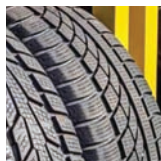


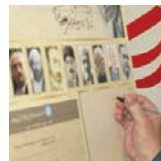
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U.S. not in position to trigger UN sanctions snapback

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© ISNA / Shima Masjedi

By **Faranak Bakhtiar**
Tehran Times journalist

World Youth Day: can Iran meet growing youth population's needs?

While Iran faced a population growth rate of less than one percent for the first time, raising concerns of losing the demographic window of opportunity and insisting on implementation of population growth policies, the question raises that whether the country is capable to meet the needs of its young population growth?

Being a middle-income country, Iran is experiencing an increasingly large young population, as over 60 percent of the whole country's 80 million population is under 30 years old. To maximize the potential for seizing the opportunity of demographic dividend, factors such as investment in education, health, and job generation for youth are recommended.

However, increasing the population requires a capability to address the needs of a young nation which can be fulfilled with various indicators, such as social and economic development, development of recreational and educational facilities, increasing the share of young people in managerial positions and among decision-makers, providing the conditions for the growth and prosperity of the youth.

Here, the question comes up that is the country able to develop the mentioned factors for the next 3 decades to experience a young population growth?

Annually, International Youth Day is observed on August 12, which was first designated by the UN General Assembly in 1999 and serves as an annual celebration of the role of young women and men as essential partners in change, and an opportunity to raise awareness of challenges and problems facing the world's youth.

The theme for 2020 is 'Youth Engagement for Global Action', and this has never been of more significance, than during the current conditions. The theme seeks to shed light on "the ways in which the engagement of young people at the local, national, and global levels is enriching national and multilateral institutions and processes." It highlights the importance of the influence that youth can have over where the future is headed and how their political and social involvement can aid in creating better, more sustainable policies for the world as a whole. **->9**

Iraq slams Turkish drone strike, cancels defense minister's visit, summons envoy

By staff & agencies

Iraq has vehemently denounced Turkey's recent drone strike that killed two Iraqi border guards and a companion in the country's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

The office of Iraqi President Barham Saleh issued a statement on Tuesday and condemned the assault as "a dangerous violation of Iraqi sovereignty" and international rules.

The statement also called on Ankara to "stop all its military operations" in the region and asked for negotiations with the aim of solving border problems between the two countries in a peaceful way.

Earlier in the day, two high-ranking Iraqi officers and the driver of their vehicle were killed in the Sidakan district of Kurdish, in what the army said was a "blatant Turkish drone attack" in the semi-autonomous region, where Ankara has been targeting the hideouts of the Kurdistan

Workers' Party (PKK) militant group over the past weeks.

Meanwhile, Iraq has canceled an official visit by Turkey's Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and summoned Ankara's ambassador to Baghdad following a drone strike that killed two high-ranking Iraqi commanders in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said Baghdad "categorically rejects and strongly condemns the blatant Turkish drone attack in the Sidakan area of Erbil province in the Iraqi Kurdish region, which resulted in the deaths of two officers and a soldier from the heroic Iraqi armed forces."

It added, "Iraq considers this act a violation of the sovereignty and dignity of the country, and a hostile act that violates international charters and laws that regulate relations between world countries. **->10**

U.S. protests: Family of Elijah McClain sues city, police

The family of a 23-year-old Black man who died after a violent encounter with Aurora, Colorado, police officers filed a civil rights lawsuit against the city and its police on Tuesday, alleging murder and routine use of excessive force against Black people.

The man, Elijah McClain, was walking on the street alone in August 2019 when he was stopped by three officers based on a report that he was "being suspicious."

According to the complaint, the officers held him in two carotid holds around his neck, tackled him although he presented no physical threat, and medics attending to him administered an overdose of the sedative ketamine which left him unconscious.

According to Reuters, McClain died days later in the hospital.

"Plaintiffs bring this action seeking both accountability for the profound loss of a beautiful

soul, and to ensure that Elijah did not die in vain by sending a resounding message that racism and brutality have no place in American law enforcement," McClain's family wrote in the complaint.

A spokeswoman for Aurora said the city attorney's office was reviewing the complaint but had no immediate comment.

McClain's family maintains that he had committed no crime and was stopped unlawfully. Citing previous instances of Aurora police forcefully detaining Black people, they alleged that McClain's case was part of a pattern of racist policing.

The Colorado Attorney General's Office issued a statement on Tuesday confirming that it had launched a broad investigation of Aurora police department patterns and practices that might pose civil rights violations. The office is conducting a separate inquiry into McClain's death, it said. **->10**

Key Western states turn blind eye to rights violations by friends: ex-British MP

By **Mohammad Mazhari**

TEHRAN — Matthew Gordon-Banks, a former British Conservative MP and senior research fellow at the UK Defense Academy, says certain western countries try to "turn a blind eye" to gross human rights violations by their friends in the Persian Gulf region.

Over the past few years, as an oil-rich kingdom and world's largest arms buyer, Saudi Arabia has been pounding relentlessly the Houthi Ansarullah movement in Yemen, the

world's poorest Arab country, for more than five years.

As civilian casualties increase in Yemen, pressure is mounting on some Western countries like Britain and Canada, to stop arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Canada sold a record amount of military hardware to Saudi Arabia in 2019. Britain has also resumed arms sales to the kingdom despite concerns about flagrant human rights violations by Saudi Arabia in Yemen.

However, Gordon-Banks says, Western powers "hypocritically" criticize and even impose sanctions on countries who "are not close friends".

"Key Western countries are willing to turn a blind eye to the human rights failures of their allies but hypocritically criticize, even raise sanctions against others who are not close friends," Gordon-Banks, who now runs International Institute for Strategic Affairs IISA, tells the Tehran Times. **->7**



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Mobile medical, patient transport systems inaugurated

Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari (R) inaugurated mobile medical and patient transport systems as well as alcohol and antiseptics production units at the Army's medical sciences university in Tehran on Wednesday.

He also paid a visit to the crisis management division of the Army's health and medical education department at the university.

Beat the summer heat in these cool destinations near Tehran

By **Afshin Majlesi**

TEHRAN — For many people in Tehran, summer vacation may mean to beat the heat at the beach particularly along the Caspian Sea, inside an air-conditioned museum or at a water park, or taking refuge to a cool nearby countryside. For the latter, here are places around the Iranian capital where scorching heat will be nothing more than an afterthought!

On the northeast side of the metropolis, you can find plenty of cool townships and villages such as Oushan, Damavand, Fasham, Ahar, Meygoun, Cheshmeh A'la, and Garmabdareh to name a few. These destinations, in addition to the fresh air, fruit gardens, and lush gardens, many of those are equipped with proper recreational facilities and abundant local restaurants as well.

On the east, Shahandasht waterfall may be top on your agenda. The 50-meter cascade is situated off the Haraz road, which connects Tehran to the Caspian Sea in the north. Adjacent to the falls stands a Sassanid-era (224 CE to 651) stronghold, named Qaleh Malek-Bahman, which worth paying a visit.

Tanghe Vashi, a popular mountainous resort that is known for having a pleasant, cool stream can be your other choice in the east direction. Tanghe Vashi is where many opt for walking through for minutes to cool off. Situated some 15 kilometers west of Firouzkouh, Tanghe Vashi also bears a 19th-century bas-relief commissioned by Fath Ali Shah Qajar (r. 1797 – 1834) to commemorate hit hunts during summer excursions.

Apart from the east, you can choose to stay in Kan and Sulaqan, which are riverside rural districts westward. Another cool spot may be colorful valleys across the popular Chalous road that embraces hectic rows of restaurants and coffee shops. **->8**

The world will degenerate into ‘might makes right’ if U.S. is allowed to ignore law, Zarif warns

Zarif cautions if powers do not respect UN Security Council principles then no nation will acknowledge its authority

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has warned that if the United States is allowed to ignore international law “the world will slide backwards toward a ‘might makes right’ standard”.

Zarif made the comments in an article he wrote in the Global Times on Wednesday.

The text of the article, entitled “International community must stop U.S. destroying the world of laws”, reads as follows:

What we in Iran - the target of a vicious and indiscriminate sanctions regime - have seen from the current U.S. administration is quite straightforward: there is no grand vision for an alternative global community. The U.S. fickleness and unpredictability have nothing to do with masterful implementation of game theory. Rather whether it comes to its mismanagement of COVID-19 at home or its undermining of peace and stability abroad, the current regime in Washington has no real plan except to frontally assault those who stand by the rule of law.

The U.S. handling of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed - and is inseparable from - the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, is a case in point.

In July 2015, Iran, the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany signed a landmark agreement to satisfy any concerns over the exclusively peaceful nature of our nuclear program while relieving the Iranian people of inhumane and unjust sanctions. As part of the JCPOA, the U.S. and other signatories also jointly co-sponsored UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which embraces the nuclear deal - and to which its full 90 pages are attached, thus enshrining the accord into international law. However, in May 2018 the U.S. administration declared that it had unilaterally opted for “ceasing participation” in the JCPOA. Since then, Iran and the rest of the international community have been left in the extraordinary position of watching the U.S. become the first government in UN history that not just violates a binding resolution it itself sponsored, but also punishes those governments and companies that uphold international law by implementing its provisions. As I warned the Security Council last month, this status quo is neither desirable nor sustainable. We are thus at a crossroads.

The U.S. administration’s disinformation campaign - including false and forged claims regarding a regional consensus about the consequences of the remaining signatories to the JCPOA upholding the deal’s provisions, including normalizing Iran’s defense cooperation with the world in October - is a ruse to disguise its real, more malevolent motivations: having failed to collapse Resolution 2231 after over two years of the most brutal “maximum pressure” ever imposed on a nation - including depriving ordinary Iranians of access to medicines and medical equipment amid the deadliest pandemic the world has seen in many decades - the U.S. now hopes to abuse its mal-interpretation of the provisions of the same resolution it abandoned in 2018 to finally destroy it. This deeply malicious U.S. behavior is evident throughout the UN, where it seeks to use the UN itself to effectively destroy the world body.

There are several key issues and consequences to consider in this equation.

First and foremost, one may wonder why or how the collapse of a single UN Security Council resolution on a niche subject relates to the bigger picture. It does, for most notably it would be a generational setback for the cause of multilateralism should the Security Council be bullied into torpedoing its own resolution. Unless all powers respect the principles which the Council was created to embody, it cannot perform its duties, nor can any nation acknowledge its authority.

We should not forget that the same U.S. regime has fatuously also withdrawn from the WHO amid the worst global pandemic, but now seeks to lead the WHO reform process, to the chagrin of its closest Western allies.

If the U.S. is allowed to continue on this path, the world will slide backwards toward a “might makes right” standard. And while this may sound appealing to Cold Warriors looking for new targets, even that standard has its limits. For both superpowers of the past century witnessed the unraveling of their international influence in their military defeat in Afghanistan, a country with a GDP that is 14 times smaller than Apple Inc.’s annual revenue.

