuffed the Trump administration's so-called maximum pressure campaign against Tehran.

“The Trump administration knows that the arms embargo isn't going to get renewed and, more than anything, this is a driver for them to try to invoke snapback and destroy what's left of the JCPOA,” said Ilan Goldenberg, senior fellow with the Center for a New American Security.

At issue is a UN Security Council resolution that was passed in 2015 in support of the nuclear deal between Iran and several world powers that President Trump withdrew the United States from in 2018. Under the resolution, a ban on imports and exports of conventional weapons to and from Iran is set to lift Oct. 18.

This past week, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the Security Council would vote in the coming week (current week) on the U.S. resolution to extend the embargo.

“The proposal we put forward is eminently reasonable,” Pompeo claimed at a press briefing. “One way or another, we will do the right thing. We will ensure that the arms embargo is extended.”

But Russia and China, which wield veto power in the UN Security Council, have already rejected the U.S. bid.

In the face of likely defeat, Pompeo has threatened another tactic: argue the United States remains a participant in the nuclear deal as defined by the Security Council resolution despite Trump having withdrawn from the agreement. Doing so could allow the United States to invoke a snapback of all UN sanctions that were in place before the nuclear deal, thereby extending the arms embargo.

“We're deeply aware that snapback is an option that's available to the United States, and we're going to do everything within America's power to ensure that that arms embargo is extended,” Pompeo said. “I'm confident that we will be successful.”

The United States would have to trigger snapback sanctions by Sept. 17 at the latest to have them in place by the time the arms embargo expires.

In an additional wrinkle, the State Department's top Iran envoy, Brian Hook, announced Thursday his departure from the administration. He will be replaced by Elliott Abrams, who has been the administration's top Venezuela envoy since 2019.

Over the last several months, Hook has traveled the world seeking to build support for the U.S. resolution to extend the arms embargo, with little apparent success. In a virtual appearance at the Aspen Security Forum the day before his resignation, Hook stressed support for extending the embargo among Persian Gulf Arab nations and Israel, adding that “no one thinks that what is missing from the Middle East (West Asia) are more Iranian weapons.”

Abrams, an Iran hard-liner, is perhaps most known for pleading guilty to withholding information from Congress during the Iran-Contra affair. He was later pardoned by President George H. W. Bush.

“Hook's departure and replacement by Abrams — a hard-line, veteran Middle East and Latin America hand — raises the risks surrounding the final few months of Trump's first term,” the political risk consultancy Eurasia Group said in a note to clients and the media this past week.

The firm previously said last month that the United States invoking snapback sanctions “will raise overall tension with Iran and introduce new uncertainty into the calculations of the Iranian leadership” and “could induce Iran to take more risky action in the nuclear realm, or retaliate for JCPOA snapback in Iraq or the region.”

The arms embargo itself has bipartisan support among U.S. lawmakers as well as support among the United States' European allies.

But the Trump administration's approach as it seeks to rally international support for renewing the embargo has rankled those same allies.

“Other JCPOA signatories do not necessarily like to see the arms embargo be lifted, but they view Trump's actions as dishonest and aimed at simply killing the JCPOA,” said Trita Parsi, executive vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft.

A European diplomat echoed that position to The Hill. “In general we would support the arms embargo, but we

don't like some of the unilateral sanctions that the U.S. are imposing on Iran,” the diplomat said.

In a phone call Friday with French President Emmanuel Macron, Trump discussed “the importance of extending the UN arms embargo on Iran,” White House spokesman Judd Deere said in a statement.

When Pompeo took his argument for extending the sanctions directly to the Security Council in a June speech, representatives of Britain, France and Germany expressed angst at both the expiration of the embargo and the United States' threat to invoke snapback sanctions.

“It is very unfortunate that the United States left the JCPOA and by doing this actually violated international law,” Germany's UN ambassador, Christoph Heusgen, said at the June virtual meeting.

Whether the United States snapping back sanctions ultimately kills the nuclear deal depends on how Iran responds, said Barbara Slavin, director of the Future of Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council.

“Everything will depend on what the Iranian response will be, and it's a little hard to predict,” she said.

It's also possible, she said, that even if the Trump administration claims victory in reimposing sanctions, other countries will ignore the sanctions, particularly Russia and China, which are the countries most likely to sell Iran weapons.

“Other members of the Security Council will reject the U.S. standing to do that since the U.S. announced that it was no longer a participant to the JCPOA, even if it wants to pretend otherwise now for this purpose,” she said. “So it's going to be a colossal mess.”

A UN Security Council diplomat similarly raised the possibility that member countries wouldn't reimpose sanctions regardless of the U.S. efforts.

“They could try to get the UN to impose additional sanctions, as the snapback mechanism calls for, but if member states don't want to do that, they wouldn't impose those sanctions,” the diplomat told The Hill.

Still, the Center for a New American Security's Goldenberg argued the 2015 Security Council resolution is a “key piece of the architecture that keeps what's left of the JCPOA alive.”

“If you break it, you might just collapse the entire deal. Nobody really knows what will happen,” he said. “The administration's position is that lifting the arms embargo is absolutely unacceptable. But their real position is, we want to break the JCPOA, and we think we can use this to do it.”

Inside the West's last gambit in Lebanon

1→ Analysts believe that Hezbollah and its allies in the government, including President Michel Aoun, seek to maintain peace and stability by encouraging Hassan Diab to continue to fulfill his job as prime minister, even though Diab is considering resigning.



In an attempt to defuse tensions, Diab said that he will request an early parliamentary election, a move that would change the political balance in the country and bring new figures to power. Diab's request came at a time when the country is facing a multifaceted crisis. On Saturday, angry protesters clashed with security forces and stormed many ministries.

“We cannot get out of this crisis without early parliamentary elections,” the prime minister said in a televised speech, adding, “On Monday, I will propose to cabinet a draft bill for early parliamentary polls.”

The early election requires the dissolution of parliament. Until Monday afternoon, this requirement was not met. Many members of the Parliament from rival factions have submitted their resignations in a protest over the government's handling of the blast. But these resignations don't mean that the Parliament is on the verge of dissolution, Mohammad Mahdi Shariatmadar, a former Iranian diplomat who served in Lebanon, told the Tehran Times. Shariatmadar added that the suspension of Parliament's sessions requires that at least 65 MPs submit their resignation.

Aside from the Parliament, the resignation of Diab's cabinet was also the subject of speculation. Conflicting reports have been published in the Lebanese media on the possible resignation of Diab's cabinet.

With media outlets speculating about Diab's departure, it seems that the Lebanese prime minister, who is known for his political intransigence, is succumbing to pressure. He has been under fire since the latest visit by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian to Beirut during which he refused to accept the French demands.

“Aoun and Diab have no agreement on the dissolution of Parliament, and Diab's call for early election came apparently without coordination with Aoun and Hezbollah,” said Shariatmadar, who was Iran's cultural attaché in Lebanon as recently as 2018.

Diab succeeded al-Hariri after the latter resigned from his post as prime minister amid widespread protests in November 2019. Ever since his appointment as prime minister, he has faced tremendous pressures from al-Hariri's allies, who saw him as a threat to their traditional grip on Lebanon's premiership. The Beirut blast provided them with an opportunity to topple the Diab cabinet, which began to lose its ministers one after another in the aftermath of the Beirut explosion.

Lebanese analysts believe that the explosion was the straw that broke the camel's back and thus Diab's resignation was only a matter of time.

But Diab is not the only target of pro-Western factions. It became clear that Hezbollah has become another target for these factions and their external supporters like the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

Analysts and former diplomats believe that pro-Western factions, along with their external backers, are exploiting the Beirut blast to mobilize the public against Hezbollah in a bid to disarm it.

“All efforts to expel Hezbollah from power and disarm it have failed and thus this [exploitation] is apparently a last ditch to disarm it,” said Shariatmadar, adding that rival groups and foreign countries make efforts to exploit the blast to damage Hezbollah's reputation.

According to Shariatmadar, when Hezbollah's rivals failed to lay the blame for the blast on the movement, they began to instigate riots, and during the riots they did provocative things like hanging a cardboard cutout of Lebanese spiritual leaders.

“At the political level, Hezbollah took a defensive position and reigned in its forces in a bid to calm tensions and maintain the status quo,” said the former cultural attaché, noting that escalation in Lebanon is not in the interest of any party, including the world powers who leap at any opportunity to denounce and undermine Hezbollah.

Referring to the plots being hatched against Hezbollah, Shariatmadar went further to say, “They brought their forces to the streets to pave the way for a conflict with Hezbollah and to show that Lebanon needs to be a protectorate again.”

He also said that the old plans to destroy Hezbollah no longer work, that's why the group's enemies struggle to destroy and disarm it through a civil war, but Hezbollah is well aware of this plot and is making efforts to distance itself from internal conflicts.

Shariatmadar pointed out that Hezbollah has arms and that it is able to defend itself, but its arms are not to be used in internal disputes. Instead, he said, they are to be used only against foreign enemies including Israel.

“Hezbollah pursues coexistence in Lebanon”, the former diplomat noted.

Lebanese analysts believe that the Beirut explosion was the straw that broke the camel's back and thus PM Diab's resignation was only a matter of time.

Ayatollah Khamenei opens Twitter account in Hindi

(Press TV) — Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has opened an official Twitter account in Hindi.

At the time of writing this item, the new account had more than 2,000 followers. Two tweets have been posted by the account so far.

Ayatollah Khamenei has Twitter accounts in other languages, including Persian, Arabic, Urdu, French, Spanish, Russian and English.

Iran is India's third oil supplier, with Indian companies importing 12.5 million tonnes of crude from the Islamic Republic in the period running



from April 2017 to October 2018.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Iran in May 2016, the first by an Indian person in that capacity in 15 years.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani also paid a visit to India in February 2018 at the official invitation of Modi.

During his visit to India, Rouhani was accompanied by a political and economic delegation, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and a number of representatives from the Iranian private sector.

Iran dismisses American officials' claim about meddling in U.S. elections

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Iranian foreign ministry rejected the American officials' recent claims that the country seeks to influence the U.S. voters ahead of presidential elections as “ridiculous”.

A top U.S. intelligence official claimed last week that Russia is backing Donald Trump, China is supporting Joe Biden and Iran is seeking to sow chaos in the U.S. presidential election.

In response, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokes-

man Seyed Abbas Mousavi described the claim as “ridiculous”, saying that “Iran does not pay attention to the individuals and parties in the U.S. so much and their behavior and kind of interactions with Iran is important”.

He told reporters in Tehran on Monday that Tehran has witnessed and tested different democrat and republican governments in the U.S. with various approaches in the past 40 years after the Islamic Revolution, noting, “Almost

all of them failed in this test.”

“There is no difference for the Islamic Republic of Iran which party and who will rule the U.S., and based on this approach, certainly, we do not do any interference and it is of no importance to us,” Mousavi said.

The 2020 United States presidential election is scheduled for Tuesday, November 3, 2020. It will be the 59th quadrennial presidential election. Donald Trump, the 45th and incumbent

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

Lebanon PM announces resignation of cabinet amid uproar over Beirut blast

1→ “We are still under the shock of the tragedy that struck Lebanon. This disaster which has hit the Lebanese at the core, occurred as a result of chronic corruption in politics, administration and the State,” Diab said, adding, “We are facing an earthquake that struck the country, with all its humanitarian, social, economic and national repercussions. Our first concern is dealing with

these repercussions, in parallel with a quick investigation that defines the responsibilities and prevent the application of any statutory limitation to the disaster.”

The prime minister also called on the Lebanese people to hold accountable those responsible for the blast, saying, “Today we are appealing to the people, to their

demand to hold accountable those responsible for this disaster that has been concealed for seven years, to their desire for real change, for a shift from the State of corruption, waste, brokerage and thefts, to a State based on the rule of law, justice, and transparency, a State that respects its citizens.”

Iran-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan transit corridor launched

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran has sent two transit cargoes from Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas to Uzbekistan through a newly established Iran-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan corridor under a pilot operation to assess the mentioned route, an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

According to IRICA Director of Transit Bureau Mostafa Ayati, following the successful launch of Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) in late July, this time two trucks loaded with transit goods from Shahid Rajaei Port headed for Uzbekistan by passing through Doharoun border crossing with Afghanistan.



According to Ayati, as a short and low-cost route to Central Asian countries under the TIR Convention, the development of transit corridors through Afghanistan is supported by both international bodies and the Iranian government and IRICA, in collaboration with Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) are determined to develop this sector.

“The pilot opening of this corridor indicates that Afghanistan is seriously determined to develop transit in its territory and connect Central Asian countries to the southern waters, including the ports along the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman (Chabahar),” he noted.

The new Iran-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan corridor can play an effective role in developing regional trade and cooperation, contributing to peace and security in Afghanistan.

Back on July 26, Iran sent two cargoes from Shahid Rajaei Port to Kyrgyzstan through the KTAI corridor for the first time to officially launch the mentioned corridor.

The KTAI Corridor was also established as a short and alternative route for sending goods from Iran’s southern ports to Central Asian countries.

The corridor was launched by IRICA in collaboration with the International Road Transport Union (IRU), and Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO) under the framework of the TIR Convention.

The Convention on International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) is a multilateral treaty that was concluded at Geneva on 14 November 1975 to simplify and harmonize the administrative formalities of international road transport.

Iran ready to expand trade with Iraqi Kurdistan

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran is ready to start technical negotiations with the Kurdistan region of Iraq over the opening of two important free trade zones following similar agreements made with Baghdad, the Iranian consul-general in Sulaymaniyah told Rudaw on Saturday.

“We are ready and we have completed the preliminary work at both border crossings, namely Parvizkhan and Bashmakh, to establish these free zones,” Mehdi Shushtari stated.



Iranian Consul-General in Sulaymaniyah Mehdi Shushtari

stand at around nine billion dollars this year - four billion less than last year.

Kermanshah alone has 371 km of land bordering the Kurdistan region and Iraq, with six border crossings and border markets.

“Last year, in total three billion dollars was the level of exports to Iraq and Syria...Kermanshah is the supplier of foreign currency to the country in relation to non-petroleum exports,” Hedayat Hatami, a top economic official in Kermanshah was quoted by IRNA as saying on July 23.

Iran’s trade volume with Iraq and the Kurdistan region has stood at around 13 billion dollars in recent years, just over half of which is through around half a dozen land border crossings with areas under the control of the Kurdistan regional government (KRG). Iranian officials, including President Hassan Rouhani, have repeatedly said that they want to increase the volume to 20 billion dollars in coming years.