We have also seen in past years how the U.S. administration has - in parallel with its assault on international institutions and accords - sought to supplant international law with its own domestic laws. In practice, this has meant that it is now the U.S. Treasury and not European national governments which decide with whom European companies can do business - be it under Resolution 2231 or their own North Stream gas lifeline.

While it has so far primarily been the U.S. that has sought to expand the jurisdiction of its domestic laws, there is nothing to suggest that it will retain a monopoly on it. With the opening of this Pandora’s box and with complacency on the part of some national governments, it is not difficult to imagine a future where ordinary citizens and private enterprises alike may end up having to contend with the extra-territorial application of multiple and growing series of domestic laws, debilitating international travel, trade and investment in a retrograde step for our globalized world.

Thus, the international community in general - and the UN Security Council in particular - face an important decision: do we maintain respect for the rule of law, or do we return to the law of the jungle?

While Iran has proven its resilience and decisive response to coercive bullying, I am confident that - in the next few critical weeks and months - members of the Security Council will refute the campaign struggle of a beleaguered U.S. administration to turn what was the diplomatic achievement of the 21st Century into an exercise in futility, and in the process annihilate what is left of multilateralism and international law.

“The U.S. now hopes to abuse its mal-interpretation of the provisions of the same resolution (2231) it abandoned in 2018 to finally destroy it.”

“As I warned the Security Council last month, this status quo is neither desirable nor sustainable. We are thus at a crossroads.”

Parliament rejects nominee for industry minister

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian **d e s k** lawmakers on Wednesday did not endorse Hossein Modares Khiabani nominated as minister of industry, mine and trade by the government.

In the 290-seat parliament, 140 MPs voted against him, 104 lawmakers voted for, and 10 abstained. Some MPs were not present in the parliament.

First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri had attended the parliament to defend Khiabani’s record.

Modarres Khiabani named as caretaker industry minister in May as President Rouhani fired Reza Rahmani on May 11.

After the voting, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qhalibaf asked Rouhani to name a new candidate as soon as possible in view of the “current economic condition”.

Modarres Khiabani served as the second most important person in the ministry while Rahmani was minister.

MP Hossein-Ali Haji Deligani, a



member of the Majlis presiding board, said he does not back Khiabani because

he has not paid attention to “the policies of resistance economy”, failed

Rouhani hopeful about U.S. failure in its new anti-Iran bid

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani **d e s k** said on Wednesday that Tehran is very hopeful that the United States will again face a defeat in its attempts at the UN Security Council to extend arms embargo on Iran.

“The United States has presented a draft resolution to violate the 2231 resolution. We are very hopeful that the United States will face failure and will feel the defeat and see its isolation,” Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

“However, our position is clear. If such a resolution which is against a part of the 2231 resolution is approved in the United Nations, it means a clear violation of the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal] and those who approve it will be responsible for the consequences.”

Rouhani noted that the Trump administration feels ashamed to admit it has taken a wrong path toward Iran. He added Washington has failed politically in its illegal moves against Iran.

“Until today, the United States has failed politically, and it will fail again. The United States cannot attract and convince the public opinion, and the world now feels that Iran is a country that observes law and morality and that it is committed to its obligations,” Rouhani stated.

The arms embargo on Iran is set to end on October 18 under the JCPOA, which the U.S. quit in 2018. Washington, however, has put forward a resolution to extend the ban.

■ ‘Iran’s defense power benefits the entire region’

Rouhani also said that Iran’s defense power and arms are not a threat to the neighboring countries and instead they are beneficial to the whole region.

“We use our arms and capabilities to defend ourselves against (possible) aggression of foreigners. Our weapon is not against you, our power is not against you. Those who loot your properties and sell you weapons to bombard your neighbors and annihilate the Yemenis are harmful to you,” the Iranian president asserted in an open reference to the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council’s statement in calling for extension of arms embargo on 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.”



Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said on Tuesday that the PGCC should not obey the U.S. whose presence in the region has brought nothing except instability.

“Protecting security and interests of the regional nations depends on trust building and intra-regional cooperation. The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council should not obey the United States whose illegitimate presence in the region has had nothing but insecurity and instability,” Vaezi wrote in a tweet.

He added, “Recent action by this council causes distrust and will be harmful to itself.”

Zarif: U.S. not in position to trigger UN sanctions snapback

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign **d e s k** Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Wednesday that the United States is not in a position to trigger the snapback mechanism which returns all the UN sanctions on Iran.

“From legal point of view, the United States has no status to use snapback mechanism. Three European allies of the United States had announced clearly in the previous session of the United Nations Security Council that the United States cannot apply this mechanism,” Zarif told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

He noted that China and Russia have opposed the U.S. move from the very beginning.

Zarif added that the U.S. action in

triggering the snapback mechanism “has no legal credibility”.

The U.S. has prepared a new UN resolution to extend an arms embargo due to expire in October.

The new proposed resolution comprised four paragraphs in place of the earlier 13-page draft circulated among members.

Zarif said Washington does not respect the UN’s “wisdom”.

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

U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snapback of all sanctions on Iran if attempts to extend the arms embargo fail.

Britain, France and Germany, three countries party to the nuclear deal, said on June 19 they would not back U.S. efforts to unilaterally trigger the reimposition of United Nations sanctions on Iran.

■ ‘Trump had more than three years to reach an agreement with Iran’

Zarif also said that U.S. President Donald Trump had three years and a half to reach an agreement with Iran and now he cannot do so in a few weeks.

“Obviously, Trump has received wrong advices,” the chief diplomat remarked.

On Sunday, Trump said he will “have a deal” with Iran a month after possible victory in the presidential election.

The Republican nominee, who is set to

face former Vice President Joe Biden in November, made the claim at a campaign fundraiser in the state of New Jersey.

“When we win, we will have a deal within four weeks,” Trump was cited as saying by several media outlets.

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday that Trump had four years of time to start a successful diplomacy with Iran by adopting a right and legal path.

“He not only did not do that, but made the worst mistakes in the past decades,” Rabiei said during a press conference.

He said, “If Trump be serious about making up for past mistakes, we will welcome it. However, it does not seem that his claims be anything more than gaining votes.”

Ravanchi confident UN will reject new U.S. draft on arms embargo

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, **d e s k** Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, has expressed confidence that the UN Security Council will reject draft of a new resolution prepared by United States on extending arms embargo against Iran.

According to UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, the arms embargo against Iran expires on October 18.

“Rebuffed by UNSC members, US was forced to retreat from its draft resolution on Iran arms embargo, and proposed another version—also violating 2231—today. The

new draft is similar—in its NATURE and GOAL—to the previous. Confident that the Council will—again—reject this move,” Takht-Ravanchi tweeted on Wednesday.

The UN Security Council is preparing to vote on a U.S. proposal to extend arms embargo on Iran, a move that some diplomats say is bound to fail.

Even though U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration quit the accord in 2018, Washington has threatened to use a provision in the agreement to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran if the Security Council does not extend the arms embargo indefinitely.

In a tweet on August 10, Takht-Ravanchi urged the UN Security Council to reject bullying and unilateralism of the U.S.

“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,” he wrote.

On June 30, the U.S. was rebuked at the UN Security Council, including by the five European countries on the council, to get a resolution passed against Iran.

Qatar: PGCC not reflecting members’ position on Iran

1 → In a letter to the Security Council on Saturday and obtained by Bloomberg News, the PGCC secretary general called on the UN 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.”

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 to give in to its demands.

Under Resolution 2231, arms embargo against Iran expires in October.

The UN council plans to vote on the U.S. draft resolution for extending arms embargo on Friday.

Russia calls U.S. attempt to extend arms embargo on Iran ‘unjustifiable’

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mikhail **d e s k** Ulyanov, Russia’s permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said that the United States’ attempt to revise the provisions of the UN Security Council’s 2231 resolution to extend arms embargo on Iran is “counterproductive” and “unjustifiable”.

“The US attempts to revise the provisions of UNSC res. 2231 on restrictions on arms trade with #Iran are counterproductive and unjustifiable,” he tweeted on Wednesday.

He added in his tweet, “The real way to strengthen stability in P.Gulf is to launch direct dialogue aimed at establishing collective security in the region.”

The U.S. has circulated a revised resolu-

tion that would extend a UN arms embargo on Iran indefinitely.

Washington seeks to gain more support in the 15-member Security Council where veto-wielding Russia and China have voiced strong opposition.

The revised draft, obtained by The Associated Press, is just four paragraphs and replaces the original seven-page, 35-para-

graph draft circulated in June, according to Aljazeera.

The original draft included several provisions that some diplomats objected to as going beyond the extension of the arms embargo and were eliminated.

Council diplomats said the revised draft could be put in a final form on Thursday and put to a vote Friday.

It doesn't matter who wins in November, Iran will not renegotiate the JCPOA: Atlantic Council

“No one in Tehran is eager to hold talks on the unrealistic demands that the Trump administration has proposed.”

The upcoming U.S. presidential elections in November will likely determine whether the Iran nuclear deal survives. If Donald Trump wins re-election, Iran is likely to quit the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and alter its nuclear doctrine to give it more leverage in any future negotiations. If Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, is elected, both Iran and the United States could move towards reviving the JCPOA, but Iran will remain reluctant to expand its terms.

An immediate threat to the JCPOA lies in the issue of whether or not to extend a conventional arms embargo on Iran, which is due to expire in October under UN Security Council Resolution 2231. It is very likely that Iran will react severely should the U.S. succeed in extending the embargo through a new resolution or through a controversial “snapback” of previous UN sanctions. Tehran has threatened to pull out of the nuclear agreement and even the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if the arms embargo is extended.

Whatever the outcome of the U.S. presidential elections, there is broad consensus within the Iranian government that Tehran will not renegotiate the terms of the JCPOA because it believes that the nuclear program file was closed after it signed the agreement and that including other aspects, such as the country's ballistic missile program and regional influence, should not be added. Reopening the subject now would be seen as a sign of Iranian weakness.

On August 10, President Trump promised a new nuclear deal with Iran “within four weeks” if he is re-elected in November. Tehran responded that they would welcome the negotiations if Trump is serious about making up for past mistakes and willing to return to the JCPOA and lift all sanctions.

With that in mind, Trump believes that Iran is just waiting for the results of the U.S. election. He believes that due to its difficult economic situation, Tehran will make a deal no matter who wins. It is clear that this view is completely wrong, as Iran has refused to negotiate on Trump's terms over the past two years and under the most severe sanctions in history. Trump has no understanding of the decision-making process in Iranian foreign policy.