Tehran has paid particular attention to expanding its non-petroleum trade with neighboring countries since Washington withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 and reimposed sanctions on the country.

Shushtari spoke about several issues in the interview at Rudaw’s studio, including the quality of goods entering Iraqi and Kurdish markets.

“As the Islamic Republic of Iran, the stability and the security of Iraq and the Kurdistan region is important to us, we see the stability of the region and Iraq as part of our own security and naturally in order to establish security in the border area, we do our utmost,” Shushtari said.

Last December, the heads of Iran and the Iraqi Kurdistan region’s customs administrations had expressed the two sides’ eagerness for the expansion of bilateral customs cooperation.

They made the remarks during a meeting on the sidelines of a workshop held by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) to train 27 employees of Iraqi Kurdistan’s customs administration in Tehran.

A memorandum of understanding was also inked by Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, the head of IRICA, and Samal Abdulrahman Aziz, the head of the Iraqi Kurdistan region’s customs administration, in the same day.

Launching forex bourse best way out for Iran’s currency dilemma

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN – Iranian economic experts believe that launching a bourse for trading foreign currencies is going to be the best way for the country to overcome the current challenges of the forex market including the high rates.

In recent days, the increase in inflation indices in the previous Iranian calendar month (June 20-July 21) has made many of the country’s economic experts and analysts criticize the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) policies in controlling the forex market and claimed the rising exchange rates to be the main reason for the inflation hike.

As reported, foreign currency rate fluctuations have always been pointed out as one of the main reasons for the jump in inflation in the Iranian economy.

According to Seyed Mohammad-Hassan Malihi, an economic expert, the only way to bring calm back to the turbulent foreign exchange market which is currently being controlled and regulated through CBI monetary policies is to establish a central forex bourse in which all the foreign currency exchanges would take place.

This way, the exchange rates will always be determined in the market and based on economic factors, and also the stagnant



currency and banknotes stored at homes and companies will enter this market and into the economic cycle, the expert said.

In the past years, the major strategy that the CBI has followed for rebalancing the forex market and safeguarding the value of the national currency, rial, has been to pump liquidity into the mentioned market.

This solution, however, does not seem to be a long-lasting one, as for many years rial has been hit by constant shock waves, following a seemingly repeated pattern every four years.

In late July, two years after the previous fall, Iran’s national currency, rial, declined to a new record low of 240,000 against the U.S. dollar.

‘Only about 18% of Iran’s feed importers currently active’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — There are currently 400 animal feed importing companies in Iran, of which only 70 are currently active, a board member of the Iranian Association of Feed Importers said.

According to Davoud Rangl, most of the mentioned companies were forced to stop importing due to banking and foreign currency problems.

He noted that the mentioned importing companies account for 30-40 percent of the country’s feed market, and the rest is imported by other bodies including Iran’s Livestock Affairs Support Company.

Livestock Affairs Support Company accounted for 33 percent of the total animal feed imports into the country in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), while the company

imported only 10 up to 12 percent of the country’s feed requirements three years ago, Rangl said.

“The biggest problem of the Iranian feed market system is the lack of agility and slowness of processes,” the official added.

Last month, another member of the Iranian Association of Livestock Feed Importers had announced that the imports of animal feed dropped 31 percent since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to late July, compared to the same period in the past year.

Mohammad-Mehdi Nahavandi said that cornmeal import had a proper status in the mentioned time, while the imports of barley and soybean meals dropped.

Earlier in June, the managing director of Iran’s Livestock Affairs Support Company Hassan Abbasi Maroufan said that

more than 1.8 million tons of raw materials for livestock feed were supplied to the country’s feed producers in 70 days since the beginning of the current year.

“Of course, the country’s demand during this period was 2.2 million tons, which wasn’t met due to the slowness of the transportation system following the coronavirus outbreak,” the official said.

“Until a month ago, up to 15,000 tons of livestock feed was cleared from the customs every day and transported to the provinces, but now the daily amount of transportation has reached over 40,000 tons, which will soon fill the demand gap,” Maroufan explained.

“There are currently 2.2 million tons of livestock food stored in the country’s ports and are going through the process of health and standard controls for clearance and they will be on the market soon”, he said at the time.

Commodities worth \$1.19b traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Over 572,763 tons of commodities valued at \$1.19 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported by the IME’s International Affairs and Public Relations Department, the trading volume at the IME’s metal and mineral trading floor experienced a weekly growth of 58 percent.

Last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 264,125 tons of various products worth \$626 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 252,323 tons of steel, 7,020 tons of copper, 3,650 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 12 tons of precious metal concentrates, 1,000 tons of zinc ingot as well as 8 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 308,170 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$510 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 88,500 tons of VB feed stock, 51,278 tons of bitumen, 67,073 tons of polymer products, 35,727 tons of chemical products, 890 tons of insulation, 54,000 tons of lube cut oil, 50 tons of argon, 1,802 tons of base oil as well as 8,950 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 401 tons of commodities were traded on the side market of the IME.

As previously reported by the Public Relations Department of IME, more than 2.608 million tons of commodities valued at over \$4.669 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange in July.

During the last month, the oil and petrochemical trading floor of the IME played host to trading of 1.729 million tons of commodities worth more than \$2.346 million.

On this trading floor, more than 434,379

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

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

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

Furthermore, in the agricultural trading floor of the IME more than 1,250 kg of saffron was traded by the customers.

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

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

As reported, 3.169 million tons of commodities worth 232 trillion rials (about \$5.52 billion) were traded at the IMF in the past month, indicating an eight-percent rise in terms of weight.

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

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

Over 91,000 tons of copper cathode produced in 4 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of copper cathode stood at over 91,000 tons in Iran during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), IRNA reported.

As reported, copper cathode output in the four-month period of this year has been just one percent more than that of the previous year.

The highest growth of production in the mentioned period has been registered for Meydoun Complex in the central Kerman province, as the complex produced 31,822 tons of copper cathode, which was 10 percent higher than the figure of the same time span in the past year.

In early May, four development projects worth 40 trillion rials (about \$952.3 million) were inaugurated in the copper sector of Kerman Province in the southeast of Iran.

President Hassan Rouhani put the projects into operation through video conference.

The projects inaugurated in Khatoun Abad Copper Complex included increasing the capacity of copper smelting in the complex, building a copper concentrate storage, construction of a sulfuric acid production plant, and an oxygen supplying unit.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO)’s Managing Director Khodadad Gharibpour was present in the inaugural ceremony of the projects.

By putting the first project into operation, the complex’s capacity for producing copper anode rises by 50 percent to 120,000 tons, and the country’s copper smelting capacity rose to 400,000 tons. This project creates jobs for 120 persons.

Some 1.11 trillion rials (about \$26.4 million) plus \$118 million have been invested for this project.

The second project, which was the construction of a 60,000-ton storage facility, was implemented at the cost of 158 billion rials (about \$3.7 million) plus three million euros, creating jobs for 250 people.

Later on, the national currency gained 10 percent of its value back following the injection of nearly \$300 million into the domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA) by the non-oil exporters.

CBI Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati has recently announced that the bank is taking necessary measures for restoring balance in the domestic foreign currency market.

“We are trying to control the market and we have started taking serious measures in this regard, which will have tangible results in the coming weeks,” Hemmati said.

The current turbulence in the country’s forex market has not been created solely by economic factors, he said, adding that political and security issues have been also involved.

“Measures are being taken so that the foreign currency rates won’t depend on non-economic factors. To this end, we have already curbed a series of illegal activities, violations, and irregularities and we are seriously pursuing these new policies,” he noted.

He called for other sectors, such as the judiciary, to help the central bank in this regard.

Hopefully, this time the bank will take more long-term practical measures for this major problem which is hurting the country’s economy year after year.

TSE to host this year’s 15th IPO on Wednesday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Tehran stock Exchange will host the 15th initial public offering (IPO) since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) on Wednesday, Tasnim news agency reported.

As reported, Behsaz Kashaneh Company active in development projects will offer 4,026 billion shares in the secondary market of the TSE.

Last week, 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).

“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 last 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.

Two weeks ago, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand 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.”

North Yaran oilfield increases output with new SRP installed

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — The production capacity of Iran's North Yaran oil field has increased by at least 500 barrels per day (bpd) following the installation of the first Sucker Rod Pump (SRP) in one of the wells of this field, Shana reported on Monday, quoting the head of the field's development project.

According to Mohammad-Ali Ajdari, head of the North Yaran development project at Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), after the installation of the first Electrical submersible pumps (ESP) in this field a year ago, the first SRP has also been installed in a trial operation nearly a month ago.

"The performance of the pump was evaluated against the characteristics provided by the manufacturer and considering the production conditions of the reservoir and the well, and the 72-hour test with a flow rate of 750 barrels per day was approved," Ajdari said.

According to Ajdari, the simplicity and ease of installation and extraction, the long life of the pump and its high energy efficiency for lower depths and production flows, as well as



low maintenance costs and lower capital costs compared to other methods of overflowing are some of the most important advantages

of these pumps.

This locally-made pump increases production from the well No. 14 of the North

Yaran field by at least 500 bpd and plays an effective role in increasing the overall production capacity of the field by increasing the well pressure to 370 ppm, according to the official.

As reported by Shana, the first ESP was installed in well No. 4 of the field in mid-August 2019, which increased the field's output capacity by 1,000 bpd.

North Yaran oilfield's development project commenced in 2016 with a daily production of 30,000 bpd, however, after a while, the field's production experienced some decline.

Yaran is one of the five oilfields known as West Karoun oilfields. It is divided into two parts namely North Yaran and South Yaran, 120 kilometers west of Ahwaz, the capital city of the southwestern province of Khuzestan, on the borderline with Iraq.

The field is adjacent to Azadegan oilfield in the east and Iraq's Majnoon oilfield in the west.

West Karoun region which includes five major fields namely North Azadegan, South Azadegan, North Yaran, South Yaran, and Yadavaran is among the country's top development projects.

Iraq-U.S. energy ties, once seen as oil deal bonanza, mired in geopolitics

Iraq's energy ties with the U.S., which were supposed to yield oil deals following the 2003 invasion, have been whittled down to waivers to OPEC's second biggest producer to import Iranian electricity and gas, and avoid a political meltdown of the fragile Baghdad government, Platts reported, citing analysts.

U.S. energy companies did not benefit much from the rule of the Coalition Provisional Authority -- the U.S.-appointed entity that governed Iraq post the 2003 invasion until 2004 -- and they seem unlikely to gain a foothold in the oil sector of a country fighting a resurgent Islamic State, grappling with protests and facing financial collapse from low oil prices.

"The expectations of U.S. policy-makers in the early years was that U.S. companies would enjoy competitive advantage in a liberalized Iraqi oil and gas sector," said Raad Alkadiri, senior director at the BCG Center for Energy Impact.

"Iraq's sector has remained state-owned and state-guided, and U.S. companies have been forced to compete in open licensing rounds. Various efforts by U.S. Administrations (including the current Trump Administration) to engineer bilateral negotiations and to promote U.S. company interests have come to naught."

■ U.S. visit

Energy ties are expected to come to the fore during the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to Washington this month, where he will meet President Donald Trump on Aug. 20. It would be his second official visit as prime minister after his state visit to Tehran in July.

"With Iraq, the U.S. puts a high priority on sector reform, self-sufficiency and opportunities for American companies," said Matthew Reed, vice president of Washington-based Foreign Reports.

"Trump wants to see U.S. firms signing deals with Baghdad, although that may not be in the cards on this trip, given Iraq's dire financial situation."

So far, only Exxon Mobil has managed to play a tangible role in Iraq's energy sector, as operator of the giant West Qurna 1 field in southern Iraq and a partner with Norway's

DNO in the Baeshiqra license in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region north of the country. It is the only major energy company operating in both Iraq and the Kurdish region.

But European and Asian companies dominate the energy sector in these regions.

BP operates with China National Petroleum Corp. the giant southern Rumaila field, which can produce around 1.5 million b/d out of Iraq's estimated 5 million b/d capacity. Italy's Eni runs the Zubair field, while Russia's Lukoil operates West Qurna 2.

■ No foothold

"The U.S. never had a foothold in the Iraqi energy sector in any meaningful way," said Alkadiri. "The reality is that European and Asian companies have been more willing to accept onerous terms than the U.S. ones."

Other major U.S. energy companies working in Iraq include oil services company Halliburton, which once counted Dick Cheney as CEO and chairman before he became a the US vice president between 2001-2009.

Also, GE operates in Iraq, and in 2018 it signed a principles of cooperation agreement with the country's electricity ministry, which provided an action plan to add up to 14 GW of power. Currently, Iraq roughly produces between 16-18 GW/day.

Iraq's handling of contracts and its near financial collapse have also been weighing on its ties with the U.S.

"If Baghdad wants its energy projects to move forward, with minimal impact on its treasury, it should spare no effort to attract private capital," said Dan Brouillette, U.S. Secretary of Energy, on July 23.

"And that means creating a climate of commercial certainty, based upon the rule of law, by fully honoring contracts and by making timely payment in both good times and bad. Doing so will open the door to foreign capital and expertise, including U.S. companies."

Last year, Exxon Mobil and PetroChina were still talking to the Iraqi government to run the Southern Iraq Integrated Project, but Exxon's pullout of staff temporarily in 2019 over the security situation in the country has delayed plans



for the project.

■ SIIP

SIIP - under negotiation since at least 2015 - is a complex, multifaceted project worth tens of billions of dollars and involves an important water injection part.

"A long-delayed but crucial water injection project for southern fields remains stuck in negotiations, both of which indicate that protracted talks over contractual terms remain an obstacle to meeting lofty production targets," said Paul Sheldon, head of geopolitical analysis for S&P Global Platts Analytics.

U.S.-Iraqi energy ties are further complicated by Baghdad's close relationship with Iran, which has been under renewed U.S. sanctions since 2018.

Iran still wields influence in Iraq, which at the same time has been receiving U.S. waivers since 2018 to continue to import electricity and gas from Tehran.

"U.S. efforts to lower Iraqi dependence on Iranian gas and power represent the largest energy issue between the two countries," said Sheldon. "Looking ahead, the imposition of U.S. sanctions would likely have a destabilizing impact on Iraq, and would risk push Baghdad closer to Tehran politically."

Aramco profit crashes 73%, sees signs of oil market recovery

State oil giant Saudi Aramco's profit has plunged 73 percent in the second quarter of the year, as a slump in energy demand and prices due to the coronavirus crisis hit sales at the world's biggest oil exporter.

But the company stuck with plans to pay \$75 billion in dividends this year and CEO Amin Nasser said on Sunday global oil demand was recovering, Aljazeera reported.

All major oil companies have taken a hit in the second quarter as lockdowns to contain the coronavirus limited travel, which reduced oil consumption and sent prices tumbling to levels not seen in nearly two decades.

Aramco, which listed in Riyadh last year in a record \$29.4 billion flotation, said the rapid spread of COVID-19 globally had significantly reduced demand for crude oil, natural gas and petroleum products.

Nasser told reporters he had seen a partial

recovery in the energy market and a pickup in demand as economies gradually open after the easing of coronavirus lockdowns.

"Look at China, their gasoline and diesel demand is almost at pre-COVID 19 levels. We are seeing that Asia is picking up and other markets (too)," he told reporters after announcing the company's quarterly results.

"As countries ease the lockdown, we expect the demand to increase."

Nasser said Aramco was committed to its 2020 dividend.

"We intend to pay the \$75 billion, subject to board approval and market conditions," he said.

The group's dividends play a critical role in helping the Saudi government to manage its fiscal deficit.

Aramco reported a 73.4 percent fall in second-quarter net profit, a steeper drop than

analysts had forecast, and said it expected capital expenditure for 2020 to be at the lower end of a \$25 billion to \$30 billion range.

Net profit fell to 24.6 billion riyals (\$6.57 billion) for the quarter to June 30 from 92.6 billion riyals a year earlier.

Analysts had expected net profit of 31.3 billion riyals, according to the mean estimate from three analysts, provided by Refinitiv.

"Aramco figures are healthy compared to other global peers," Mazen al-Sudairi, head of research at Al Rajhi Capital, said. "This was the worst quarter in the modern history of the oil industry, and surviving it with healthy figures points to a very positive outlook."

Aramco shares were up about 0.4 percent in early trade. The group is currently the world's second most valuable publicly traded company after Apple.

Aramco said it will pay a dividend of \$18.75 billion for the second quarter of this year, in line with plans for a \$75 billion dividend for 2020.

BP earlier this month cut its dividend for the first time in a decade after a record second-quarter loss, while Royal Dutch Shell in April cut its dividend for the first time since World War II.

Aramco's free cash flow stood at \$6.1 billion in the second quarter and \$21.1 billion for the first half of 2020, respectively, compared with \$20.6 billion and \$38 billion for the same periods in 2019.

Aramco's gearing ratio was 20.1 percent at the end of June, mainly reflecting the deferred consideration for the acquisition of Saudi Basic Industries Corp and the consolidation of SABIC's net debt on to Aramco's balance sheet.

Europe demands Iranian petchem despite pandemic, sanctions

TEHRAN (Shana) — The Managing Director of Nirouchlor Company said that the company's exports to Europe, despite the restrictions caused by the coronavirus in the world, reached about 5,000 tons.

According to Tamin Petroleum & Petrochemical Investment Co. (TAPPICO), Vahid Namnik said: "Although the world is affected by the Coronavirus pandemic, we have managed to export a new 1,000-ton shipment of chlorine to Europe."

Since March, the company has exported 4,800 tons of petrochemical, he said.

Emphasizing the existence of strong rivals in Europe and West Asia, he said: "The competitive quality of Nirouchlor products due to the use of high-tech production lines along with the new approach of the business unit in the development of overseas markets, are the two main factors to achieve this success."

Referring to the plan to increase production capacity in Nirouchlor, Namnik said: "Despite all the pressures due to sanctions, we were able to complete the project to increase product capacity in 2018 and use it to more than double the production capacity of items."

The oil and gas industry is going remote

By Irina Slav

If there was one thing the last oil price crisis proved, it was this: despite the devastation that low oil prices can wreak on an industry, they can also make oil and gas production more efficient for less money. If there is one thing this crisis is proving, it is that oil and gas companies can do this remotely. In what could well be the industry's next step towards digitalization, oilfield service providers have been moving more and more of their operations to remote offices—some are even moving some operations to the homes of their employees. And once again, they have been doing more with less, prompted by oil prices falling off a cliff this spring.

■ Home oilfield

The Wall Street Journal's Colin Eaton reported earlier this month that Baker Hughes and Schlumberger both had two-thirds of their drilling activity supported by remote work during the second quarter of the year. For Schlumberger, this was up 25 percent from the first quarter. For Baker Hughes, it was up 20 percent.

Eaton also quoted a Halliburton executive as saying the move from the field to the remote operations center or the home has been an eye-opener in that it has shown the industry that remote work was not as much of a challenge as previously believed.

And this means the trend could become a stable one, just like it has for Big Tech.

Google and Facebook were among tech companies that extended their work-from-home policies until at least the summer of 2021. Some, such as Twitter, have told employees they could keep working remotely forever. But drilling an oil well requires the physical presence of a crew. It is not all done on a computer... except it increasingly is.

The oil and gas industry has been rather selective in its adoption of digital products to optimize its business. This may be about to change, a survey by analytics and advisory firm Quantzig recently revealed. According to the survey, the industry should go all-in for digital to utilize the potential of information technology, and the time to do it is right now.

"Such a transformation will require organizations to implement a focused digital strategy backed by technology adoption," said Quantzig. "It will also need investment and commitment to revisit and revamp processes, infrastructure, and systems. All the enablers required for a successful transformation will have to come into play for the industry to harness the true potential of digitalization."

■ Jobs gone forever

Automation is a big part of the digitalization of the oil industry. It will eventually render many jobs in the field—manual jobs—obsolete. This means that some jobs lost now to the oil price collapse will not be coming back.

Back in February, Baker Hughes' VP of Ventures and Growth, Taylor Shinn, told Oilprice.com in an interview that digitalization did not necessarily mean the loss of jobs. It would actually make it easier to retrain employees and re-assign them, he said. But this was before the pandemic struck, obliterating more than 40,000 jobs in Texas alone, according to data from the Texas Alliance of Energy Producers.

In the perfect storm of low prices and low demand, job losses were inevitable from the start. Going remote and going digital will make more job losses inevitable. Yet it is very likely that they will create new ones, too.

■ The rise of the digital worker

In December last year, the Houston Chronicle's Sergio Chapa reported on the rising number of tech labs set up by oil and gas companies to drive forward the digitalization of the industry. These labs were hiring people for positions that had words like "data", "agile", and "cloud" in their names.

As Chapa noted in that report, it was not only a way to take advantage of what many are calling the fourth industrial revolution. It was also a way to make work in oil and gas more appealing to a generation that is more hostile to this industry than those before it as a talent shortage loomed on the oil horizon.

Yet this shift is first and foremost about bringing oil and gas in the digital era more comprehensively. Drillbit sensors are fine, and so are 3D printed turbines, but the industry is moving towards comprehensive digitalization, it seems, and the pandemic is speeding up the process because remote is safe.

Geo-data major Fugro recently said it had completed the first fully remote inspection of an offshore platform in the North Sea. It used a remotely operated vehicle and its remote operations center in Aberdeen. This is just the first instance of what is likely to become standard practice, also featuring virtual reality products such as Baker Hughes' Phantom View, drones, and smart drills.

Baker Hughes told the WSJ's Eaton that 40 percent of the users of its remote operations services since the start of the year were first-time users. Schlumberger reported that it planned to boost its digital business substantially in what is becoming the new normal for the industry. Halliburton last month struck a deal with Microsoft and Accenture to advance its digital capabilities.

The big three are going digital. It will cost thousands of jobs, but it may yet create thousands more.

Libya's oil blockade will help clear the global supply glut

Libya's port blockade is set to keep the North African country's oil off the market until at least the fourth quarter of 2020, which, as devastating as it will be for Libyan oil revenues, could help reduce the expected global production glut by 65 percent, Rystad Energy said on Friday.

Currently, oil production in Libya is around 100,000 barrels per day (bpd). This figure is dramatically down from 1.2 million bpd at the start of the year, just before paramilitary formations affiliated with the Libyan National Army (LNA) of eastern Libyan strongman General Khalifa Haftar occupied Libya's oil export terminals and oilfields.

With Libya's conflict escalating, the country's crude oil exports are expected to be just 1.2 million barrels in August, a 40-percent plunge from July, Bloomberg reported earlier this week, citing an initial loading program it has seen.

With no immediate return of Libyan oil on the market, the expected global production surplus later this year



could be just 58.6 million barrels or about one-third of Rystad Energy's previous forecast.

TEHRAN TIMES

Iran's Leading International Daily

Advertising Dept**Tel: 021 - 430 51 430**

times1979@gmail.com



tehrantimes79



tehrantimes79

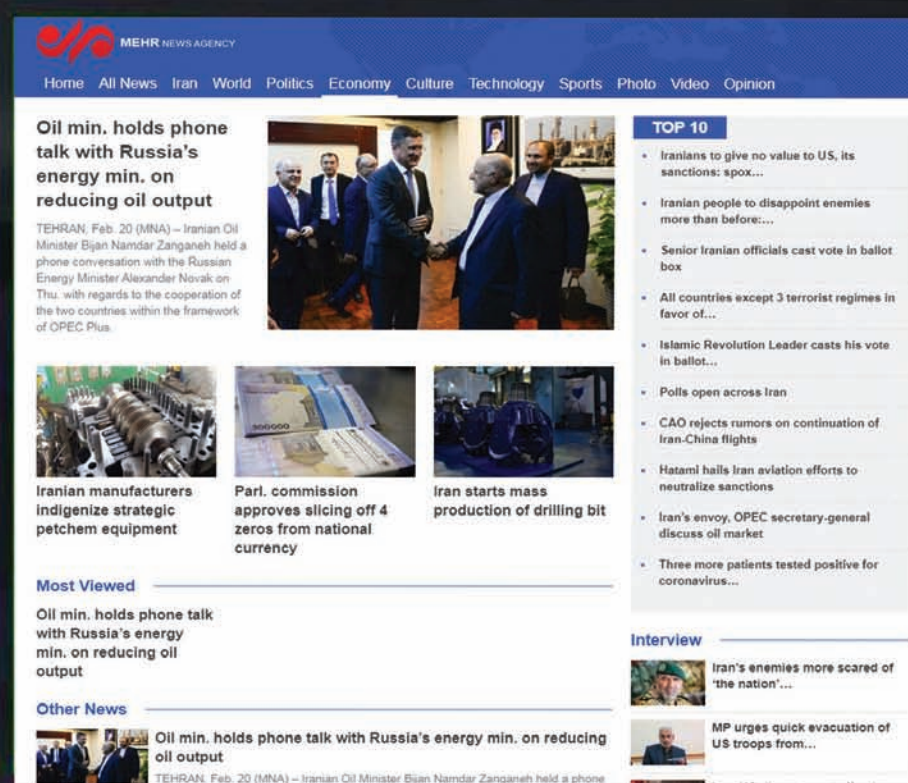
Modern Stadium of Martyrs of Khuzestan Football Club (KSC)



PIC-COLLAGE

English page of Mehr News provides you
with great opportunity to advertise.

Get in touch
www.mehrnews.com



en.mehrnews.com

@Mehrnewscom

Catch up with the latest news in Iran and beyond with

**Mehr News English**

U.S. concerned about Tehran-Moscow partnership

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

TEHRAN — “Americans want neither Iran nor Russia to appear as regional powers,” an Iranian expert said in an interview with Mehr News, “The U.S. does not want Tehran and Moscow as partners, either.”

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of their diplomatic relations, Iran and Russia are witnessing an ever-increasing development in their mutual ties. They conduct constructive negotiations on the JCPOA, the Syrian crisis, ongoing affairs in Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and regional and international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Both countries believe in principles including resistance against the hegemony of major western powers in the region, preserving regional stability and security, and respecting the sovereignty of other countries and not interfering in their internal affairs.

Tehran and Moscow are interested in the expansion of common economic and trade ties as well as cooperation in parliamentary, energy, cultural, scientific, and political sectors besides military and weaponry ones. The two sides plan to update their cooperation document in the future, establish corridors of Iran-Russia-Europe, Iran-Iraq-Russia, and Russia-Iran-Afghanistan and to create customs “Green Corridor” with each other.

In an interview with Mehr news agency, Shuaib Bahman, an Iranian expert on Russian affairs, elaborated on various aspects of economic and political cooperation between the two countries.

The full text of the interview follows:

■ Would you please provide a general image of Iran-Russia economic transactions?

A: To have a comprehensive overview of Iran-Russia economic ties, we can explore it from various aspects.

One is the transaction of goods between the two sides, which has not registered remarkable growth in the past recent years. In the past two or three decades, the figure has been below \$2billion, which is low. The trade volume between the two countries has not witnessed a notable growth due to some reasons, among which I can refer to banking and customs impediments as well as the U.S. sanctions, political issues, and reluctance of both countries’ managers for expansion of such ties. I believe the last factor is the most effective one. Of course, the two sides have had the chance, in particular, after the endorsement of an agreement between Iran and the EEU, to do their financial transitions independent from SWIFT or other western channels and via their own-made financial mechanisms i.e., the Iranian SEPAM and the Russian Mir payment system.

It is worth noting that mutually signed agreements between Tehran and Moscow worth above \$25 billion; however, they have not been implemented yet. I can say that the main reason for the issue is the tendency of some Iranian managers towards the westerners, which is rooted in their unfamiliarity with the Russian’s technological and technical developments, potentials, and capabilities. For instance, Russians have developed the GLONASS (Global Navigation Satellite System), which is a rival to the U.S. GPS (Global Positioning System) or they have the unique and modern technology to expand a network of offshore natural gas pipelines from Russia to Germany across the Baltic Sea.

In recent years, Iran has imported different types of oils, cereals, steel, paper, railway parts and etc. from Russia. However, in fact, the Russian market is much bigger,



and in case of getting more familiar with it, our imports can have a wider variety and Iran can import many other products, including technical and technological ones from the country.

We should not forget that presently, the developments and modernization in the major Iranian industries, including railway, steel, machinery and etc., have been made by the help of eastern countries such as China and Russia.

This is while westerners have not been inclined to transfer knowledge and technology to Iran, even when the country was among their allies. If we study Russia’s foreign trade in recent years, we can find that the country has expanded its export destinations and its types of goods for exports.

Regarding the bilateral economic relations, it can also be referred to the construction of different phases of Bushehr nuclear power plant by Russians’ help, or the construction of hydropower plants and agreement on electrifying railway roads in Iran.

There are also some weaponry and military agreements between the two sides, the considerable economic aspects.

■ What about political ties between Tehran and Moscow?