Should Trump win, there is broad consensus in the Iranian establishment to pursue a continued policy of maximum resistance to counter the administration's “maximum pressure” policy. No one in Tehran is eager to hold talks on the unrealistic demands that the Trump administration has proposed. Like the failed experience of the



Trump believes that Iran is just waiting for the results of the U.S. election. He believes that due to its difficult economic situation, Tehran will make a deal no matter who wins. It is clear that this view is completely wrong, as Iran has refused to negotiate on Trump's terms over the past two years and under the most severe sanctions in history. Trump has no understanding of the decision-making process in Iranian foreign policy.

maximum pressure campaign, Trump's talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un were fruitless. Instead, Iran will likely change its nuclear doctrine to strengthen the deterrence aspects of its nuclear program and increase its influence in the Middle East, as that would provide it with more options in a possible military confrontation.

If Trump is re-elected a second term, Iran will likely revive tools that it used to achieve the JCPOA, such as enriching uranium to 20 percent, reducing cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors, suspending voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, and resuming uranium enrichment at

the underground site of the Fordow nuclear facility in order to lay the ground for “symmetrical negotiations”. While Iran has taken some steps out of the JCPOA since the U.S. withdrew, it has not gone this far.

Some analysts in Tehran believe that deterrence for American policymakers consists of two main options: either allow Iran to continue on its path and become nuclear or launch a war against Iran to stop it. Under such circumstances, analysts believe that the United States will choose a third option—that of symmetrical negotiations, which will offer significant concessions to once again curb Iran's nuclear progress.

If Trump is re-elected a second term, Iran will likely revive tools that it used to achieve the JCPOA, such as enriching uranium to 20 percent, reducing cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors, suspending voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, and resuming uranium enrichment at the underground site of the Fordow nuclear facility in order to lay the ground for “symmetrical negotiations”.

Most analysts believe that the United States is highly unlikely to go to war with Iran because this would jeopardize the U.S. pivot to Asia favored by both Republicans and Democrats. A military conflict with Iran would bog the U.S. down in the Middle East for at least another decade. Furthermore, given the presence of powerful pro-Iran proxies in some of the surrounding region, a war against Tehran would also involve U.S. allies and have incredibly damaging and unforeseen consequences. Hence, even most U.S. allies do not support a war with Tehran.

In preparation for this scenario, Iran would likely emphasize its willingness to use missiles and to close off the Strait of Hormuz in the event of a war. Additionally, Tehran is constructing a one thousand kilometer-long oil pipeline from Goreh to Jask in the Persian Gulf that would enable Iran to continue to export oil and bypass the strategic waterway. Iranian officials predict that the project will come online within a year. Iran's announcement that it would expand underground missile sites across its southern maritime borders on the Persian Gulf, as well as execute military drills—such as the recent sinking of a giant mock U.S. aircraft carrier—are also parts of its deterrence plan.

Iranian policymakers believe these aspects of deterrence would persuade the United States to enter balanced negotiations with Tehran.

If Biden is elected and sets preconditions for returning to the JCPOA—including Tehran's missile program and questions over its regional influence—Iran will refuse and seek to operationalize its deterrence strategy. However, many analysts in Iran believe that with Biden in office, he, like Barack Obama, will pursue a balance of power strategy between Iran, its Arab neighbors, and Israel.

Biden's foreign policy team appears united in calling for a return to the JCPOA, although several advisors have talked of the need for a broader follow-on agreement that includes ballistic missiles and ending regional conflicts, among other things.

It is noteworthy that even if Biden wins, he will only have a short window to deal with Iran while President Hassan Rouhani remains in office, as the next Iranian presidential elections are in mid-2021. U.S. sanctions and the Rouhani government's poor economic record have already cost Iranian moderates control over parliament and the next president is likely to be a conservative. Given that conservatives in Iran have long expressed their opposition to the JCPOA, Biden cannot gamble on a favorable outcome in Iran's presidential elections. If he wants to revive the agreement upon assuming office, he needs to act quickly.

Rouhani, Macron hold phone talks on Lebanon

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani and French President Emmanuel Macron have held a telephone conversation discussing the situation in Lebanon, Alireza Moezi, Rouhani's deputy head of communications, said in a tweet on Wednesday.

The two presidents also talks about INSTEX (the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges).

A massive explosion rocked the Lebanese 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 170 people and injured around 6,000.

The citizens made homeless in the blast has increased to 300,000, with losses estimated between \$10 and \$15 billion.

Macron appeared at the site of the explosion on August 6,



and called for an international inquiry into the devastating blast that generated a seismic shock felt across the region.

Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab announced the resignation of the country's government on Monday evening amid heightened political tensions following the blast.

“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 prevents the application of any statutory limitation to the disaster.”

Turkey's Halkbank says it is immune from U.S. prosecution in Iran sanctions case

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Halkbank on Monday urged the dismissal of a U.S. indictment accusing the state-owned Turkish lender of helping Iran evade American sanctions, saying it was immune from prosecution and that U.S. laws did not cover its alleged misconduct.

U.S. prosecutors have accused Halkbank of using money services and front companies in Iran, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates to evade sanctions, enable revenue from oil and gas sales to be spent on gold, and facilitate sham food and medicine purchases.

Halkbank pleaded not guilty on March 31 to bank fraud, money laundering and conspiracy charges.

A spokesman for Acting U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss in Manhattan declined to comment. Halkbank's trial is scheduled for March 1, 2021.

In a Manhattan court filing, Halkbank said its status as an “instrumentality” of Turkey shielded it from prosecution under principles of sovereign immunity.

Halkbank also said there is a “strong presumption” against applying U.S. criminal laws, such as the International Emergency Economic Powers Act it was accused of violating, to conduct outside the United States.

The bank said its only domestic connection was its alleged processing of transactions through domestic banks, but



these were “peripheral” to the broader criminal case.

U.S. District Judge Richard Berman, who oversees the case, also presided over the January 2018 conviction of former

Halkbank executive Mehmet Hakan Atilla and a related guilty plea by Reza Zarrab, a wealthy Turkish-Iranian gold trader.

Last month, Halkbank asked Berman to recuse himself because of possible bias. The judge has yet to rule.

Halkbank's case gained renewed attention in a recent memoir by John Bolton, a former U.S. national security advisor.

Bolton said Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan gave U.S. President Donald Trump a memo saying Halkbank was innocent, and Trump told Erdogan he would “take care of things.”

Turkey later said Bolton's book contained misleading presentations of Erdogan's conversations with Trump.

Beirut blast revives debate over international Trusteeship system in Lebanon

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — In the wake of the massive explosion at the Beirut port, which devastated parts of the Lebanese capital and left hundreds of thousands of Beirut residents homeless, Lebanese politicians and experts dangle the prospect of Lebanon being placed under international trusteeship.

The August 4 explosion at the Beirut port sent shock waves across Lebanon and the region, prompting a fierce political debate in Lebanon over how to tackle the explosion's economic and political damage, with some experts suggesting to establish a trusteeship council for the country as a way to contain the worsening crisis, a move that is seen by some Lebanese political factions as a ploy to disarm the Hezbollah movement.

“If Lebanon is to be saved, the United Nations should establish a Trusteeship Council for Lebanon that would govern the country for five years, which most Lebanese would welcome,” wrote Emile Nakhleh, a former U.S. intelligence officer, in an article published by the Responsible Statecraft website.

According to Nakhleh, the council should undertake a “drastic restructuring of the country's institutions” and ultimately “dismantle the sectarian confessional system of government and change the constitution.”

The calls for establishing such a council are based on the proposition that the current leaders of Lebanon are unable to manage the challenges their country face.

“The country's senior leaders are unable to govern and have no money to pay for rebuilding Beirut. They have lost the trust of the Lebanese people and international donors,” said the former officer. He added, “The Lebanese state is failing and is rapidly devolving into chaotic and warring smaller regions run by warlords. Meanwhile, poverty, lawlessness, unemployment, and hunger are becoming rampant.”

Some Lebanese journalists and politicians echoed the same call, adding that a Trusteeship Council could undertake to disarm some groups, draw borders, and impose its authority in Lebanon.

However, international law experts believe that establishing a Trusteeship Council for Lebanon is very unlikely as the country is a sovereign state that enjoys the UN membership.

“The trusteeship issue is no longer under consideration at the United Nations. There have been no Trust Territories since the 1960s,” Yousof Molaei, a retired professor of international law at the University of Tehran, told the Tehran Times.

According to the professor, setting up an international trusteeship system in Lebanon is subject to a very complicated procedure and requires the confirmation of the UN Security Council.

“It's not possible to establish a trusteeship system for countries that once gained sovereignty. Lebanon is a sovereign state with an ambassador at the UN, and it is recognized as an independent state. Therefore, it's not possible to place Lebanon under international administration. The trusteeship period is over,” Molaei said.

International Trusteeship System dates back to the 1940s, when the United Nations established it in a bid to supervise what came to be known as Trust Territories placed under the UN supervision. Under Article 77 of the UN Charter, the International Trusteeship System applied to territories held under mandates established by the League of Nations after the First World War; territories detached from “enemy States” as a result of the Second World War; and territories voluntarily placed under the System by States responsible for their administration. Today, there are no Trust Territories around the world. However, the Trusteeship Council continues to exist as an organ of the United Nations, and meets where occasion requires it.

Experts believe that the current situation in Lebanon doesn't require an international trusteeship.

“The international trusteeship drops as soon as a country become a UN member, because the principle of trusteeship contradicts another fundamental principle of the UN, which is the equality in sovereignty among large and small states,” wrote Leila Naqola, a professor of international relations at the Lebanese University, in an opinion piece published by the al-Mayadeen website.

Naqola agrees with Molaei that establishing trusteeship system in Lebanon requires the adoption of a resolution by the UN Security Council.

The Council has no plans to discuss setting up trusteeship system in Lebanon. Nevertheless, some political factions in Lebanon seem to believe that setting up the system is highly likely.

A well-placed Lebanese source told the Lebanon Debate news website on August 9 that there are huge concerns over the efforts to internationalize the Lebanese crisis.

“It's highly likely that Lebanon would be placed under international trusteeship, especially if the authority made a mistake in dealing with the angry people and did not seek to relieve their anger,” the source warned, adding that Lebanon faces a very dangerous situation.

Setting up an international trusteeship in Lebanon is no easy task, given the fissures between the Lebanese political factions. This may be the reason why some Lebanese media outlets say that there are plans to establish a different type of trusteeship system for Lebanon.

In a move to shore up the economy, the Lebanese government held talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to secure a package of financial aid. The talks were put on hold because of Lebanon's failure to implement the reforms demanded by the IMF.

According to a report published by the Lebanese news website, Lebanon 24, the IMF demands are part of a greater plan to pressure the Lebanese government into implementing the reforms and perhaps placing it under International Trusteeship.

“It's an open secret that, in addition to the IMF plan for Lebanon, there is a serious proposal at the UN stipulating that the international organization's experts oversee the process of rebuilding the official Lebanese administration according to correct, clean and scientific standards, or in other words placing the official Lebanese administration under international trusteeship. However, the United Nations will not go in this direction without a political understanding that would guarantee the approval of Hezbollah and give it political assurances,” wrote the Lebanon 24 website.

Some even interpreted the latest visit by French President Emanuel Macron to Beirut after the explosion as an effort to restore the French mandate for Lebanon and interfere in Lebanon's internal affairs.

“Instead of focusing his attention on identifying the factors behind the explosion, we see Macron pushing for political change and an explosion of the stability in Lebanon. Macron's statements are an interference in Lebanon's internal affairs, which exacerbate the suffering of the Lebanese people. Macron should offer apologies to the Lebanese people,” tweeted Mohsen Rezaee, the secretary of the Expediency Discernment Council of Iran.

Majlis disapproves of government’s plan to sell oil bonds: MP

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Majlis (Iranian parliament) disapproves of a plan proposed by the government that is said to bring about an “economic breakthrough” for the country through selling oil bonds, MP Hossein-Ali Haji Deligani told the Tehran Times.

Economic breakthrough should be attained either through submitting the budget amendment bill to the parliament or the pre-selling of oil on the Energy Exchange market in small packages,” the MP noted.

It is said that based on this plan, the government is to sell 220 million barrels of oil through issuing parallel salaf bonds in a course of one year.

A standard parallel salaf is an Islamic contract similar to futures, with the difference being that the contract’s total price must be paid in advance.

While the details of the mentioned plan have not been still announced, it has drawn many criticisms as it is highly doubtful that people would risk their savings in order to invest in oil transactions. Practical feasibility is another question.

Tire output up 23% in 4 months on year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Production of tire in Iran has risen 23 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year.

As reported, 7.914 million tires weighting 84,124 tons have been produced in the country during the four-month period, showing a 24-percent growth year on year.

Of the mentioned figure, 6.946 tires with the weight of 49,789 tons were the passenger car tires, which shows a 30-percent rise in number and a 25-percent growth in the weight compared to the first four months of the past year.

Some 7,452 tons of van tires were manufactured, indicating an eight-percent growth from the figure of the previous year’s same time span.



Also, 16,898 tons of bus tires were manufactured, showing a 10-percent rise.

Manufacturing of the tires of light agricultural machinery experienced a growth of 31 percent to stand at 1,741 tons, and that of the heavy ones rose 31 percent to stand at 6,140 tons.

Meanwhile, 2,103 tons of road building machinery tires were manufactured, with a 21-percent growth compared to the first four months of the past year.

Earlier this month, an official with Iran’s Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry said that increasing the amount of investment making for production of tire in the country is a necessity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In terms of number, a 27-percent growth was also experienced in tire output during the first quarter of the year, as 10.525 million tires of different types were produced in the three-month period.

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

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

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

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

In a bid to nullify the U.S. sanctions, Iran is determined to strengthen its domestic production to achieve self-reliance. Selecting the motto of “Pickup in Production” for the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020), and the slogan of “Surge in Production” for the current year indicates the Islamic Republic’s determination to achieve this goal.

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

Iran, Russia to launch cargo shipping line in September

1 → The official noted that the governments of the two countries have been taking necessary measures for preparing the infrastructure for activating this route.

He added that according to a decision made by the two countries’ North-South Corridor joint taskforce, two container ships will begin carrying goods between Russia’s port of Astrakhan and two Iranian ports of Caspian and Qazian at Bandar-e Anzali, north of Iran.

As reported, the 16th meeting of the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee is also scheduled to be held September.

In a telephone conversation in April, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin discussed ways to maintain and expand trade ties amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Highlighting the close and strategic relations between Iran and Russia in recent years, Rouhani stressed the need to develop bilateral relations and cooperation, especially in the fields of trade, economy, science, and medicine.

In late July, the chairman of Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce announced that



Iran’s exports to Russia increased 20 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20) despite the pandemic.

Hadi Tizhoosh Taban noted that the growth in the exports indicates that the coronavirus pandemic has not affected trade between the two neighbors.

Offering of shares through 2nd ETF to start on August 26

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian finance and economic affairs minister announced that offering of shares through the country’s second exchange-traded fund (ETF) will be started on the first Wednesday of the next Iranian calendar month (August 26).

Farhad Dejpasand said that Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry and Oil Ministry have made the necessary coordination for the second ETF’s offering on the mentioned date, IRNA reported.

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

An exchange-traded fund is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges, much like stocks. An ETF holds assets

such as stocks, commodities, or bonds and generally operates with an arbitrage mechanism designed to keep it trading close to its net asset value, although deviations can occasionally occur.

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

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

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

Industry ministry inks 7 MOUs with local bodies to support SMEs

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has signed seven memorandums of understanding (MOUs) for cooperation with various organizations and institutions in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on the occasion of the National SMEs Day (Tuesday).

The ministry has also unveiled six new electronic systems and website aimed at facilitating the activities of the country’s SMEs, IRIB reported.

As reported, the mentioned MOUs were signed with the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology, Islamic Azad University, Industrial Management Institute, Bank of Industry and Mine, Permanent Export and Investment Center of Iran, Industrial Engineers Basij Organization, and the Association of Iranian Food Industry Machinery Manufacturers.

The mentioned six systems and portals of electronic services also include a land allocation system, a service desk system, a business clinic system, a technological needs addressing system, a business cluster identification system and an admission system for applicants in training courses.

Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has been following new strategies to support domestic production in various areas and the country’s SMEs, as a major player in the country’s productive sector, are at the heart of these new strategies.



In this regard, Industry Ministry paid 335.77 trillion rials (nearly \$7.99 billion) to SMEs and semi-finished industrial projects with an over 60 percent physical progress during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

In line with the industry ministry policies, Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) has taken serious measures for supporting this sector and one of the major programs that ISIPO is following regarding the SMEs is reviving idle units and helping them to get back into the business to increase the country’s domestic production and to boost exports to the neighboring countries.

Holding training courses, supporting SMEs’ participation in international exhibitions, supporting SMEs research and study projects, and supporting knowledge-based SMEs are some other programs that ISIPO is following to help SMEs expand their activities.

1.5m sets of affordable home appliances to be produced, distributed by next March

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The spokesman of Iran’s Home Appliances Manufacturers Union has said that one of the country’s major manufacturers is going to produce 1.5 million of various affordable home appliances and distribute them in the market by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

According to Hamidreza Ghaznavi, the mentioned appliances include refrigerator, stove, washing machines, 32 and 43-inch TV sets and vacuum cleaners.

These devices are meant to be distributed among the low-income classes and will be sold in two packages, Ghaznavi said, adding that they will be of good quality and the manufacturer is not going to make any profit from selling them.

Based on the official data published by the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), domestic companies produced 210,200 TV sets, registering a 49.4-percent growth compared to the same period last year.

Also, the production of refrigerators and freezers increased by 7.9 percent to reach 328,500 units and the production of washing machines also registered a 115.1-percent rise to reach 207,400 units in the mentioned period.

In early July, Ghaznavi had said that Iran is expected to become an export-



er of some home appliance items as of the next Iranian calendar year (starts in March 2021).

“If the currency problems are solved and steel sheets and some petrochemical products are provided for this industry, we will become an exporter of some household appliances by the next year,” the official said.

In recent years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has not been an exemption and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years so that in the previous calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19) this industry’s production capacity increased by 10 percent compared to the preceding year.

Annual fishery output anticipated to reach 1.5m tons

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s annual fishery production is anticipated to reach 1.5 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), IRNA reported, quoting Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) Head Nabiollah Khoun-Mirzaei as saying.

The official has previously put the country’s fishery output at 1.28 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Khoun-Mirzaei said it is while the planned figure was 1.25 million tons, and underscored that this amount of output was achieved despite the sanctions and related difficulties in the previous year.

The official noted that the output, which was more than the projected amount, was achieved through the help of research sectors as well as the ground laid by the private sector.

Referring to the high quality of Iran’s fishery products, the head of IFO said that these products were sold easily in the export markets.

In mid-January, he had also said that new export destinations have welcomed Iran’s high-quality fishery products in the past Iranian calendar year.

New markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations have opened up for Iranian fishery products in the current year, Khoun-Mirzaei said.

“Based on the negotiations and agreements signed between Iran and China by the minister of agriculture, the



Chinese fishery market has been opened to Iranian products. The Eurasian nations and South Korean markets have also welcomed Iranian fishery products and have the potential for exports,” the official explained.

According to the deputy head of Fishery Organization Hossein Ali Abdollahy, some 12 aquatic species are already bred in Iran and the figure is planned to reach 17 by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021).

Meanwhile, Managing Director of Iran’s Agricultural

Parks Company (APC) Ali Ashraf Mansouri has recently announced that some 1,500 hectares of fishery parks are planned to be inaugurated in the country in the current year.

Iran’s value of fishery exports reached \$37.42 million during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20), the spokesman of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) has announced.

Rouhollah Latifi put the weight of fishery exports at 23,462 tons, of which 606 tons valued at \$272,000 were caviars.

The official named Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, United Arab Emirates, China, Hong Kong, Russia, Thailand, Azerbaijan, Qatar, Kuwait, and Armenia as some of the export destinations of the Iranian fishery products during the three-month period.

He also put the country’s fishery imports at 3,305 tons worth \$6.979 million during the first quarter, and mentioned Singapore, China and India as the major exporters to Iran.

On June 10, Iran’s Veterinary Organization announced that the country has resumed exports of fishery products to the European Union (EU) member states.

As announced by the Iranian Agriculture Ministry, despite the U.S. sanctions that have created many problems for the export of fishery products, through the efforts made by the veterinary organization, the country succeeded to obtain again the license to export aquaculture and fishery products to the member states of the European Union.

TEDPIX falls 24,292 points on Wednesday

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 24,292 points to 1.975 million on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

As reported, 10.32 billion securities worth 176.371 trillion rials (about \$4.199 billion) were traded at the TSE during the Wednes-

day trades.

The first market’s index fell 12,450 points and the second market’s index dropped 70,638 points.

TEDPIX has increased six percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

The index stood at 2.034 million points at the end of the previous week.

The indices of Bank Mellat, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Iran Khodro Investment Development Company, Ghadir Investment Company, and Bank Saderat were the major contributors to the index’s rise in the past week.

On August 2, TEDPIX surpassed two million points during the daily trades and through

gaining 45,672 points it stood at 2.007 million, notching up another outstanding record in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20).