A: The political relations between Iran and Russia in the past recent years have witnessed some ups and downs, in particular after the Islamic Revolution in Iran or the Dissolution of the Soviet Union. But we can say that as of having President Putin in the office for the second time, the two sides have grown a tendency for improvement of bilateral ties. However, despite the increase in the ties, we can not still say that the common relations have entered a strategic level.

■ How do you assess the two sides’ cooperation in regional issues?

A: Tehran and Moscow began their regional cooperation as of the trips of the Martyr Lt. Gen. Soleimani to Moscow. He held meetings and talks with President Putin, in 2014-2016, when he persuaded the Russian President for military presence in Syria. We can say the IRGC commander made a foundation of Tehran-Moscow ties in the region. After the held meetings, the two sides also started a new phase of common ties; for example, Russia resumed providing Iran with the S300 missile system afterward. We can say that Iran and Russia started unprecedented regional cooperation afterward, which ended in weakening the ISIL terrorists in Syria. They also could establish cooperation to resolve the crisis in Syria without giving

a role to western countries.

■ Can Russia and Iran be considered as rivals in Syria?

A: Of course, the two sides have some disagreements over the Syrian issue, which is natural, but we cannot name them as competitors. It is worth noting that all the role players taking part in resolving the Syrian crisis and all the formed coalitions among countries such as Turkey, Qatar, Egypt, Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. have not only lost their previous cooperation but have also found some discrepancies, disputes, and hostilities over their stances towards the issue. This is while Tehran and Moscow could successfully manage their collaboration in Syria, despite all the differences in their interests. The two partners also have some future plans for cooperation in Syria.

■ Regarding that both Iran and Russia are major energy exporters, can we say that they may be faced with some conflicts in their common interests in the long-run?

A: Some may say Yes, considering both countries’ tendency to export oil and gas to Europe or other markets.

But we should remember that being major oil and gas exporters cannot necessarily be translated as being rivals.

The opposite can even be true; the two countries can reach mutual interests via going hand in hand.

Iran and Russia can play a big role in the international energy market, setting prices, controlling supply and etc. For example, the idea of forming the Gas Exporting Countries Forum was initially put forward by Iran and then supported by Russia. The same is true about OPEC+.

In fact, Tehran and Moscow can benefit more from being partners rather than rivals.

In addition, it should be noted that due to some reasons, Russia is not following up its previous policies of exclusive energy exports to Europe. They now have good customers in the east, i.e., China. Russians have found that their efforts to be the only gas exporter to Europe have not borne fruit, in particular in the past decade, it has lost about 20 percent of its share in the European Gas market since Europeans were inclined to diversify their energy suppliers.

The other issue is about Iran, which is dealing with crippling sanctions. The U.S. sanctions against Iran have impeded the country from developing its energy ties to Europe. Additionally, if Iran gets freed from the sanctions and resolves all the disputes with Europeans, it will take the country about ten years to get prepared its infrastructure and installments for starting

energy exports to Europe.

Therefore, Iran and Russia cannot be regarded as rivals in this sector.

■ How do you explain Russia’s stance towards exports of Iranian gas to Turkey?

A: Russia should not be blamed for the issue. Difficulties of Iran’s gas exports to Turkey must be explained through Tehran-Ankara disputes. It has been the Turks who have decided to shift their gas supplier from Iran to Russia. Turkey is now making a huge investment in Mediterranean gas and oil resources, which will leave the country no need for Iranian energy resources. The country plans to be converted into the major energy hub in the region.

■ How can Tehran-Moscow cooperation resist the U.S. hegemony i.e., its political, economic, or military predominance?

A: We should not forget that the time of forming blocs, whether eastern or western, has passed, but the point is that Tehran-Moscow cooperation can have a big impact on the U.S. hegemony and unilateralist policies. Such cooperation, also the one with China, can neutralize anti-Iranian sanctions. It can also negatively influence the U.S. in the long term. All this, however, does not mean the formation of an anti-American or an eastern bloc.

■ How can Russia be considered a significant partner for Iran?

A: Compared to western countries, Russia has never sought to put pressure on Iran, neither crippling down the establishment. The country has been in favor of expanding ties with Iran in various sectors.

This makes both China and Russia significant partners for Iran.

It should be noted that despite the enemies’ propaganda, Russia is a good partner, while enemies have always sought to introduce it as an unreliable one.

Western-based media start various campaigns against any cooperation between Iran and countries other than the western ones as did so about the Iran-China 25-year roadmap. The same thing is expected to happen about the imminent long-term comprehensive strategic cooperation agreement between Iran and Russia.

Westerners have never been interested in forming any cooperation between Tehran and Moscow for several reasons.

First of all, is the geopolitical reason; getting united, Iran and Russian can create a unique geographical path that expands from the Persian Gulf to East Europe and west of China.

The second one is the energy factor; Tehran and Moscow can have a huge influence on the international energy market.

The third factor is the independent foreign policies that both countries apply. They both stand beside each other against the U.S. hegemony, while they are of major powers in the region per se.

We should not forget that after the Dissolution of the Soviet Union, the U.S. has always put curbing the regional powers among its top priorities. Therefore, Americans do not want either Iran or Russia to appear as regional powers, and they do not want Tehran and Moscow as partners, as well.

As we witnessed, western-based media compared Iran-China 25-year cooperation roadmap to the ‘Treaty of Turkmenchay’, which was an agreement between Persia and the Russian Empire back in 1828. This was meant to suggest Iranians that neither China nor Russia are reliable partners for their country.

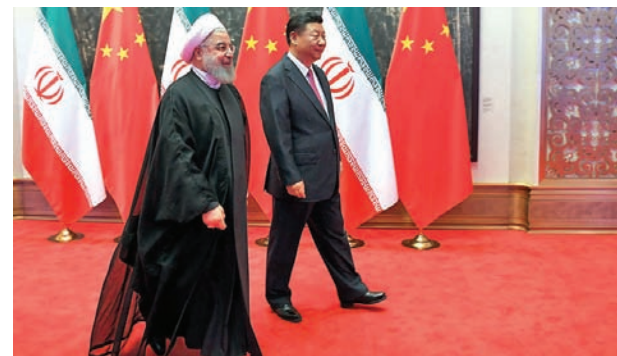
Without a doubt, enemies will run campaigns against any probable long-term cooperation between Iran and Russia in the future, as well.

Iran-China deal: The U.S. is defied

By Marzieh Motahari

The Iran-China deal has been drawing a lot of attention. The yet-to-be finalized 25-year partnership has been strongly criticized by American officials, as it seems to threaten U.S. interests and hegemony, particularly in the West Asia region.

The mainstream media has also been actively trying to spread rumors about the deal including Chinese troop deployments, monopolization of oil sale at low prices, and transfer of Persian Gulf islands to Beijing’s control. Yet all such claims were rejected by Iranian officials who insisted that the long-term agreement was interest-based and that the relationship between the two countries would be costly for the U.S. and those who follow U.S. policies against Tehran.



However, the harshest criticisms come from the White House. In a recent interview with Fox News, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned against the trade deal between Tehran and Beijing, threatening Chinese state firms with sanctions. He claimed that “China’s entry into Iran will destabilize the Middle East (West Asia)”. In another similar remark, Pompeo accused Iran of sponsoring terrorism and criticized the deal that would give Iran access to weapons systems.

“Iran remains the world’s largest state sponsor of terror, and for the Iranian regime to have access to weapons systems, money, and commerce from the Chinese Communist Party only compounds risk for the region,” he tweeted last week.

Such remarks made by Pompeo and other U.S. officials show the significance of the economy and security deal that is against U.S. policies towards Iran. In fact, the deal defies U.S. “maximum pressure” strategy against the country.

The “Joint Statement on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Islamic Republic of Iran and People’s Republic of China”, develops and deepens ties between Tehran and Beijing in 5 different domains: “political”, “executive cooperation”, “human and cultural”, “judiciary, security and defense”, and “regional and international”.

In the political domain, it is stated that the expansion of ties between the two “strategic partners” will contribute to “safeguarding the regional and global peace, stability and development.” The statement clarifies that both countries support the “core interests” of each other, including independence, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity.” Accordingly, Iran will remain committed to the “One-China policy” and China will support Iran’s “development plan” and also its increasing “role in regional and international affairs.” This contradicts U.S. policies towards Iran. In fact, the U.S. has always been trying to reduce Iran’s influence in the region and curb its power to change the political equations in West Asia and the larger world; however, based on the deal, China recognizes Iran’s influence and supports the role it plays.

The “executive cooperation” domain in the statement also defies U.S. policies and sanctions against Iran, as the two countries agree to enhance “investment and trade exchanges and promote tangible cooperation” in so many different areas, including banking, mutual investment, financing, space, manufacturing industries, use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and renewable energies. They also agree to exchange technology and knowledge and cooperate in human resource training. This is while the U.S. has imposed embargoes on the export of so many different technologies, equipment, and resources to Iran and restricts an exchange of knowledge with the country in certain fields. The latest round of sanctions against Iran was announced by Secretary Pompeo on July 31.

“Today, I expanded the scope of Iran metals sanctions targeting Iran’s nuclear, military, and ballistic missile programs. Knowingly transferring any of these 22 metals to Iran is now sanctionable. Our pressure will continue until Iran behaves like a normal nation,” Pompeo announced on his Twitter account.

So with the deal in place, Iran will be able to bypass such sanctions and make them futile.

As for the human and cultural domain, the deal will enhance the cooperation between the two countries “in the fields of academic and higher education, exchange of professors and students, scientific cooperation and transfer of new technologies and execution of joint projects.” This way, Iran can have access to new technologies that have been so far prohibited by the U.S. from being transferred to the country by any means.

In the judiciary, security and defense domain, Tehran and Beijing agree to enhance cooperation in fields of military and defense, specifically in “human resource training, fighting terrorism and exchange of information, as well as equipment and technology.” This is against America’s efforts to prevent any arms or military technology from entering Iran or getting out of the country. In this respect, one of the latest U.S. efforts took place on June 30, when Pompeo proposed a draft resolution at the UN Security Council and urged the Council to extend an arms embargo on Iran that is set to expire in October- all in vein, though.

The last part of the statement includes regional and international issues. In fact, the deal insists on respecting “the national sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of countries”. This totally contradicts U.S. policies in the region that are mainly based on interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Moreover, in this part of the statement, China reiterates its recognition of Iran’s effective role as a regional power, something that the U.S. does not approve of. Besides, Iran and China once again support the nuclear deal officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and believe it “contributes toward guaranteeing the peacefulness of Iran’s nuclear activities and results in the full realization of Iran’s legitimate rights to peaceful use of nuclear energy according to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)”. The U.S. however did not fulfill its commitments under the JCPOA and left the deal unilaterally.

So, a careful study of the “Joint Statement on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Islamic Republic of Iran and People’s Republic of China” clarifies the reasons behind America’s discontent with the deal. By this long-term agreement, Iran and China are defying the U.S. in different respects, and this is no good news for the U.S. interests and hegemony in the region and the world.

Beirut explosion: Hezbollah should not fall into the same trap twice

➔ Today, there are voices calling for the resignation of both the government and parliament, which would create a dangerous political void in the country. In 2005, the late Prime Minister Omar Karami was provoked to resign from his position. This happened while the official investigation by the government, back then, was able to identify a suicidal terrorist, Abu Adass, who had carried out the attack. Actually, the Lebanese investigators were doing a great job. Years after the terrorist attack on the al-Hariri parade, the investigation led by the international committee has reached the results the Lebanese investigation has reached. It is clear that the decision taken by Lebanese President Michel Aoun was based on the trust in the Lebanese investigators, and an attempt to prevent internationalization of the investigation, which was demanded in 2005 by the March 14 bloc, mainly the Future and Progressive Social Party led by Walid Jumblatt.

Eventually, the Hariri assassination led to the resignation of Prime Minister Omar Karami that was driven by an emotional moment forced by Bahia al-Hariri’s speech. The international political insinuation led to nominating Fouad Siniora as the prime minister, who led Lebanon into a disaster. Siniora’s role was in agreement with the new American policy, which was in its peak in West Asia. This policy led to the Israeli war on Lebanon

and on Hezbollah in particular. Later on, the country was put in a stressful conflict in 2007, when this American-Lebanese government took the decision to monitor Hezbollah communication apparatus.

Nowadays, Lebanon is going through almost the same scenario. Since November 17, 2019, strikes and protests have started in the country. Protestors are seeking fair demands. They want jobs, reliable social and medical system, and seeking a reform of the corrupt political and economic system. However, the demands were suddenly altered to depriving Hezbollah of its weapons.

It seems that the explosion in Beirut port, on the 4th of August, was intended to harvest the 2005 results. However, with a minor change, the international forces decided to guide the international policy directly by the presidents, not the ambassadors. It is clear that Hezbollah will face the same difficult challenges: The call for the government to resign, the call for Hezbollah to disarm, and accusing it of committing the harbor blast, as it was accused of killing al-Hariri.

Hezbollah has so far been trying to handle the matter with wisdom. In addition, Sayyed Nasrallah is the only official entitled to issue a declaration on the matter. Also, the enclosed meeting with Mr. Mohammad Raed, a parliamentarian from Hezbollah, gave the party a strong boost. He cornered his rivals from the Phalanges Party,

Progressive Social Party, the Lebanese Forces, and their allies and partisans.

Nonetheless, they are still hoping that the protests would stop international aid to Lebanon from Europe, the United States, France, and the rest of the Western world.

This raises a serious question: whether the explosion was intended to pave the way for the Western powers’ return or not? It is clear that the United States is revising its policy in West Asia as it is on the verge of leaving the region. And it needs winning cards in doing so.

Accordingly, two factors might be pointing to the Israeli role in the Beirut blast: first, the established knowledge that the Israelis were definitely aware of the existence of ammonium nitrate in the port. Second, that there is a tendency to deploy NATO in Beirut port as it faces the Russian Khmeimim Air Base in Syria.

The coming days are going to reveal more challenges for Lebanon. The resignation of three ministers would be a dangerous sign if it is followed by more, or the resignation of Prime Minister Diab himself. In such a situation it is essential to support the current government because Lebanon cannot afford an al-Kadhimi government like Iraq for the next two years, which is now proposed in the name of Fouad al-Machzoumi as the next prime minister. The parties targeted by the demonstrators need to enter serious dialogue to confront the incoming challenges.

Eco-lodges trigger reverse migration in Semnan

TOURISM **TEHRAN** —The growth in the number of eco-lodge units has triggered reverse migration in the north-central Semnan province, ISNA reported.

The development of the tourism industry with the inauguration of more eco-lodge units in the villages of the province has caused the reverse migration in these villages so that villagers are not willing to sell their properties, provincial tourism chief Mehdi Jamal said on Monday.