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

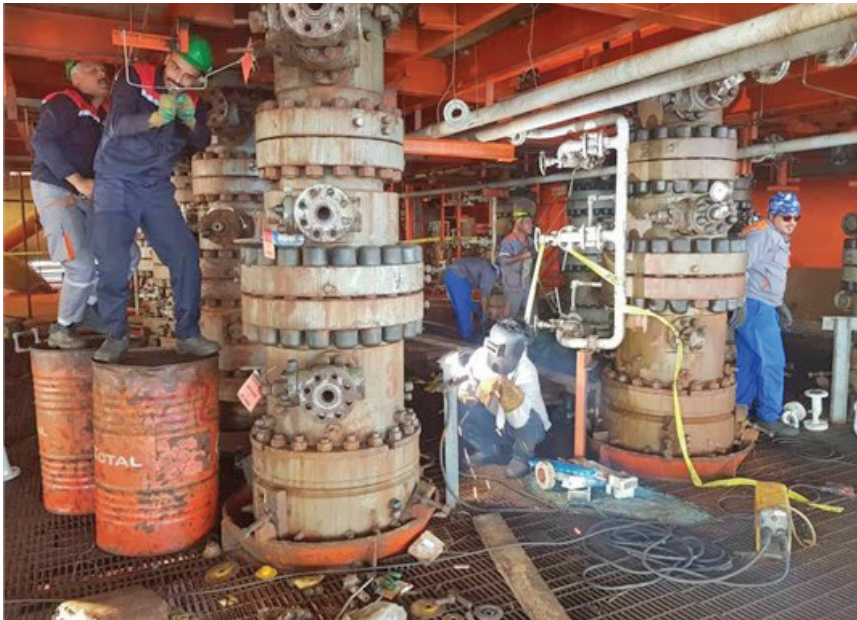
South Pars platform 22 gas output rises 200 mcf

E N E R G Y TEHRAN – Production capacity of Iranian South Pars gas field's phase 22 has increased by 200 million cubic feet (mcf) with three new wells going operational in this phase, head of the phases 22-24 development project's offshore operations said.

"By observing safety requirements, the hook-up operations of three new wells in the SPD22 platform have been completed and the production capacity of this platform has increased by about 200 million cubic feet," Mehrdad Kazemi said.

According to Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the giant gas field (in the Persian Gulf), the hook-up operations for the mentioned three wells were completed in 10 days and the installation of measurement equipment and testing and commissioning of the well control systems were also successfully completed using the capabilities of Iranian oil industry experts and engineers.

The last platform of the phases 22-24 of South Pars development project started



transferring sour gas to onshore refineries back in March.

According to Ali Asghar Sadeqi, deputy operator of the phases' development project, with this last platform fully operational, the phases' total output reached the expected 56 million cubic meters.

According to POGC, the phases 22-24 also produce 75,000 barrels of gas condensate, and 400 tons of sulfur per day, in addition to 50 million cubic meters of methane, 2,900 tons of LPG and 2,750 tons of ethane.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Has the oil market finally turned a corner?

By Alex Kimani

August has historically been brutal for oil and gas stocks. According to data from Schaeffer Research, the energy sector has consistently underperformed in August, with returns coming in negative in 8 of the last ten years.

Oil field services companies have been among the biggest culprits, with Baker Hughes, Schlumberger NV and Haliburton Co featuring among the ten worst-performing stocks in all sectors with average returns of -7.45 percent, -6.31 percent and -6.10 percent, respectively.

Meanwhile, one of the top players in the Eagle Ford shale play, Apache Corp., rounds off the list of shame with an average return of -6.17 percent over the past 10 Augusts.

However, this year is looking to buck that trend.

The energy sector's favorite benchmark, the Energy Select Sector Fund (XLE), is up nearly 10 percent since the beginning of the month and almost +12 percent over the past 30 days. Apache leads the rallying pack, gaining 22 percent after posting decent Q2 results during its latest earnings call and announcing a significant find at its offshore Suriname prospect.

The latest leg up by oil stocks has come after the Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported two consecutive weeks of huge crude draws. This, coupled with growing hopes for another stimulus package, have raised hopes that the large supply overhang that has been crimping oil markets could finally be in the rearview mirror.

■ Big crude draws

Last week, the EIA reported that crude oil inventories for the week ending July 31 had contracted by 7.4 million barrels with the American Petroleum Institute reporting an even bigger draw of 8.587 million barrels. Analysts were expecting a much smaller inventory decline of 3.267 million barrels for the timeframe.

The surprise decline followed yet another week of a larg-

er-than-expected draw. The previous week, the EIA had announced a 10.6 million barrel decline in crude inventories, marking the largest drop in more than six months.

As expected, oil prices have reacted positively to these developments: WTI is trading at \$42.36/barrel, a level it last touched in early March while Brent crude is changing hands at a five-month high of \$45.20.

The larger crude draws are an encouraging sign that recovery in oil demand is on the right track.

But before the bulls can start doing a victory lap, there are a couple of worrying signs and data points that suggest that this market is still a long way from being out of the woods.

■ Weak refining margins

Despite the large crude draws, a buildup in distillate inventories as well as refining margins that remain a long way off their pre-crash levels imply that the oil outlook remains shaky at best.

The EIA reported a 700,000-barrel build in gasoline inventories for the week ending July 24, a reversal from the 1.8-million-barrel draw a week earlier. The energy watchdog also reported an inventory increase of half a million barrels in distillate fuels, compared with a 1.1-million-barrel inventory build for the previous week.

However, the biggest red flag remains persistently weak refining margins.

On Tuesday, the CME Group quoted gasoline crack spreads at just \$9.57/barrel, or about half their February average. Crack spreads represent the economics of refining crude into its various constituents and tend to be a good barometer of real-time fuel demand. Despite a gradual re-opening of economies, the global air industry-one of the biggest consumers of oil-remains very weak.

The EIA reported that although U.S. passenger airline traffic doubled in June from May's levels, it was still 80 percent below last year's corresponding period. Reuters also report-



ed that fuel demand by Asia's economic powerhouse, India, had hit reverse gear, slipping 21 percent Y/Y in July and 13 percent compared to a year ago after staging an encouraging recovery. India has been among the countries hardest hit by the pandemic, with nearly 2 million infections and resurging infections that have prompted new lockdowns and fears that other parts of the world may soon follow.

Then there's the big question of whether OPEC relaxed its production cuts too soon.

Starting this month, OPEC trimmed its historic production curbs by about 2 million barrels/day to 7.7 mb/d. But as BNP Paribas' head of commodity strategy Harry Tchilingirian has told Bloomberg, there are genuine concerns that rising OPEC+ production could coincide with an uneven recovery in oil demand as India has just shown us.

It's indeed a precarious situation with OPEC+ risking falling victim to its own success.

But then again, uncertainty is the new normal in this market, making calling the bottom of one of the worst oil crises in modern history a fool's errand.

Russia's oil product exports to U.S. jump to 16-year high

Russia's exports of petroleum products to the United States more than doubled in the first half of 2020 compared to the same period last year, reaching their highest levels since at least 2004, Russian outlet RBC reported, citing Russian customs data.

Russia's oil products exports to the U.S. jumped to 9.1 million tons between January and June 2020, up from 4 million tons for the same period in 2019.

The U.S. was Russia's second-largest buyer of oil products – accounting for 12 percent of Russia's petroleum products exports – after the Netherlands, which accounted for 16.3 percent of all oil product exports, the customs data showed.



The U.S. has been importing higher volumes of Russian petroleum products since April last year, according to data from the U.S. Energy

Information Administration (EIA).

In the first half of 2020, U.S. importers apparently found Russian oil products more attractive in terms of pricing, and they also had to replace oil products from Venezuela which is under U.S. sanctions, Raiffeisenbank analyst Andrey Polischuk told RBC, commenting on the increase in Russian oil exports to the United States.

The U.S. has been raising its imports of fuel oil from Russia over the past year and a half after the U.S. imposed sanctions on Venezuela's exports, Reuters reported last month, quoting data from Refinitiv Eikon.

Venezuela's heavy crude oil is suitable to

process in complex refineries on the U.S. Gulf Coast, but the sanctions have cut off Venezuelan oil flows to the United States.

Last year, when the U.S. began slapping sanctions on Nicolas Maduro's regime, refiners started to raise their imports of fuel oil from Russia, importing a record-high volume of 11 million tons for the full year 2019, double the fuel oil imports from Russia in the previous year.

In July 2020, Russia exported 1.078 million tons of fuel oil to the United States, equal to more than 7 million barrels, and a 16-percent increase on June as U.S. refiners had to replace lost barrels of Venezuelan heavy oil following U.S. sanctions on Caracas.

Petrostates glimpse their peak-oil future with summer of strife

From Baghdad and Algiers to Caracas, many of the world's oil capitals are experiencing a summer of discontent. It could be a glimpse of their future.

Iraq has seen fatal protests as its electricity grid buckles amid searing heat, while Venezuela's oil production has sunk to a 75-year low. In Algeria's capital, tension is simmering as the hardship of virus lockdowns brings the risk of renewed demonstrations and riots.

OPEC has revived oil from its historic drop but prices near \$40 are still far too low for most members as they grapple with weak economies, unstable governments, restless young populations, and the ravages of climate change. As the legacy of the pandemic and the switch to cleaner energy threatens to keep crude prices lower for longer, there are profound consequences for the way oil-rich countries are run.

"The shaky six of OPEC - Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Venezuela - are facing a very precarious political and economic outlook," said Helima Croft, head of commodity strategy at RBC Capital Markets LLC.

OPEC's revenue is down about 50 percent from a year ago, and members' long-running financial ailments are coming to the fore.

Oil-dependent Angola is seeking to increase a \$3.7 billion International Monetary Fund loan by \$800 million. The country and Nigeria have devalued their currencies as a shortage of foreign exchange hammers local businesses. Iran and neighboring Iraq have also reached out to the IMF.

Even Saudi Arabia isn't immune, rolling out a slew of austerity measures last quarter while contending with the tripling of its budget deficit to 109.2 billion riyals (\$29 billion).



The strain has been showing for a while now. Last year, popular revolts forced the resignation of Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi, and ended the 20-year rule of Algeria's Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

The prospects for petrostates have dramatically shifted from just a decade ago. Oil prices were near \$100 a barrel then and consumers were worried about supplies running out. Now, OPEC is increasingly having to reckon with the prospect of peak demand, when consumption starts to decline as wind and solar power become more popular.

The International Energy Agency expects this turning point in the history of the industry could be just about a decade away. Covid-19 could make it even sooner.

■ Oil demand plateau

In May, BP Plc boss Bernard Looney said that remote working could erode the need for transport fuels and speed up the shift from hydrocarbons. Having consumed about 100 million

barrels of oil each day last year, the world's thirst for petroleum may never be as intense again.

"The pandemic will accelerate many of the technologies and behaviors that were going to come anyway," said Amy Myers Jaffe, managing director of the climate policy lab at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. For governments reliant on oil sales, the implications could be grave.

"The idea that we're going to have some up-cycle that lasts for a decade, and produces oil prices between \$80 and \$100, and all these countries can collect up the rent again -- that seems less likely," she said.

■ Peak demand

Still, oil is likely to remain a major energy source for years to come. The timing of peak demand is widely contested, with some forecasting it's unlikely for the next couple of decades at least. For oil to be displaced, billions of dollars of spending are needed for vehicle electrification and renewable energy.

Some exporters are using the downturn to diversify their economies. Saudi Arabia is pursuing reform, with its "Vision 2030" program seeking to develop other sectors such as tourism and technology.

But the plan is being thwarted by spending cuts and a struggle to attract foreign investment. And for countries such as Iraq, Nigeria and Venezuela, which lack the kingdom's deep pockets, the challenge of reform may prove insuperable.

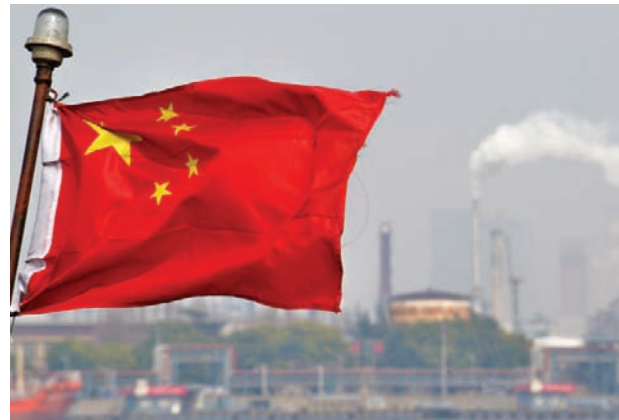
The Saudis may be content to see oil prices remain subdued a little longer, being keenly aware that another rally would only revitalize rivals like the U.S. shale industry, which has squeezed the kingdom hard over the past decade with a flood of crude, and could do so again.

China to expand its influence in West Asia with major oil deal

By Simon Watkins

China continues to expand its influence in West Asia through oil and infrastructure deals, and the latest deal with ADNOC is a great example of how Beijing looks to grow its presence in the offshore oil business

It is little surprise to see that China – again – figures in yet another concessions award in West Asia, this time relating to the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC). In the aftermath of Saudi Arabia's second disastrous oil price war against the U.S. shale sector, virtually all major West Asia state-owned oil firms are looking to plug variously significant operational deficits, as are their governments.



In the absence of a sudden major spike in oil prices, economic survival in practical terms now comes down to one of two broad options. The first is to sell off chunks of state assets in initial public offerings (IPOs) or stakes in ongoing oil and gas projects, which ADNOC recently did with the sale of a 49 per cent stake in its gas pipelines for just over \$10 billion to international investors. The second is to sell-off the same assets to companies from countries for which the immediate economic shortfall inherent in such deals pales into insignificance compared to the longer-term geopolitical and financial advantages. In this latter regard, Russia has its own financial constraints to deal with but China does not.

Specifically, ADNOC has announced the transfer of ownership rights in its Lower Zakum, and Umm Shaif and Nasr offshore concessions from the existing holding of the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) to China National Offshore Oil Corporation's (CNOOC) subsidiary, CNOOC Limited. This will be done by CNOOC acquiring a 40 per cent interest in CNPC's majority-owned subsidiary PetroChina Investment Overseas (West Asia) Ltd (PetroChina) through its holding company, CNOOC Hong Kong Holding Limited (CNOOC HK). After the proposal has been approved by Abu Dhabi's Supreme Petroleum Council (SPC) – a rubber-stamping affair – CNOOC will join the principal operating consortium in the Lower Zakum concession, comprising India's ONGC Videsh (10 per cent stake), Japan's INPEX Corporation (10 per cent), China's CNPC (6 per cent), Italy's Eni (5 per cent), and France's Total (5 per cent). CNOOC will also join the principal operating consortium in the Umm Shaif and Nasr concession, comprising Total (20 per cent), Eni (10 per cent), and CNPC (6 per cent). ADNOC will retain a 60 per cent majority ownership interest in both concessions.

Significantly, aside from the broader relentless expansion of China into the West Asia, in line with its multi-generational 'One Belt, One Road' programme, this deal marks the first time a dedicated Chinese offshore oil and gas company has joined in any ADNOC concession. These points did not go unnoticed by the chairman of CNOOC, Wang Dongjin, who said: "CNOOC will leverage our extensive expertise in the offshore sector and be dedicated to value creation in these concessions for our mutual benefit."

In this context, this latest deal follows the signing on 22 July 2019 of a comprehensive framework agreement between ADNOC and CNOOC to 'explore new opportunities for collaboration' in the upstream, midstream, and downstream oil sectors as well as in liquefied natural gas (LNG). Described at the time by ADNOC chief executive officer, Ahmed Al Jaber as "far-reaching", the deal is such a significant move by China into the core oil and gas interests of one of the U.S.'s few remaining vocal allies in the West Asia - the UAE - that the deal signing ceremony was attended in person by China's President, Xi Jinping.

Although couched in the usual platitudes expected in such deals, even the official guidance on its contents highlighted its vast scope and scale. For example, ADNOC and CNOOC, according to the official published notes on the agreement, will 'share knowledge, best practices and technologies in ultra-sour gas development to improve operational efficiency in gas processing and treatment, deliver efficiency, performance and reliability for drilling operations and develop field and reservoir development plans'. As an adjunct to this, China's Offshore Oil Engineering Company (COOEC) would be in prime position for associated engineering, procurement and construction opportunities, as would China Oilfield Services Ltd (COSL) for the supply of oilfield services and to explore collaboration opportunities in offshore oil and gas field assets in Abu Dhabi.

Also according to the July 2019 agreement, ADNOC and CNOOC would jointly explore LNG sales and purchase opportunities, share knowledge and expertise in LNG markets, and evaluate partnerships and joint investment opportunities in the LNG value chain. Finally, in the downstream sector, the two companies would collaborate in new integrated refining and petrochemical assets in China, co-operate in CNOOC's refining assets, and jointly partner and invest in the refining and petrochemical value chain.

One of these early, albeit indirect, China investments may well be into an investment platform to fund local chemicals projects, as part of an overall push to invest \$45 billion in downstream activities in Abu Dhabi, according to a senior oil and gas industry source familiar with the project. The investment platform is to be run as a joint project between ADNOC and the Abu Dhabi state-owned holding company, ADQ (formerly known as the Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company) and will oversee the development of projects in the planned Ruwais Derivatives Park. Although ADNOC has not made public the breakdown of where all of the funding is to come from, ADNOC and ADQ together will hold a 60 stake in the project.

That the ADQ has any money at all for such an investment, or indeed for anything at all, is surprising, given that less than two months ago it was in urgent talks to raise a loan of "at least \$3 billion", according to various reports. "ADQ's attempts to put together a syndicate of banks did not go well and yet here it is with investment funding, at a time when the broader deal with China is moving forward," he said. "There are no public statements that China is involved in the funding, of course, but it is fair to say that if ADQ or ADNOC had asked China for funding for the investment platform then China would have given it," he concluded.

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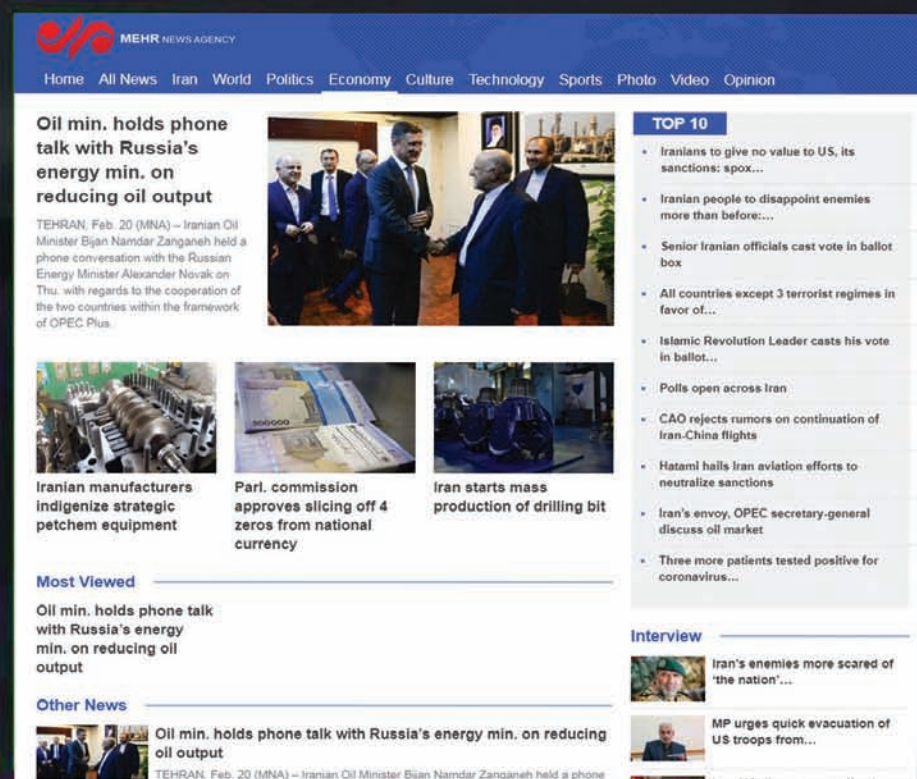
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Key Western states turn blind eye to rights violations by friends: ex-British MP

“There is a huge hunger by many Americans to go out and look for more conflict, to sell more arms”

➔ Following is the text of the interview:

■ How do you assess the relationship between the Western powers, including the U.S. and Britain, western Arab Persian Gulf states?

A: With the exception of the U.S.-UK close relationship, I find that the EU may well have good relations with most (P)GCC countries, but overall, it tends to be a series of bi-laterals on the part of many all vying for diplomatic and trade influence both ways. The U.S. and UK act in harmony.

Of course, it is hypocritical of the West to tell other countries like Iran what to do when not following their advice themselves. Also, when Washington breaks an agreement or imposes sanctions, it is very much expected European countries should follow the U.S. example.

A rare recent disagreement is when President Trump canceled a major nuclear deal with Iran, which Iran has kept to play internal politics with the previous Obama administration merely. The remainder of Western Europe has been reluctant to follow suit, including the United Kingdom.

The values of Western Europe's allies in the (Persian) Gulf appear to take no recognition of countries like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its poor human right record; even to the extent of working behind the scenes at the U.N. to help ensure Saudi Arabia has a place on the U.N. Human Rights Committee. Much of these matters are historical, but it is time to review strategy all over The (Persian) Gulf.

■ What is your comment on Western states' approaches toward human rights failure in West Asia?

A: I consider that key Western countries are willing to turn a blind eye to the human rights failures of their allies but hypocritically criticize, even raise sanctions against others who are not close friends. In the long term, this is insupportable.