With the efforts of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, the province has witnessed a 20% increase in tourism facilities, which is a promising trend, he added.

Back in June, the official announced that the province's tourism department plans to increase the number of eco-lodge units across the province in the near future.

He also noted that increasing the number of eco-lodge units will strengthen and promote the region's tourism potential.

The main population centers of Semnan province lie along the ancient Silk Road (and modern-day Imam Reza Expressway), linking Rey (Tehran) with Khorasan (Mashhad).

While few visitors spend much time in the area, driving through you can easily seek out several well-preserved caravanserais (notably Dehnamak and Ahowan), cisterns (the Cafe Abenbar in Garmsar is a special treat) and ruined mud citadels (Padeh is lumpy but fascinating).

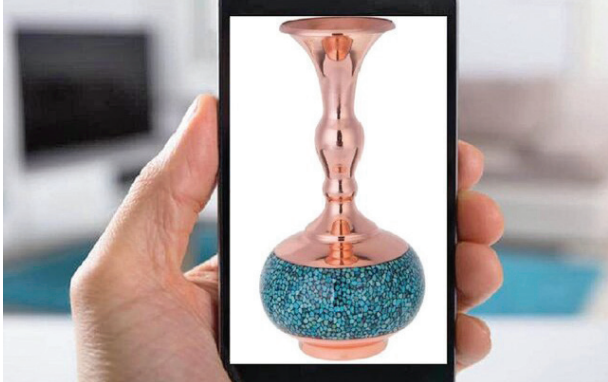
The large, bustling cities of Semnan, Damghan, and Shahrud (Bastam) all have a small selection of historic buildings and Semnan has a fine old covered bazaar.

The tourism ministry has set a target to help build 2,000 eco-lodges by 2021, believing such guest houses could cater to sustainable development and job creation in the countryside and rural areas.

The culturally-diverse country never disappoints visitors when it comes to eco-tourism, sightseeing and even tribal tourism as it is home to many regional people including ones with Turk and Arab elements in addition to the Kurds, Baloch, Bakhtyari, Lurs, and other smaller minorities such as Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and others.

Specialized workshop aims to upgrade handicraft design

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts plans to organize an on-line workshop for craftspeople to upgrade handicraft design methods in a bid to expand both domestic and foreign sales markets.



"The purpose of this virtual course, which will be held for free, is to focus on new skills for designing the [handcrafted] products and upgrade them according to the needs of domestic and foreign markets. The workshop will also cover schemes for the packaging of handicraft products," Parvaneh Heidari, an official for the ministry, said on Sunday.

"This four-session workshop will [exclusively] be held for crafters from Tehran province aiming to increase the competitiveness of sales of handicraft products in domestic and foreign markets," the official noted ISNA reported.

Handicrafts exports from Tehran province reached \$73 million during the past Iranian calendar year 1398 (started March 21, 2019), according to data announced by provincial tourism chief Parham Janfeshan back in March. Traditional glassware, mosaic, woodwork, hand-woven kilim carpets and rugs, personal ornamentations, and semi-precious stones constitute the majority of Tehran's handicrafts mostly exported to Turkey, Iraq, and Persian Gulf littoral states.

The Islamic Republic exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19), tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan announced 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, Mounesan explained.

Iran's first soccer museum starts operation

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The first museum in Iran dedicated to soccer officially started operation in the northwestern city of Tabriz, the capital of East Azarbaijan province, IRNA reported.



The license for "the country's first" soccer museum has been issued by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, provincial tourism chief Ahmad Hamzehzadeh said on Monday.

Soccer is the most popular sport in Iran, with wrestling and volleyball as close contenders. It was played in Iran as early as 1898 when a team of British residents of Isfahan played a team of Iranian-Armenians.

In southwestern Iran the game was introduced in 1907 by British sailors and workers. Iran national team won the Asian championships in 1968, 1974, and 1976 and made its World Cup debut in 1978.

Coronavirus shuts Yazd's museums, historical sites once again

➔ 1 Due to a sharp rise in the number of coronavirus infections and deaths, all art and cultural centers, universities, schools, seminaries, English schools, libraries, movie theaters, museums, mosques, beauty salons, and several other entities have been shut down once again.

While Museums in the Iranian capital of Tehran have reopened their doors to the public after one week of closure, Mohammadreza Kargar, the tourism ministry's director for museums and historical properties has announced that the activity of museums in other provinces is subject to the decision of the provincial headquarters.

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

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

He also noted that most of the income



A view of Amir Chakhmaq Square in the UNESCO-registered city of Yazd in central Iran

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

Several Iranian provinces have extended the closure of their museums and some historical sites as they are on the red risk zone. In July 2017, the historical structure of

20 wonderful must-see cultural sites in Iran

By Afshin Majlesi

(Part 2/3)

7. Shah Cheragh, Shiraz

The centuries-old Shah Cheragh (literally meaning the "King of Light") is a major mausoleum and pilgrimage site, where Sayyed Mir Ahmad, one of the brothers of Imam Reza (AS), is laid to rest, in the touristic city of Shiraz.

Insides are lined with dazzling glass tiles that bounce the light in every direction, and intricate geometric designs that create a stunning otherworldly light show.

The mausoleum boasts architectural elements and motifs from various centuries and its courtyard and tilework represent relatively modern embellishments from the late-Qajar period. Its blue-tiled dome is flanked by dazzling gold-tipped minarets.

There is also a modest museum in the northwestern corner of the courtyard, next to the shrine, which showcases shrine-related objects, including some highly prized old Qurans and an exquisite door embellished with silver and gold.

Each day, the shrine draws hundreds of the faithful from all over the country or even abroad. Women must wear a chador (open cloaks that leave the face exposed) within the whole shrine complex, available for free at the women's entrance.

8. Bam citadel, Kerman

The Bam citadel (locally called "Arg-e Bam") and its cultural landscape, located on the southern edge of the Iranian high plateau, in Kerman province, is highly regarded as an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement built in vernacular technique using mud layers.

The massive fortress and its environs were almost completely brought down to earth due to a devastating earthquake on December 26, 2003. Most of what visitors now see at the site is restored and replicas of the original structure being restored from 2004 onwards.

The origins of the adobe citadel can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC) and even beyond. The ensemble was on crossroads of important trade routes as well in its heyday sometime between 7th to 11th centuries.

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

9. Soltaniyeh dome, Zanjan

Dominating the skyline, the 14th-century Soltaniyeh dome (locally known as "Gonbad-e Soltaniyeh") is highly recognized as an architectural masterpiece particularly due to its innovative double-shelled dome and elaborate interior decoration.

The mausoleum's interior decoration is so outstanding that scholars like A.U. Pope have described the building as "anticipating the Taj Mahal". The gigantic dome is embellished with turquoise-blue faience tiles, rising

dramatically 48m above from its base that neighbors dusty archaeological digs and crumbling walls.

The dome is the earliest extant example of its type in the country and became an important reference for the later development of the Islamic dome. The city of Soltaniyeh was briefly the capital of Persia's Ilkhanid dynasty (a branch of the Mongol dynasty) during the 14th century.

Also, the extremely rich interior of the mausoleum, which includes elaborate brickwork, glazed tiles, marquetry, or designs in inlaid materials, stucco, and frescoes, can be conceived as a masterpiece in the arena of Islamic architecture.

10. Valley of the Stars, Qeshm Island

Stars Valley, also called, the Valley of Stars offers a pristine nature of rock formations, which easily recall, a little imagination, the shapes of animals, faces, among others.

Located on the west of the village of Berkeh Khalaf on the Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf, the bizarre landscape has been created as the result of the erosion of soil and stones by wind and rain over hundreds of millennia.

Some locals believe that a star once fell on this area thereby creating the rocky shapes that make it seem as if from another planet. It is the result of years of erosion by heavy precipitation. The valley is composed of marl and sandstone, and the rock formations vary from tall pillars, creating canyon-like paths, to hollowed-out spaces and smooth, round stones.

11. Alamut Valley, Qazvin

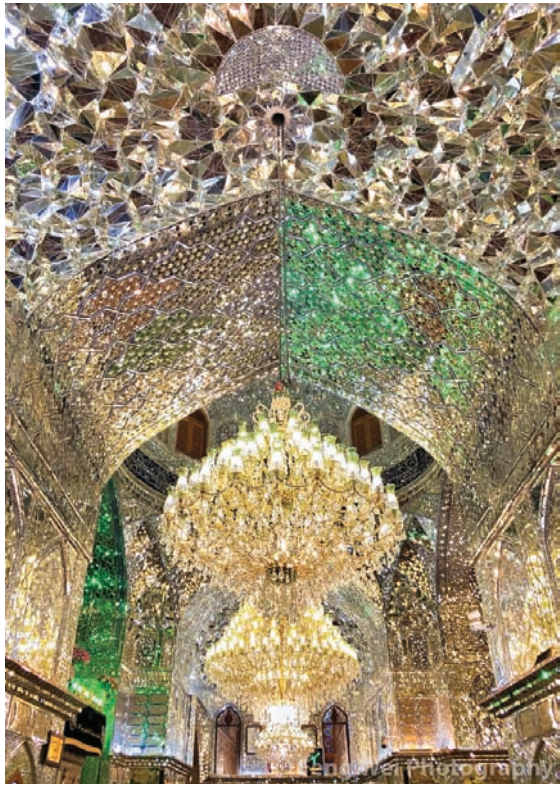
Alamut, which means "eagle's nest", is a mountainous geographic region in the western edge of the Alborz range, between the dry and barren plain of Qazvin in the south and the densely forested slopes of the Mazandaran province in the north.

Perched on top of a hill in a relatively remote village, a well-fortified castle is maybe the highlight of your travel to Alamut. The now-ruined castle was once sheltering the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124), spiritual leader of Islam's heretical Ismaili sect, known as 'Assassins'.

In popular myth, Sabbah led a bizarre, much-feared mercenary organization whose members were dispatched to murder or kidnap leading political and religious figures of the day. In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book "The Valleys of the Assassins".

Narratives say that the name Alamut derives from a regional eighth-century king who spied an eagle landing amid its rugged lofty crags and was inspired to build an impregnable fortress.

Sabbah's rule from Alamut (which he renamed City of Good Fortune) is shrouded in mystery and enigma. This is partly because most Ismaili records of the era were destroyed by the Mongols while the writings of their detractors survived. It is said that Assassins believed that their actions would transport them to paradise. Supposedly Sabbah cunningly cultivated such beliefs



An interior view of Shah Cheragh, a major mosque and mausoleum in Shiraz

by getting his followers stoned on hashish (unbeknown to them) and then showing them beautiful

12. Naqsh-e Rostam necropolis, near Shiraz

Located near Persepolis, Naqsh-e Rostam embraces massive rock-hewn tombs and royal bas-relief carvings, turning the ancient site to a must-see for holidaymakers traversing Iran. The Achaemenid necropolis is situated near Persepolis, itself a bustling UNESCO World Heritage site near the southern city of Shiraz.

Naqsh-e Rostam, meaning "Picture of Rostam" is named after mythical Iranian hero which is most celebrated in Shahnameh and Persian mythology. Back in time, natives of the region had erroneously supposed that the carvings below the tombs represent depictions of the mythical hero.

One of the wonders of the ancient world, Naqsh-e Rostam embraces four tombs are where Persian Achaemenid kings are laid to rest, believed to be those of Darius II, Artaxerxes I, Darius I and Xerxes I (from left to right facing the cliff), although some historians are still debating this. Beneath the funerary chambers are dotted with seven Sassanian-era (224–651) bas-reliefs cut into the cliff surface, depicting vivid scenes of imperial conquests and royal ceremonies; signboards below each relief give a detailed description in English.

Qajar-era public bathhouse to turn into café museum

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The Qajar-era (1789–1925) Maryan public bathhouse in the city of Talesh, northern Gilan province, will be repurposed into a café museum, a provincial tourism chief has said.

With a budget of over 2 billion rials (about \$50,000), the bathhouse is being restored, and after the end of the project, the historical monument will be ceded to the private sector with the aim of better maintenance, CHTN quoted Vali Jahani as saying on Monday.

Located in the historical village of Maryan, the bathhouse was built under Sardar Amjad, the ruler of Talesh at the time, by an architect from Germany on a sloping ground in an area of 131 square meters.

The bathhouse, which was mostly built with red bricks, was inscribed on



the National Heritage list in 2003.

Bathhouses or 'hammams' in Iran were not only places for bathing and cleaning up. They had a social concept for people who gathered at these places weekly.

It was a place where people talked with each other about their daily life and shared humor and news. There are still bathhouses in Iranian cities but they do not have their social function anymore since most people have bathrooms in their homes due to the modern lifestyle.

Some cities had separate bathhouses for men and women. They were usually built next to each other. However, there were some bathhouses, which were used by men and women at different times of the day.

There were also male and female public bathhouses; at daybreak, a longhorn (boooq-e javaz) was blown to announce that the bath was ready. Men came to the baths from daybreak till the afternoon. Women could use the bathhouses since then to sunset. In some cases, five days were allocated to men and two days to

women.

Persian literature is full of proverbs, narrations, and folk stories about bathhouses, which indicate the importance of the place in the past time.

Bounded by the Caspian Sea and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the north, Gilan, in the far past, was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanian empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE.

Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action – it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

Persian fallow deer breeding in favorable condition

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — With a **d e s k** large population of 53, Persian fallow deer roam in the 55-hectare shelter of Dasht-e Naz, the most important breeding center for this species in the northern part of the country, so that the hope for returning them to natural habitat after several decades has increased.

The main habitat of fallow deer in the country includes western and southwestern areas, but the declining trend in the number of this valuable species in the 1330s (falling on 1951- 1961) led to measures to save them since the late decade.

Since the past 60 years, the species are inhabiting protected areas, and the most important center for the reproduction of fallow deer is the semi-natural breeding site of Dasht-e Naz in the city of Sari, where in the last two years the population of the species has grown significantly.

Persian fallow deer population increases by 60%

Persian fallow deer population in the Dasht-e Naz site has increased by about 60 percent in less than two years, which is gratifying, Hossein Ali Ebrahimi, head of the provincial department of environment told IRNA on Monday.

The fawns, born during the past two years, with the protective measures taken, live away from any danger, he stated.

Fortunately, our efforts over the past two years came effective, and the population of these beautiful species has increased as the death toll has decreased, he noted.

Kouros Rabiei, head of wildlife supervision department of Mazandaran DOE said that two years ago, 33 fallow deer were living in the site, which has now reached up to 53 with



the implementation of protection programs to prevent the loss and prey.