A number of key countries in the West have a huge number of people employed in the armaments industries and “war machine.” There is a huge hunger by many Americans to go out and look for more conflict, to sell more arms, to destabilize other governments.

■ How about Western countries' reactions to U.S. protests? Suppose if these protests were happening in Russia or China, how would they react to it?

A: Some criticisms by the West of other suppression of protests are legitimate. For example, China has not maintained as per



“It is, of course, hypocritical of the West to tell other countries like Iran what to do, when not following their advice themselves.”

one country two systems of government relating to Hong Kong. Elsewhere Western countries often around the so-called NATO axis say one thing to one country and do something else themselves. China is under attack after COV19 and the President being elected for Life. China economically is the biggest threat to the West and especially the UK and U.S.

What British and UK citizens see in their mainstream media is not fair and balanced reporting. Indeed, it is not very in-depth reporting, especially in the U.S. Thus, its peoples often do not entirely know what is going on in their name. Take, for example, UK and interventions in Libya and Syria.

■ Do you confirm that Britain has been betting on the Persian Gulf after Brexit?

A: I am very concerned about where British economic markets will come from, how and with what tariffs added, when it leaves the transitional year soon having left the E.U. already. Our biggest market for what is very much a service economy

is in the E.U. area itself. I do not see food being imported and having been grown in the (Persian) Gulf countries. I do not see Australia or New Zealand replacing current markets. Yet UK will always want to trade with (Persian) Gulf countries, and it is time a more enlightened view towards trading with the Islamic Republic of Iran is taken. Sanctions hurt ordinary people, not elites wherever they may be. The UK believes it is a strong position to continue trading with the E.U.; but at what cost?

■ Do you think ordinary people are satisfied with British foreign policy? Are they aware of or concerned about foreign policy?

A: There is a hardcore minority within UK that is extremely concerned about British foreign policy. We have been having too many wars and too little dialogue with countries we ought to be talking to, even if we do not always agree. This is especially true of our politicians as diplomats tend to follow the lead of the respective country of origin. I wish to see more ministerial visits

from UK and the U.S. to Iran, China, and Russia. Many younger people, millennials, are taking to other forms of media than state broadcasters to gain their information. The UK is in a better position than American viewers and readers.

■ Why has Britain always pursued different policies from Germany and France in the EU? It is not an exaggeration if we say Britain follows American policies. For example, Britain under Tony Blair became a party to the invasion of Iraq led by the U.S.?

A: It is true that there often differences of nuance or even substance between how the UK, France, and Germany behave towards other key countries, especially in the (Persian) Gulf. France and Germany are on the European mainland and have a more pragmatic view of Russia's relations. Yet on the issue of the nuclear Treaty of the Obama era with Iran, torn up by President Trump, even UK is sympathetic for the detail to be stuck to. Perhaps the November elections in the U.S. may see a change. I think it is a choice between a war-mongering Biden team versus a difficult President Trump, but one less likely to start new wars.

It was VP Dick Cheney that pushed for war in Afghanistan, and Blair is still largely hated in UK by people on all sides of the political spectrum for taking part in a war that was illegal and not approved by the U.N.

■ Why have European countries, including Britain, failed to honor their obligations toward the nuclear deal with Iran after the U.S. exited the agreement?

A: Circumstances made it difficult for UK to “go against” the Trump White House view on the nuclear treaty. For one thing UK needs some American support post-Brexit. In Brussels, NATO tends to have a vested interest and hold even though its remit does not cover Iran and requires serious reform. COVID 19 has also made governments weaker, but I believe the UK, in particular, needs to “stand up” a little more to the huge internal deep state, with a vested interest in aggression, which we see today in America.

Europeans doing things differently will take courage. It is not impossible and renowned people like former nuclear inspector Scott Ritter have made clear that in their view, Iran has stuck to the Treaty from its side.

I have spent many years in and around the (Persian) Gulf, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a very proud nation with a long history. Certainly, talk to them.

It is time the Muslim world gets serious about climate change

By Ibrahim Ozdemir

Many Muslim majority countries bear the brunt of climate change, but their cultural awareness of it and climate action are often staggeringly limited.

A movement of “Islamic environmentalism” based on Islamic tradition - rather than imported “white savior” environmentalism based on first-world political campaigns - can address both. And the post-COVID-19 lull in emissions is an opportunity to fast-track this.

It is a movement we sorely need. My home country Turkey, for example, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, as temperatures are rising and rainfall is decreasing year on year, causing serious problems with water availability. In Bangladesh, it is estimated that by 2050 one in seven will be displaced by climate change, creating millions of climate refugees. In West Asia, large areas are likely to become uninhabitable due to heatwaves likely to sweep over the region in the next few decades.



However, despite their vulnerability, many Muslim countries are contributing to the problem. Indonesia, the most populous Muslim-majority country in the world, is the world's fifth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases and is doing little to curb emissions. Bangladesh and Pakistan are the two most polluted countries in the world but have taken no serious measures to address pollution. Inaction in the Muslim world persists despite a declaration by Muslim countries in 2015 to play an active role in combatting climate change.

You would think that those most affected by climate change would be the most eager to stop it. This is not always the case. Many Muslim countries are reluctant to impose Western concepts of environmentalism or to bow to pressure from countries that have already gone through industrialization without having to address pollution or curb emissions. Environmental colonialism is not the answer.

What would work, and has been proven to work, is using the principles of Islam to encourage conservation in Muslims.

Islam teaches its followers to take care of the earth. Muslims believe that humans should act as guardians, or Khalifah, of the planet, and that they will be held accountable by God for their actions. This concept of stewardship is a powerful one and was used in the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change to propel change in environmental policy in Muslim countries.

In fact, Muslims need to look no further than the Quran for guidance, where there are approximately 200 verses concerning the environment. Muslims are taught that “greater indeed than the creation of man is the creation of the heavens and the earth”. The reality is that nothing could be more Islamic than protecting God's most precious creation: the earth.

This approach can reach the hearts and minds of the 1.8 billion Muslims around the world, and it must be integrated with, rather than neglected by, the climate movement.

The Prophet Muhammad also demonstrated kindness, care, and good general principles for the treatment of animals, which form a benchmark for Muslims. He outlawed killing animals for sport, told people not to overload their camels and donkeys, commanded that slaughtering an animal for food be done with kindness and consideration for the animal's feelings and respect for Allah who gave it life, he even allowed his camel to choose the place where he built his first mosque in the city of Medina.

A 2013 study in Indonesia showed that including environmentalist messages in Islamic sermons led to increased public awareness and concern for the environment. In 2014, Indonesia issued a fatwa (or Islamic legal opinion) to require the country's Muslims to protect endangered species.

There are also organizations dedicated to using religion to pass on the message of conservation, such as the Alliance for Religions and Conservation (ARC). One of its most successful projects used Islamic scholars to convince Tanzanian fishers that dynamite, dragnet, and spearfishing go against the Quran - and they listened.

This case also tells us that remote, top-down moralizing is unlikely to be effective. The fishermen had previously resisted bans from the government but were persuaded once they were told that they were acting un-Islamically. One fisherman said: “This side of conservation isn't from the mzungu [“white man” in Swahili], it's from the Quran.”

Clearly, we need to speak the language of those whose behavior we are seeking to change, particularly if that language is naturally averse to unsustainable policies.

Some Muslim thought leaders are aware of this and are eager to develop a “homegrown” environmental movement to emerge as thought leaders in their own right. For example, the Dhaka Forum this month ran a panel on post-COVID-19 environmental issues with the majority of speakers coming from the Muslim world.

Muslim countries have a head start in the climate race. They have a framework and a belief system that mandates the protection of the earth and its natural resources. As Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a prominent proponent of the religion and environmentalism movement, argues, the desacralization of the West has resulted in an ideology that humans have dominion over the earth, rather than stewardship of it, which is the Islamic view.

Muslims must become guardians of the earth once more, for the sake of their environments and God's sake.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Trump, Kushner promised money by MBS: Prof. Askari

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Hossein Askari, an expert on Saudi Arabia, believes that the U.S. will be reducing its footprint in West Asia, and China will be poised to fill the vacuum.

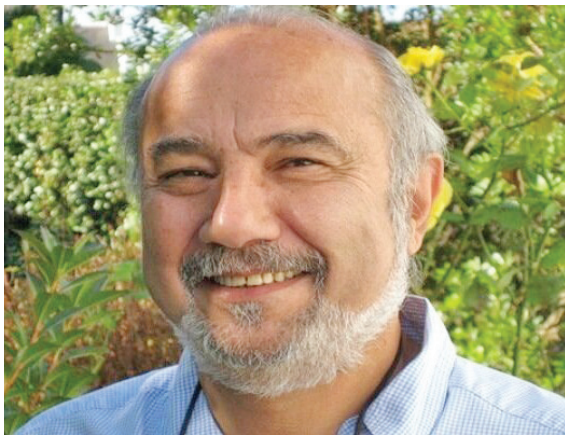
“MBS has promised Trump and Kushner money,” Hossein Askari, who served as special advisor to the Saudi finance minister, tells the MNA.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ According to the New York Times, U.S. intelligence agencies have in recent weeks published a confidential analysis of current actions inside Saudi Arabia and in cooperation with China to build the industrial capacity needed to produce nuclear fuel. The analysis has raised alarms that there may be covert moves by Saudi Arabia and China to produce unenriched uranium so that it can later be enriched to fuel nuclear weapons. What will be the reaction of the Trump administration to this report?

A: First and foremost, please note that Trump could be gone in about five months. So the issue is not just Trump but also the next U.S. administration if Trump loses the election on November 3. As for Trump, I believe that his administration will make some noise but will do nothing. Why? As I have said all along from his first visit abroad as President to Saudi Arabia, Trump and Kushner have been promised money by MBS. This is how Saudi Arabia operates. The Al-Saud always try to buy people. And buying the U.S. president to do their bidding was the opportunity they craved for, and they got in Trump. But if Trump loses, then it will be an entirely new ballgame. Not just nuclear enrichment but in many other arenas—Yemen, regional cooperation, funding for extremists, human rights, and more will be on the table.

■ Despite the fact that Saudi Arabia is a member of NPT and has a comprehensive bilateral safeguards agreement in place with the IAEA, but unfortunately still refuses to accept the Agency's safeguards inspections, and



despite repeated requests for several years, the Agency has not amended its obligations to allow the Agency to inspect. According to the New York Times, Saudi Arabia is trying to build a yellow cake factory. Accordingly, Saudi Arabia's nuclear program has entered a critical phase, which requires the IAEA to adopt bilateral agreements with the country to these sensitivities. Why does the IAEA not put pressure on Saudi Arabia in this regard, and the IAEA's Board of Governors does not make a serious decision?