Since then, the reproduction of deer was in a good condition, but usually, the fawns were preyed on carnivores such as wild cats and jackals, so that breeding had no effect on increasing the population of the species.

In semi-natural wildlife sanctuaries, the main goal is the reproduction of a species, and part of the wildlife cycle must inevitably be stopped, he highlighted, adding, the centers are selected for semi-captive breeding, with the aim of protecting and preventing the extinction of a specific species; therefore, we must eliminate the disruptive factors in the process of increasing the animal population.

According to statistics from the provincial DOE, 65 yellow deer have been sent from

Dasht-e-Naz to other shelters in the country so far, but a significant 60 percent increase in the number of deer in Dasht-e-Naz in less than two years is a rare coincidence in fallow deer breeding.

According to Rabiei, it can be achieved through a series of protective and preventive measures.

"To save the deer, we had to cut off the carnivores' access to the deer. The first way was to capture the animals alive to keep them away, which was done, and then the 55-hectare shelter was secured for keeping the animals.

The second step was the installation of cameras and lights, as well as the establishment of 24-hour monitoring stations, which caused hunting of fallow deer by wild animals

to reach zero since 2019," he explained.

Reintroduction of the species in Zagros

Currently, there are more than 200 Persian fallow deer in shelters throughout the country, the first priority of which is to save the species from extinction, which will be achieved by continuing this process, he highlighted.

The next goal is to release the species in their main habitats, i.e. the western and southwestern regions of Iran after their population reaches the desired level, he added.

Ultimately, the goal is the reintroduction to nature and habitat after a few decades, he said, noting, so much attention is paid to prevent them from being tamed; they are also kept wild at these sites and maintain their natural temperament.

He further expressed hope that the situation to be good enough to release a population of fallow deer into their natural habitats in the southwestern part of the country.

The Persian fallow deer (Dama dama mesopotamica) is a rare ruminant mammal belonging to the family Cervidae.

Persian fallow deer are physically larger than fallow deer, and their antlers are bigger and less palmate. They are nearly extinct today, inhabiting only a small habitat in Khuzestan, southern Iran, two rather small protected areas in Mazandaran, an island in Lake Urmia, and in some parts of Iraq.

They were formerly found from Mesopotamia and Egypt to the Cyrenaica and Cyprus. Their preferred habitat is open woodland.

The overall population of the Persian fallow deer lingered around 250 individuals in 2005 and registered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in 2015.

Caspian Sea grappling with poor waste management

1 → Noting that the release of urban and rural wastewater into the sea is another problem the Caspian Sea is struggling with, he clarified that a number of cities in the northern provinces either do not have a wastewater treatment plant.

In other cities, there is a wastewater treatment plant, but the sewage network is incomplete and human wastewater is discharged into the sea, he added.

Stating that plastics and microplastics are among the issues that can be a threat to humanity in next 10 years, he noted that erosion makes microplastics out of plastic waste, and 70 percent of these are transferred directly to the seas, and therefore can enter the aquatic and human food cycle, causing damage to human health and marine biodiversity.

Emphasizing waste management in the country is a serious issue and the government and parliament should think of a solution urgently, he said that waste management is not appropriately done in the whole country, but in the north is on the verge of crisis, so the Interior Ministry and the parliament should address this issue



and allocate the necessary funds.

During the last 25 years, the water level of the Caspian Sea has decreased by 130 cm, he said, noting that whether this decline will stop in the future is a matter of controversy, but given climate change and rising water

consumption from the Volga River, the main source of water for the Caspian Sea, many believe that the water level will continue shrinking and the Caspian Sea will be smaller in the future.

The Caspian Sea water level has reached its lowest level since 1995, mainly because of a recent drop in the water level of the Volga River, which supplies most of the sea's water, by about 22 percent.

In 2019, the average water level stood at -27.18 meters, showing 13 centimeters decrease compared to the year before.

According to the national center for Caspian Sea studies and research affiliated to the Water Research Institute, seawater temperature is one of the main criteria in heat exchange and an indicator in assessing the potential for evaporation from the water level, which is one of the main components of the Caspian water balance.

The increasing trend of the Caspian Sea surface temperature, especially in recent years, has been one of the factors affecting the reduction of water level.

Dropped emissions during COVID-19 lockdown will do 'nothing' for climate change

While greenhouse gas emissions plummeted as the world locked down in response to the coronavirus pandemic, such dips will do "nothing" to slow climate change unless society moves away from fossil fuels, researchers have found, space.com reported.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health

Organization declared the novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, a pandemic, which it remains today. To slow the spread of the virus, countries around the world began implementing lockdown measures that limited travel and closed down factories and businesses. In turn, Earth-orbiting satellites saw a dra-

matic decrease in greenhouse gas emissions.

However, according to an international study led by the University of Leeds, unless large-scale, structural interventions — like a significant switch away from fossil fuels — are implemented, these changes will not affect Earth's climate. In fact, the

researchers found, even if lockdown measures continue in some fashion around the world until the end of 2021, more than a year and half total, global temperatures will only be roughly 0.018 degrees Fahrenheit (0.01 degrees Celsius) lower than expected by 2030.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

FDA to penalize manufacturers producing unlabeled GM foods

Iran's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will penalize food manufacturers who have not labeled genetically modified (GM) food products, Vahid Mofid, the caretaker of the FDA department of food and beverages has announced.

All food products containing ingredients derived from GMOs must be labeled, including soybean and corn oil, rapeseed and cottonseed, he also noted.

He went on to say that eight laboratories in addition to the Energy & Power Industries Laboratories Company can test the products in terms of containing GM organism.

Labeling the products is merely done out of respect for the customer and providing the consumer with different choices and has nothing to do with the product's safety and health, he concluded.

سازمان غذا و دارو با محصولات تراریخته فاقد

برچسب بر خورد می کند

مدیرکل فرآورده های غذایی و آشامیدنی سازمان غذا و دارو، وحید مفید در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اعلام کرد: تمام محصولات تراریخته در سطح عرضه کنترل می شوند و در صورتی که تراریخته باشند اما برچسب نداشته باشند، حتماً برخورد می کنیم.

وی اضافه کرد: برخی محصولات در کشور مانند ذرت، سویا و کلزا از نوع تراریخته وجود دارد و فرآورده های غذایی در صورت استفاده از این محصولات تراریخته باید آن را روی برچسب خود اعلام کنند.

مفید افزود: هشت آزمایشگاه علاوه بر آزمایشگاه مرجع در کشور می توانند تراریختگی را تعیین کنند.

مدیرکل فرآورده های غذایی و آشامیدنی سازمان غذا و دارو گفت: درج تراریختگی در برچسب جلوی ترکیبات، صرفاً احترام به مشتری و فراهم کردن قدرت انتخاب برای مصرف کننده است و هیچ ارتباطی با ایمنی و سلامت آن فرآورده ندارد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"chloro-, chlor-"

Meaning: green or chlorine

For example: This is the fundamental process by which **chlorophyll** 'captures' the energy of sunlight.

PHRASAL VERB

Pan out

Meaning: to happen or develop in a particular way

For example: We'll have to see how things pan out.

IDIOM

Crystal clear

Explanation: to understand or has an obvious meaning

For example: There was no need to repeat the instructions. They were crystal clear.

Risk of COVID-19 plastic trash pile-up worries Europe

Concerns are rising across Europe that the coronavirus-induced slump in oil prices could knock demand for recycled plastics but data is still patchy on how the pandemic has affected the amount of trash piling up, the European Union's environment chief said.

As lockdowns around the world caused a drop in demand for fossil fuels, oil prices have plummeted this year, making virgin plastics even cheaper than recycled versions of the material, the Reuters reported.

That could spell trouble for EU plans to improve recycling rates. The EU generates around 26 million tonnes of plastic waste each year. Only 30% of that is recycled.



"We are concerned about potential disruption of the markets for recycled plastics caused by the low prices of crude oil, and also about littering of disposable masks and gloves," EU Environment Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevicius told Reuters in a written interview.

"At this stage, we do not yet have sufficient aggregated data to make reliable conclusions on the impact of the coronavirus crisis on plastic waste generation, separate collection, sorting, recycling or littering."

Plastic recycling plants across Europe have been forced to curb operations during the pandemic, and some say demand has plummeted, as clients have shelved green goals due to the economic downturn.

So far, however, companies still appear on track to meet a voluntary goal set by the EU to use 10 million tonnes of recycled plastics in new products by 2025, Sinkevicius said.

He said the Commission has received "relatively few" requests to grant exemptions or extensions to EU environmental rules due to the COVID-19 crisis, but some countries had faced difficulties meeting recycling targets even before the pandemic.

The EU will ban some single-use plastics next year and EU leaders agreed last month to introduce a bloc-wide tax on non-recyclable plastic packaging waste, to help raise funds for Europe's recovery from the economic chaos wrought by the virus.

Sinkevicius said the EU's 750 billion euro (\$881.8 billion) coronavirus recovery fund could help support the recycling sector.

"If no rapid remedy comes from the EU and the authorities of the member states, reaching of the EU recycling targets is in danger," Plastic Europe Managing Director Antonino Furfari told Reuters.

"The low oil prices are set to remain with us for more than only a couple of months, hence further affecting the recycling business. Decoupling the price of fossil plastics from recycled one is therefore a must."

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Brazilian police shoot dead leader of drugs gang

(April 16, 2004)

The police in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro say they've shot dead the leader of a notorious drugs gang thought to be responsible for a recent increase in violence. The man, known as Lulu, was killed on Wednesday afternoon in the shanty town of Rocinha. This report from Steve Kingstone:

Twenty seven year old Luciano Barbosa da Silva was discovered hiding in woods with **an alleged accomplice**. Both died after a shoot-out with the police.

Better known as Lulu, da Silva is said to have run **a lucrative trafficking operation** from a luxury home high on the hillsides of Rocinha — the largest of Rio de Janeiro's **shanty towns**.

The current wave of violence is thought to have begun when **rival traffickers** tried to move into the area. In all, twelve people have been shot dead since Friday. Lulu's house is now being used as a **makeshift** police headquarters amid fears of a renewed power struggle.

The state authorities in Rio de Janeiro have asked for four thousand troops **to back up** the police, but so far the Brazilian government is refusing to grant that request. It says the violence is not yet serious enough **to warrant** military involvement.

Some commentators have warned that sending in soldiers will only lead to more bloodshed. The head of the Organisation of Brazilian Lawyers says a civil war could break out if the **heavily-armed** drug gangs are **provoked**.

Words

an alleged accomplice: a person said to have helped commit a crime
a lucrative trafficking operation: a profitable business selling drugs
shanty towns: a large collection of rough huts where living conditions are very poor
the current wave of violence: the increased fighting at the present time

rival traffickers: competitors in the drugs trade

makeshift: temporary; usually of poor quality

to back up: to support

to warrant: if something warrants a particular action, it makes the action seem necessary; a formal use

heavily-armed: with a lot of guns or weapons

provoked: annoyed by someone; pushed into acting aggressively

(Source: BBC)



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

China sanctions 11 U.S. politicians

China Monday announced unspecified sanctions against 11 U.S. politicians and heads of organizations promoting democratic causes, including Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, who have already been singled out by Beijing.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Monday said the 11 had “performed badly” on issues concerning Hong Kong, where China has cracked down on opposition voices following its imposition of a national security law in the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city last month.

According to AP, the number of Americans named by the ministry exactly equals the number of Hong Kong and Chinese officials placed on a sanctions list by the U.S. last week over the crackdown.

China showed its determination to defy such pressure on Monday by arresting leading independent media tycoon Jimmy Lai and raiding the publisher’s headquarters.

“The relevant actions of the U.S. blatantly intervened in Hong Kong affairs, grossly interfered in China’s internal affairs, and seriously violated international law and the basic norms of international relations,” foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at a daily briefing on Monday.

U.S. protests: Riot declared for Portland protest at union building

→ 1 Police arrested 24 people during demonstrations overnight Friday after they said people defied orders to disperse and threw rocks, frozen or hard-boiled eggs and commercial-grade fireworks at officers. Some demonstrators filled pool noodles with nails and placed them in the road, causing extensive damage to a patrol vehicle, police said.

The gatherings this past week had been noticeably smaller than the crowds of thousands who turned out nightly for about two weeks in July to protest the presence of U.S. agents sent by the Trump administration to protect the federal courthouse downtown.

The Portland Police Association is a labor union that represents members of the Portland Police Bureau. Its building is located about 5 miles (8 kilometers) north of the federal courthouse.

Belarus’ leader wins sixth term with over 80 percent of votes

Election officials in Belarus said Monday that President Alexander Lukashenko has won his sixth consecutive term, taking over 80 percent of the vote amid protests fueled by frustration with the country’s deteriorating economy, years of political repression and the authoritarian incumbent’s cavalier brushoff of the coronavirus threat.

Human rights groups said one person was killed - which the authorities denied - and dozens were injured in a police crackdown on protests that followed Sunday’s presidential election, Daily Star reported.

The country’s central election commission said that with all ballots counted, Lukashenko, who has led Belarus for 26 years, took 80.23 percent of the vote and his main opposition challenger, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, had only 9.9 percent.

Opposition supporters believe the election results were rigged and plan to gather in Minsk for more protests on Monday evening.

“We don’t recognize these results,” Tsikhanouskaya, a former English teacher and political novice, told reporters Monday.

“According to the data we receive from precincts, we won, and this corresponds with what we saw at polling stations,” she said. “People stood in lines at polling stations in order to vote for Tsikhanouskaya. I believe my own eyes rather than the data of the central election commission.”

Thousands of people took to the streets in a number of Belarusian cities and towns Sunday night, protesting the early count suggesting Lukashenko’s landslide victory. They faced rows of riot police in black uniforms who moved quickly to disperse the demonstrators, firing flash-bang grenades and beating them with truncheons.

Resistance News

Israeli warplanes launch fresh airstrike in Gaza

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— The Israeli military’s warplanes have launched a fresh air raid against the positions of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas in the northern parts of the besieged Gaza Strip.

The latest attack was carried out on Sunday night after two small fires that started hours earlier in southern parts of the occupied territories due to explosive-laden balloons sent from Gaza.

The Israeli military says the air raid which targeted a Hamas observation post was in response to the balloons, which it blames on the Palestinian resistance movement.

The attack came a few hours after Israeli tanks fired shells at Hamas sites in the central parts of the besieged Gaza Strip, Press TV reported.

On Sunday afternoon, Israeli tanks fired several rockets toward positions belonging to Palestinian resistance movements in the eastern border area of Deir al-Balah City in central blockaded Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Information Center reported.

The Israeli military claimed in a statement that the aggression displayed after an alleged shooting attack conducted from the blockaded enclave at Israeli troopers stationed in the vicinity of settlement of Kissufim.

No injuries were reported in the Israeli aggression and the alleged shooting attack from Gaza.

The Israeli regime every so often launches strikes against positions in the blockaded enclave, accusing the resistance groups there of launching rockets.

U.S. court issues summons for Mohammed bin Salman

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) has been issued a summons by a U.S. court for a lawsuit by a former top Saudi intelligence agent who was reportedly targeted in a foiled assassination attempt.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia issued the summons on Friday, a day after Saad al-Jabri filed the lawsuit accusing Prince Mohammed of sending a hit squad to Canada to try and kill him.

According to al Jazeera, a summons is an official notice of a lawsuit, given to the person or persons being sued.

Al-Jabri, who lives in Canada, reportedly under increased protection by police and private security guards, claimed that his close ties with the U.S. intelligence community and deep knowledge of the prince’s activities had rendered him one of the aspiring monarch’s key targets.

“Few places hold more sensitive, humiliating and damning information about Defendant bin-Salman than the mind and memory of Dr. Saad - except perhaps the recordings Dr. Saad made in anticipation of his killing,” the lawsuit read.



Saudi Arabia, which has issued Interpol red notices seeking al-Jabri’s return - which have since been dismissed by the agency as political - has urged other countries to send al-Jabri back to the kingdom, accusing the former senior intelligence

officer of corruption.

The summons, which named 12 people in addition to Prince Mohammed, added: “If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint”.

U.S. Attorney General Barr says the left wants to tear down system

U.S. Attorney General William Barr mounted a partisan attack on the Democratic Party in an interview that aired Sunday, claiming the left believes in “tearing down the system” and pursues absolute victory as “a substitute for religion.”

Barr also told a Fox News TV host he was worried that an increase in mail-in voting could lead to a contested presidential election in November, sounding in on an issue often raised by U.S. President Donald Trump.

In an interview with conservative pundit Mark Levin, Barr said Democrats had pulled away from classic liberal values and now were akin to the “Rousseauian Revolutionary

Party” aimed at destroying the institutions upon which the country was built, Reuters reported.

“They’re not interested in compromise, they’re not interested in dialectic exchange of views. They’re interested in total victory,” Barr said of the left. “It’s a secular religion. It’s a substitute for a religion.”

The comments come nearly two weeks after a contentious hearing before the House Judiciary Committee in which Barr denied accusations he was doing Trump’s bidding by intervening in high-profile cases and sending federal agents into cities.

Barr has come under fire from Democratic lawmakers for sending federal officers to disperse protesters in Portland, Oregon, where some demonstrators have attacked a federal courthouse and others have gathered to speak out against racism and police brutality following the May 25 death of George Floyd.

Barr said police have been unfairly maligned and targeted with violent attacks during nationwide protests, and argued greater attention should be paid to a recent surge in violence in some cities that has led to numerous deaths of Black people.

South Korea’s 2021-2025 defense blueprint revealed

South Korea’s Ministry of Defense has revealed its 2021-2025 mid-term defense blueprint on Monday.

The ministry says it will start the process to acquire a light aircraft carrier from next year and to develop an indigenous Iron Dome missile interceptor system.

As stated in the South Korean Defense Ministry, the military ordered the development of the latest air defense system, similar to the Iron Dome. It is planned that the actual deployment of the new air defense system will begin in the late 2020s or early 2030s.

In addition, the new defense project includes the acquisition of a light aircraft carrier for the Republic’s Navy. At the same time, it is not specified which aircraft carrier is planned to be purchased, but it is reported that official procedures for its acquisition will begin in 2021.

Also, in the period until 2025, South Korea intends to begin production of the fifth-generation domestic fighter KF-X,



which is still in development. The South Korean military also plans to develop long-range air-to-ground and air-to-ship guided missiles.

The project says that in the period from 2021 to 2025 the construction of submarines with a displacement of 3600 tons and 4000 tons will begin in the country.

In total, South Korea intends to allocate \$ 253 billion for the army rearmament program in five years.

It is clarified that the bulk of the new weapons are created for confrontation with North Korea.

German Social Democrats tap Olaf Scholz as chancellor candidate

Germany’s Social Democrats have proposed Olaf Scholz, the finance minister and their most high-profile and popular politician, to run to succeed Chancellor Angela Merkel in next year’s elections, when her fourth and final term is expected to end.

The decision marks a comeback for the former Hamburg mayor, who was defeated last year in the race to lead his party by two left-wing outsiders. Now, Saskia Esken and Norbert Walter-Borjans have nominated their erstwhile rival, al Jazeera reported.

“Now it’s official,” Scholz wrote on Twitter on Monday. “The party leadership have unanimously nominated me as chancellor candidate. I look forward to a fun, fair and successful campaign.”

But Scholz, who has been turned by the coronavirus crisis from an austere-minded custodian of the public purse to the free-spending paymaster in charge of enormous stimulus and healthcare spending to sustain Europe’s largest economy through



the pandemic, faces a stiff challenge.

The party, which for decades vied with Merkel’s Christian Democrats to dominate the political scene, has not won a national election since 2002 and now languishes a distant third in most polls behind the conservatives and the upstart Greens.

In what some saw as a recognition of this reality, party co-leader Walter-Borjans on Sunday conceded what had once been anathema: that in addition to the Greens, the party would be open to governing in coalition with the Left party, heirs to the Communist Party of former East Germany.

Syrian tribe declares popular war against U.S. forces, SDF

A Syrian tribe in the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr has launched a popular resistance force against US troops and their allies, accusing the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) of stealing the country’s resources.

The U.S.-based Rai al-Youm newspaper said on its website on Monday that the tribe of Akidat announced in a statement the formation of a military council and launching popular resistance against the US forces and their allied militants in an apparent direct accusation of the American troops of being behind the assassination of Matshar al-Hafi, a senior member of the tribe.

The statement also accused the SDF of stealing the country’s

resources and killing its prominent figures, Press TV reported.

According to the statement, the elders and notable members of the tribe had held a meeting to take action against the “American occupiers” and the U.S.-backed mercenaries, and to liberate the Syrian territory.

The statement said they agreed to form a political council and a tribal army - to serve as its military wing - to manage the tribe’s affairs in cooperation with the relevant authorities.

It added that the council has begun the practical steps towards the formation of the Akidat army to liberate Syrian territory in coordination with the Syrian army.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes

and operations against what are said to be Daesh targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a United Nations mandate. Damascus has repeatedly condemned the airstrikes.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians.

The U.S. has dispatched new deployments to the Syrian provinces of Hasakah and Dayr al-Zawr following President Donald Trump’s October decision to keep hundreds of U.S. troops in Syria to “secure” the country’s oilfields which Syrian troops have yet to retake from militants.

Visual point of view



Afghan talks to kick off as Kabul set to free Taliban prisoners

Peace negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban are expected to start in Qatar within a week once the final batch of Taliban prisoners was released, the U.S. special envoy and Afghan government sources said on Monday.

The government accepted the advice of a Loya Jirga, a grand assembly of elders sometimes held to decide on controversial issues, on Sunday to release 400 Taliban prisoners, paving the way for the so-called intra-Afghan talks aimed at ending a war that has ground on since Taliban government was removed from power in U.S.-led invasion in 2001.

According to al Jazeera, the prisoner release was part of a U.S.-Taliban agreement signed in February. The Afghan government, which was not party to the deal, was expected to release a total of 5,000 prisoners to kick start the talks.

“Our stance is clear, if the prisoner release is completed, then we are ready for the intra-Afghan talks within a week,” Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen told AFP news agency, adding that the first round of talks will be held in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

The intra-Afghan talks, which were initially slated to be held in March, were delayed as the Afghan government was reluctant to release all the Taliban prisoners.

The resolution to release the last batch of prisoners, which was proving to be of particular concern to Kabul, was passed at the end of a three-day Loya Jirga.

“In order to remove the hurdles for the start of peace talks, stopping bloodshed, and for the good of the public, the Jirga approves the release of 400 prisoners as demanded by the Taliban,” Jirga member Atefa Tayeb announced on Sunday.

‘Lasting ceasefire’

According to an official list seen by AFP, many of the 400 inmates stand accused of serious offences, including many involved in attacks that killed scores of Afghans and foreigners, with more than 150 of them on death row.

The Jirga urged the government to give assurances to the population that the released prisoners would be monitored and would not be allowed to return to the battlefield, adding that foreign fighters should be sent back to their respective countries.

Asian Beach Games to be held in April 2021

S P O R T S TEHRAN — This year's Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China have been re-scheduled for April of 2021.

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) has confirmed the multi-sport event in the Chinese city will now be held from April 2 to 10, insidethegames.biz reported.

The Games' organizers were forced to postpone the event, originally planned for between November 28 and December 6 this year, after the Chinese Government decided to cancel the majority of international sporting events for the rest of 2020.

The OCA has confirmed that the name "Sanya 2020" will still be used despite the event taking place next year.

"The decision taken jointly in collaboration with Chinese Olympic Committee and the Sanya Asian Beach Games Organizing Committee (SABGOC) will ensure the safety of the athletes and officials as well as the spectators in these unprecedented times of COVID 19 pandemic," a statement said.



"The sports entry as well as other technical details will be readjusted in collaboration with SABGOC and announced shortly.

"The OCA is extremely positive that the Games with the joint efforts of all the involved parties will be a great success."

Sanya, located on the southern end of China's Hainan Island, is due to be the sixth host of the Asian Beach Games.

More than 2,000 athletes from more than 40 countries are expected to compete next year in 19 sports.

Iran will participate in the soccer, volleyball, handball, wrestling, athletic, kabaddi (men and women), sport climbing, water polo, swimming and 3x3 basketball (women) in the Games.

China's sporting ban for 2020 does not include test events for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics.

Despite the uncertainty on the Asian Beach Games caused by the decision, organizers have continued to prepare and released an official song last month.

Esteghlal, Persepolis not permitted to sign foreigners

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Mehdi Alinejad, the Iranian Deputy Minister of Sport and Youth, confirmed that Persepolis and Esteghlal are not allowed to sign new foreign players or coaches for the next season.

"Due to the challenging situation of the currency exchange and the recent hike in the dollar's value against the rial, there is no possibility for Persepolis and Esteghlal clubs to sign foreign coach or player. These clubs can renew their current squad and coaching staff contracts and focus on signing Iranian players rather than foreigners," Alinejad said in a ceremony in Tehran on Monday.

The two Tehran giants have had a lot of financial problems in recent years and



could be banned from signing players for the next transfer windows after they failed to pay the salary of their former foreign coaches and players.

The Ministry of Sport and Youth owns two major football clubs of Iran, Persepolis, and Esteghlal.

FFIRI waits for FIFA's advice to finalize the federation's statutes: spox

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran football federation spokesman Amir Mehdi Alavi has said that they are waiting for FIFA's advice to finalize the amendment of the federation's statutes.

"The draft statutes of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), which was sent to FIFA a month ago, also observes the requirements of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), FIFA and is in compliance with domestic law," said Alavi in an interview on Radio.

The Iranian football federation sent the amended draft status to FIFA in early June, after FIFA threatened the federation to the possible global suspension over the problematic provisions of the current statutes.

The Presidential elections of the FFIRI



are set to take place in November, as the organization's statutes reportedly moved a step closer to FIFA approval.

"We hope that after FIFA approval we will see the approval of the draft statutes in the FFIRI assembly and in the next stage we will hold the general assembly," Alavi concluded.

Iran volleyball league new season to start on Sept. 9

S P O R T S TEHRAN — The 2020-21 Iran Volleyball Super League will start on Sept. 9.

A total of 14 teams will take part in the new season, Shahram Azimi, Director of Competition and Events of Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation, said.

The draw ceremony was held at the Iran's National Olympic and Paralympic Academy in Tehran on Monday in an online format, volleyball.ir reported.

The 2019-20 was canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The matches will be held in two rounds of preliminary and playoffs. In the preliminary round the competition will be played in a two-legged system.

The top eight teams will qualify for the playoffs round.

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, which have captured the Asian Men's Club Championship for 7 times including 6 in a row (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011), have won 12, the most titles in the new Super League.

Week 1 Schedule:

- * Shahrddari Varamin – Shahrddari Qazvin
- * Saipa Tehran – Hoorsun Ramsar
- * Shahrddari Urmia – Azar Battery Urmia
- * Foolad Sepahan – Khatam Ardakan
- * Shahrddari Gonbad – Shahdab Yazd
- * Foolad Sirjan Iranian – Rahyab Melal Marivan
- * Labanyat Haraz Amol – Paykan Tehran

Maghsoodloo clinches domestic title ahead of FIDE Olympiad

MNA — Grandmaster Parham Maghsoodloo has claimed the title of an internal tournament prior to the 2020 FIDE Online Olympiad.

Starting on August 3, the internal event saw top chess players of the country competing online. Maghsoodloo announced the winner of the event after 13 rounds.

The competition, according to the Chess Federation, was held with the

Olympiad format so as to make players ready for the upcoming FIDE Olympiad.

All of the players announced that are announced to be competing in the FIDE event, plus some other masters, participated in the preparation competition.

The Iranian federation announced the national team's lineup for FIDE Online Olympiad on July 19. Parham Maghsoodloo, Ehsan Ghaem Maghami, Mohammad Amin Tabatabaie, Pouya

Idani, and Arian Gholami in men's category and Sarasadat Khademalsharieh, Mobina Alinasab, Anahita Zahedifar, Anousha Mahdian, and Motahare Asadi in women's category will represent Iran in the competition.

Given the successful holding of different chess competitions online since the outbreak hit the world, FIDE also decided to hold an online Olympiad from July 22 to August 30.



Dabbagh: Palestine can still reach the next round

A mix of optimism and pessimism prevailed among Nouredine Ould Ali's men when Palestine were drawn against Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Singapore and Yemen in Group D of Asian qualifying for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. The Palestinian team got off to an impressive start, winning 2-0 against Uzbekistan, a country that was 18 spots above them on the FIFA World Ranking.

"That was a very important victory, especially as it came at the beginning of our qualification campaign," Uday Dabbagh, the player who scored the first goal for Palestine in the qualifiers, told FIFA.com. "It was our first victory ever against Uzbekistan, and thus a major motivation for us to perform well in these games."

Asked what that goal meant to him, especially since it came only two months after his first professional football experience that saw him move from Palestine to Kuwait's Al-Salmiya Club, the 21-year old said: "It was great to score the national team's first goal in the qualifiers. It was a major boost for me as I had just started my professional football outside Palestine."

But the hopes of Dabbagh and his team-mates were soon dashed as this win remained the only victory for Palestine in the qualifiers. The Knights lost 2-0 to



Singapore and drew 0-0 with Saudi Arabia before suffering two successive losses to Yemen and Uzbekistan.

After the lost game against Singapore, Dabbagh missed the following three games for Palestine due to

a collarbone injury that he had again in March after moving to Qadsia SC.

Dabbagh's return will improve the chances of the Palestine, which failed to score any goals in their last three qualifiers. Now bottom of Group D with four points, there is hope that the player, who plays in more than one position, will lead them to victories in the remaining games.

In the first game, Palestine will host Singapore. After that, they will play an away game against Saudi Arabia and a home game against Yemen. With two of these three games taking place on home soil, Palestine have a chance to qualify for the next round, Dabbagh believes.

"Many factors negatively affected our team in the previous games, notably the injuries suffered by a number of players," he said. "But with these players returning now, we have very good chances. Moreover, two of the games will be played on home soil, and this will tip the balance in our favour."

"We still have three important games. I hope we'll achieve positive results to realize our dream and qualify for the next round."

(Source: FIFA)

Sokhangui appointed as director of NPC classification department

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Yahya Sokhanguei has been named as director of Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) classification department on Sunday.



Sokhanguei has been working as a classifier in the Paralympic committee over the past years.

The Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games schedule remains essentially unchanged for the event that has been postponed until next year.

The Paralympic Games will begin on August 24, 2021, and close on September 5, while the Olympics are to start on July 23.

Iranian federation turning to domestic coach to lead national team

Iranian media keep speculating in regard to the new head coach of the country's men's volleyball national team.

After reporting that their federation (IRIVF) negotiates with several big names to take over the men's national team for the Tokyo Olympics, the media in Iran now have information that suddenly domestic experts have bigger chances in the "race" for the job.

These names are circulating to come in place of Montenegrin Igor Kolakovic: Behrouz Ataei (commanded Iran U21 to the title in the 2019 FIVB World Championship, currently at the helm of Labanyat Haraz Amol), Mostafa Karkhaneh (Saipa Alborz), Masoud Armat (Ataei's assistant in the Iran U21 and head coach of Khatam Ardakan), and Peyman Akbari (long-time assistant coach in Iran senior National Team and head coach of Shahrddari Urmia).

All in all, it seems that a domestic expert will lead the Iran National Team after a decade of foreign coaches.

(Source: worldofvolley.com)

Alipour reaches agreement with Qingdao Huangha

Persepolis football team striker Ali Alipour has reached an agreement with Chinese football club Qingdao Huangha.

Alipour, who has been the best goalscorer of Persepolis football club over the past years, had been also linked with a move to Portuguese football team Paços de Ferreira.

Alipour, 26, has scored 62 goals and provided 32 assists in 192 games for Persepolis.

Qingdao Huanghai Football Club are a professional Chinese football club that currently participate in the Chinese Super League under license from the Chinese Football Association (CFA).

The team are based in Qingdao and their home stadium is the Qingdao Guoxin Stadium that has a seating capacity of 45,000. The club is owned by Qingdao Central Plaza Business Management Co., Ltd. who formed the team on 29 January 2013.

(Source: Varzesh3.com)

Asian Youth, Junior Handball Championships postponed

Tasnim — Asian Men's Youth and Junior Handball Championships were postponed, the Asian Handball Federation announced.

The competitions were postponed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2020 Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship was scheduled to be held in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Also, the Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship, which was originally scheduled for October 3 to 13 in Shiraz, has been postponed until March 2021.

The Iran handball federation will be hosting an Asian tournament after seven years.

Tractor midfielder joins Cusco FC

Tractor football team attacking midfielder Willyan Junior Mimbela Cáceres joined Peruvian football team Cusco.

The 28-year-old player joined Tractor from Unión Comercio last year on a three-year contract.

Americatv.com.pe has reported that Mimbela has returned to his country to play in the Peruvian league.

Mimbela was the third Peruvian player in Iran's football after Diego Chavarri and Rinaldo Cruzado, who played for Gostareh Foolad and Esteghlal respectively.

(Source: Americatv.com.pe)

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
 » **Advertisements Dept.:** Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
 » **Public Relations Office:** Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
 » **Subscription & Distribution Dept.:** Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
 » **Webmaster:** webmaster@tehrantimes.com
 » **Printed at:** Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79
 Tehrantimes79
 Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
 P.O. Box: 14155-4843
 Zip Code: 1599814713



He who remembers the length of the journey, prepares himself for it.
Imam Ali (AS)

Tehran Municipality to dedicate cultural centers to Muharram mourning rituals during pandemic

→1 Last month, President Hassan Rouhani said that Muharram mourning rituals would be held with observing health protocols and social distancing.



Director of Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality Hojjatoleslam Meisam Amrudi in an undated photo.

During a meeting of the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters, Rouhani said that the mourning ceremonies for Imam Hussein (AS) must be held throughout the country gloriously with a precise observation of health protocols.

The president noted that the rituals should be held in a way that it will not give a pretext to the enemies, but make Iran a role model for other countries and Shia who hold mourning ceremonies for Imam Hussein (AS).

During the Muharram rituals, millions of Muslims commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (S).

Countryside Animafest Cyprus to screen “The Crab”

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Shiva Sadeq-Asadi’s short film “The Crab” is competing in the 19th Countryside Animafest Cyprus, which is currently underway in Salamiou, Cyprus.



This combination photo shows a poster 19th Countryside Animafest Cyprus and the animated movie “The Crab”.

The movie tells the story of a shy schoolboy who is interested in performing in a play with his school’s theater troupe. But the only part offered to him is to play the role of a crab.

The animation produced at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults has been screened in various international events, including the 23rd Shanghai International Film Festival in China.

The 19th Countryside Animafest Cyprus opened on Sunday and will run until August 12.

The festival’s aim is to cultivate the art of animation, by raising audience awareness and promoting cultural, financial and social development in the field of independent animation filmmaking.

It is organized with the official support of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus and ASIFA Cyprus. A selection of the world’s latest productions, focusing on independent, non-commercial films that show acute artistic sensibility and originality of idea, story and execution are showcased at the festival every year.

Official says taziehhs can be performed despite pandemic

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian Association of Tazieh Managing Director Ebrahim Galledarzadeh has said that tazieh performances should not be halted and these ritual plays can be performed during Muharram observing health protocols despite the pandemic.

“Tazieh is a ritual performance, which dates back to centuries ago in Iran and is performed during Muharram. It is not only a kind of performance but also a ritual play people have beliefs in,” Galledarzadeh said.

He asked for a solution to perform tazieh during Muharram, which is coming in two weeks in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

“Tazieh was long liked by many from the old days and many gathered to watch the performances, and that is why Dowlat Tekyeh was constructed,” he said.

Dowlat Tekyeh was a place for seasonal Islamic ceremonies that was built during the reign of Qajar king Nasser ad-Din Shah near the Golestan Palace downtown Tehran.

Tazieh was also performed in big squares and courtyards, which used to attract many viewers.

He added, “Those individuals who gather



A tazieh performance in an undated photo. (Mehr/Mohsen Nofaresti)

to watch the performance usually consider tazieh a kind of worship and while they are in the crowd, they break into tears with the scenes they watch, and they usually go back into their inner selves and experience a kind of privacy while in the crowd.”

He said that he believes the performances in the lunar months of Muharram and Safar present no problem.

“I believe it not only has no problem but it seems to be necessary because it can create a place for ritual performances while health protocols and social distancing are observed,” he said.

In a meeting with Galledarzadeh, Qader Ashena, the director of Iran’s Dramatic Arts Center, has said that the decision by the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters is very important, and if there would be no threat for the performers and the viewers, tazieh performances will have no problem.

He said that he would like to have a meeting with the Health Minister to discuss the issue.

“These types of performances can be a good help for the artists while they can also make people occupied by the open-air performances,” he concluded.

Story of Sultan Mahmud, slave Ayaz inspires Iranian board game



A box of the Iranian board game “Ayaz & Friends”.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Story of the Ghaznavid Sultan Mahmud and his Turkish slave Ayaz has inspired a board game produced by Iran’s Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA).

The game titled “Ayaz & Friends” has been designed by Emad Arghand for children above seven. It is played by two or four people and helps the player improve their

ability in solving a problem, reasoning and predicting.

The game is played in two stages, during first of which the players collect pieces bearing various Persian letters with which players will make words and phrases in the second stage. The winner is the player who can make the most words and phrases with the letters. Negative points are considered for those letters remaining unused.

Mahmud Sebuktegin, mostly known as the Ghaznavid Sultan Mahmud, was the first fully independent ruler of the Turkish Ghaznavid dynasty, who reigned (998-1030) over what had become by his death a vast military empire stretching from northwestern Persia to Punjab in India and from Chorasmia and the middle stretches of the Oxus River to Makran and the Arabian Sea shores.

Abul-Najm Uymaq Ayaz was favorite Turkish slave of the Ghaznavid Sultan Mahmud, whose passion for Ayaz is a recurrent theme in Persian poetry.

Information about Ayaz’s life is very scarce, his real personality being hidden behind a veil of tales. As the chief royal cupbearer, he enjoyed Mahmud’s trust and probably was given some important assignments. After

Mahmud’s death, Ayaz refused to join Mohammad, the designated heir to the throne, and together with two other prominent men and most of the palace slaves left Gazni to join Masud, the rival claimant, in Neyshabur.

Ayaz continued to enjoy favor in Masud’s reign. Ahmad Hasan Maymandi recommended Ayaz for the governorship of Ray, a prestigious and hazardous post, but the sultan decided otherwise on the ground of his inexperience. Later in Masud’s reign, however, Ayaz was appointed governor of Qosdar and Kerman.

In Persian literature, much has been written about Ayaz’s good looks and his qualities of valor, shrewdness, sincerity and loyalty. Farrokhi, one of Mahmud’s court poets, panegyrized Ayaz in a qasida, describing him as valiant, brave and handsome.

Sultan Mahmud’s relationship with Ayaz had many parallels in the category of royal love for a slave, but this one was presented in Persian literature as something different and exceptional.

Nezami Aruzi, Attar, Rumi and several other Persian poets have made allusions to the story of Mahmud’s relationship with Ayaz in their works.

“Eaten” to compete in Anibar Intl. Animation Festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Mohsen Rezapur’s short movie “Eaten” will be competing in the Anibar International Animation Festival in Kosovo.

The 11th edition of the festival is scheduled to go online in the city of Peja from August 17 to 23.

The story of “Eaten” is set on a mysterious, unknown planet, in which a rabbit-like creature is eaten by a wolf. It meets another rabbit-like creature in the wolf’s stomach and they begin a new



“Eaten” by Iranian director Mohsen Rezapur.

life with each other, but that’s not the end of the story.

Produced at Iran’s Experimental and Documentary Film Center, “Eaten” has been screened at numerous festivals around the world.

In March 2019, it won the special jury award at the 11th Tehran International Animation Festival, which is organized by the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults every year.

“In this edition, beyond bringing light

to those who served and are serving on the first line of duty, we want to also bring light and rethink what makes us human,” the organizers of the Anibar festival have said.

“How under extreme circumstances we have to make choices and decisions that might conflict with our values and principles as human beings. And how under these circumstances we can change so that we elevate our humanity, our sense of community and our relation to the environment,” they added.

German writer Sebastian Fitzek’s “Package” received at Iranian bookstores

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of German writer Sebastian Fitzek’s crime thriller “The Package” has recently been published by Tandis Publishing House in Tehran.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Mahvash Khorramipur.

“The Package” is about a young psychologist, Dr. Emma Stein, whose life suddenly turns into a nightmare when one night in a hotel room she becomes the next victim of the “hairstylist”, a psychopath who rapes young women and cuts off their hair.

Deeply traumatized by the deed and the loss of her unborn child, she feels safe only in her small house in Berlin’s Grunewald and is now fighting against her paranoia and the side effects of her many drugs within her own four walls.



Front cover of the Persian translation of German writer Sebastian Fitzek’s book “The Package”.

When the postman asks her to accept a parcel for a neighbor whose name she has never heard before, she is forced to leave her house for the first time in six months and loses her judgment about reality and delusion.

Fitzek was born in Berlin in 1971. After going to law school, he decided against a juridical profession for a creative occupation in the media.

After an internship at a private radio station he switched to the competition as head of entertainment and became chief editor later on, thereafter becoming an independent executive consultant and format developer for numerous media companies in Europe.

He lives in Berlin and is currently working in the program management of a major capital radio station.

His most popular book is “Die Therapie” (“The Therapy”).

“The Cambridge Introduction to Chekhov”

appears in Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — American literary historian and writer James N. Loehlin’s book “The Cambridge Introduction to Chekhov” has been published in Persian by the Elmi-Farhangi, a major publishing house in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Saeid Dorudi.

Chekhov is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential literary figures of modern times. Russia’s preeminent playwright, he played a significant role in revolutionizing the modern theater.

His impact on prose fiction writing is

incalculable. He helped define the modern short story. Beginning with an engaging account of Chekhov’s life and cultural context in nineteenth-century Russia, this book introduces the reader to this fascinating and complex personality.

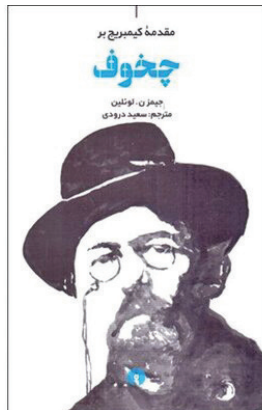
Unlike much criticism of Chekhov, it includes a detailed discussion of both his fiction and his plays. The introduction traces his concise, impressionistic prose style from early comic sketches to mature works such as “Ward No. 6” and “In the Ravine”.

Examining Chekhov’s development as a dramatist, the book considers his one-

act vaudevilles and early works, while providing a detailed, act-by-act analysis of the masterpieces on which his reputation rests: “The Seagull”, “Uncle Vanya”, “Three Sisters” and “The Cherry Orchard”.

Loehlin is an associate professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin, in the U.S. He is the author of “Henry V” in the “Manchester Shakespeare in Performance” series and editor of “Romeo and Juliet” in the “Cambridge Shakespeare in Production” series.

He has directed eighteen of Shakespeare’s plays, including both parts of “Henry IV”.



Front cover of the Persian translation of American writer James N. Loehlin’s book “The Cambridge Introduction to Chekhov”.