A: I think that the U.S. Russia and China don't want Saudi Arabia pressured at this time. We think that we live in a post-colonial period, but colonialism has morphed into something elsewhere less than a handful of colonialists call the shots. And for now, the U.S. is still at the top.

■ Some members of the Trump administration, including Jared Kushner and Michael Flynn, a former national security adviser to the Trump administration, have been accused of providing sensitive nuclear equipment to Saudi Arabia. However, Saudi Arabia appears to have

secret ties to both the United States and China over its nuclear program. What is your assessment?

A: As MBS reputedly has said, he has Kushner in his pocket. So, it is not so secret, but yes, there is an understanding there. For now, the U.S. administration supports or at least says nothing about a number of Saudi excesses. China wants to be a player in the Middle East. So, it has ties with a number of countries in the region, including Iran. In this way, it will have options and bargaining chips going forward. In this case, it is getting money from MBS, something that always helps.

■ Why is China trying to have a secret nuclear plan with Saudi Arabia? What are the goals of this issue?

A: As I just said, China gets money and influence in the region. It will have more options and chips at the table if and when they are needed. I also believe that the U.S. will be reducing its footprint (bases, covert operations, and the like) in the Middle East, and China will be poised to fill the vacuum.

■ Some experts have previously said that if the United States does not cooperate with Saudi Arabia under the 123 agreement and does not allow the country to enrich uranium and have a full fuel cycle, the country may resort to a secret program to have a full cycle. Do you think the United States will be willing to give Saudi Arabia the right to enrich uranium, or does it want an agreement like the United Arab Emirates that does not allow uranium enrichment and reprocessing of plutonium (golden standards)?

A: “We are in a state of flux. Will Trump win in November or not? It will all depend on the outcome. If Trump wins, I believe Trump will not demand much from MBS. But if he loses, then things will change radically. MBS will have to change if he wants continued U.S. support; The support that has been essential for the Al-Saud rule of the Kingdom. In that case, yes, the directive from the U.S. will be something along the lines of the UAE agreement.”

Islamic Jihad warns Israel against escalating aggression against Palestinians

The Palestinian resistance movement, Islamic Jihad, has warned the Israeli regime against escalating acts of aggression against Palestinians.

The movement, in a statement released on Sunday, censured the repetition of attacks by Israeli military forces against Palestinians, stating that such heinous behavior projected its ugly image last Friday when Dalia Samoudi, 23, succumbed to her critical wounds sustained from Israeli gunfire during a raid into the al-Jaberiyyat

neighborhood of the northern occupied West Bank city of Jenin.

The Islamic Jihad said the mother of three was shot as she prepared to feed her baby daughter and was hit by a bullet that penetrated her body and left her dead a few hours later.

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates announced on Saturday that it would take the cold-blooded murder of Samoudi to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The ministry said in a statement that it was doing the necessary preparations to lodge the crime and its details to the ICC, calling on the international tribunal to open an official investigation into the matter.

“The international community is requested to break its silence and take urgent action to provide adequate protection for our people,” the statement read.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry held the Israeli regime, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, fully responsible for

the heinous crime, underlining that such acts of aggression are being committed under the full support of US President Donald Trump's administration.

The Director of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) Mahmoud al-Sa'adi said Israeli forces opened fire on the ambulance that was trying to reach Samoudi's house, with two bullets penetrating the vehicle, WAFA news agency reported.

(Source: Agencies)

First Tehran-Vienna flight since COVID-19 outbreak scheduled for Saturday

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's flag carrier Homa, known internationally as IranAir, is scheduled to resume flights to the Austrian capital, Vienna, following months of suspension over the coronavirus outbreak.

Following the spread of the COVID-19 virus, many Homa flights to destinations, including Austria, were suspended for several months but the service from Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport to Vienna Airport (and vice versa) will be resumed on August 15, Homa announced in its website.



The round flights are scheduled once a week on Saturdays by closely observing healthcare protocols, the airline said.

Over the past couple of months, many countries, including the Islamic Republic, imposed travel restrictions to help curb the spread of novel coronavirus. In this line, incoming and outgoing flights have been suspended, and road travels restricted to a great extent.

Some experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019. The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

Ardebil historic bazaar to undergo restoration

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Zanjirlu covered passage of the Safavid-era (1501-1736) bazaar of Ardebil in northwest Iran will undergo some rehabilitation works, CHTN reported.

TO protect and revive the historical texture of the bazaar of Ardebil, parts of it including its covered passages, will be restored, provincial tourism chief Nader Fallahi announced on Tuesday.



The experts and restorers will try their best to preserve the originality and the historical appearance of the complex, the official added.

In the Iranian culture, bazaars have been traditional public spaces in the Iranian cities with great contributions to commercial activities in the urban life meanwhile their extended activities can be traced to social, cultural, political, and religious roles.

The Safavid dynasty was one of the most significant ruling dynasties of the country, often considered the beginning of modern Iranian history. It overthrew many of the chaos that existed in Iran at the time and established a religious government.

During the Safavid era, Ardebil had a special prestige and enjoyed a remarkable political, social, and cultural status.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, whose altitude averages 3,000 meters above sea level, Ardebil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition.

The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardebil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

Zanjan; a cradle of filigree art

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — The city of Zanjan in northwestern Iran has been registered as the national city and birthplace of filigree art, which dates back to several thousand years ago.

Filigree is a delicate kind of jewelry metalwork, usually of gold and silver, made with tiny beads or twisted threads, or both in combination, soldered together or to the surface of an object of the same metal and arranged in artistic motifs.

Filigree is always considered one of the most original handicrafts in Zanjan province. This art has developed so well in Zanjan that over the past couple of years, two artists namely Abdulhamid Moharrar and Mohsen Yazdanshenas have won UNESCO titles for their art.

In the filigree industry, the master of the art melts the metal and puts it in a special mold and produces wires of one cm in diameter. These wires turn into silver rods with a diameter of one millimeter to be used in filigree.

By inserting these wires in molds that are usually made of boards and waxes and giving them various shapes, silver wires are connected by heat and then different types of dishes are made out of them. Hammering, heating, rolling, and molding are among the tasks performed by a master of the art.

The most important and popular designs in Zanjan are tears and leaves.

Perhaps the boom of this art goes back to the Seljuk era. However, based on the remains left from the Safavid period, the epoch could be considered as the culmination of its flourishing.

These handmade artifacts are so beautiful and elegant that today they adorn the museums, private art collections and homes of people living in different parts of the world.

Beat the summer heat in these cool destinations near Tehran

→ 1 The villages of Darband and Darakeh stand out when it comes to the north of Tehran. Those are amongst the most accessible cool destinations for relaxing and enjoying good Iranian cuisine, good weather even to climb easy mountain routes.

Tajrish Square is a gateway to the rocky Darband where people hike upward trails. A few kilometers uphill from the atmospheric square the road ends, becoming a path winding up a narrow rocky valley, with water cascading down the slopes. The trail heads up into the hills past a picturesque succession of teahouses, restaurants, and fruit-conservative stalls.

A visit to Darband can easily be combined with Sa'd Abad Place Complex. You may exit the once royal complex via the top entrance and keep going up the hill and perhaps drink a cup of tea and puff on a qalyan (hobble-bobble) while submerged with a mountain-village feel.

Also, Darakeh is where you can enjoy the lovely nature, listen to the sound of the river, and rest for a while. It is teemed



People walk through a succession of teahouses, restaurants and fruit-conservative stalls in the rocky village of Darband, northern Tehran.

Another restoration season comes to end on Iran's 'Lilliput'

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The fourth season of restoration work has recently been completed on the mysterious village of Makhunik, which is commonly known as the country's 'Lilliput'.

In this season, wall plastering, strengthening the walls, repairing the roofs, and applying thatched facades were completed with a credit of 1.5 billion rials (about \$36,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials), Makhunik tourism chief Hadi Haqqanah said on Tuesday.

He went on to say that the restoration work started four years ago and some 4 billion rials (about \$95,000) has been spent so far in this regard, IRNA reported.

Many experts say that the unique architecture of the village and its historical background are still untapped potentials for tourism.

Over the past couple of years an average of 1,000 foreign nationals visited the village annually, Haqqanah noted.

Situated on an easternmost point of the Iranian soil, in Sarbisheh county, near the border with Af-

ghanistan, Makhunik was inhabited by people of very short stature until about a century ago. Currently, it is home to roughly 200 adobe dwellings many of them are of exceptionally low height.

That's why it is sometimes referred to as nostalgic 'Lilliput', an imaginary country inhabited by people about 15 cm tall as being described in Irish author Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels".

Makhunik's architecture is dominantly characterized by exceptionally low-height houses with narrow doorways most of which cannot be entered without stooping down. The adobe village used to suffer from isolation and barren terrain which made architecture and animal breeding challenging carriers.

In 2005, Makhunik appeared in the news as a mummified body measuring 25cm in length was unearthed. It widely fostered a belief that this remote region was once home to ancient dwarfs. Subsequent studies, however, concluded that the mummy was a premature baby who died some 400 years ago.



Nowadays, people of Makhunik are of average height as living standards improved in the region from the mid-20th century when the construction of roads and growing numbers of vehicles have lessened their isolation.

Safavid-era madrasa in Tuyserkan being restored

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Parts of the Safavid-era (1501–1736) Sheikh Alikhan Madrasa in the city of Tuyserkan, west-central province of Hamedan, is being restored, a provincial tourism chief has said.

With a budget of 800 million rials (about \$20,000), the interior spaces of the madrasa, as well as some of its classes, have undergone some rehabilitation works, CHTN quoted Es'haq Torkashvand as saying on Wednesday.

The project is expected to be completed by the end of September, the official added.

Built in 1680, the madrasa has a four-portico (iwan) courtyard surrounded by 36 classes.

Located next to the historic bazaar of Tuyserkan, Sheikh Alikhan Madrasa was



inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1997.

Madrasas or religious schools have played a key role in preserving religious traditions and transferring it to their future generations in many Islamic countries including Iran.

However, the need for new sciences during the 19th century brought widespread educational changes in Islamic countries.

The advent of modern schools in Iran dates back to the Qajar era (1789–1925) and the establishment of the Dar ul-Funun in Tehran, known as Iran's first modern university.

Madrasas, in Muslim countries, are mainly referred to institutions of higher education. The madrasa functioned until the 20th century as a theological seminary and law school, with a curriculum centred on the holy Quran. Arabic grammar and literature, mathematics, logic, and, in some cases, natural science were studied in madrasas in addition to Islamic theology and law. Tuition was free, and food, lodging, and medical care were

provided as well. Instruction usually took place in a courtyard and consisted primarily of memorizing textbooks and the instructor's lectures. The lecturer issued certificates to his students that constituted permission to repeat his words.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. It was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Ali Sadr cave, Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan's attractions to name a few.

Iran documenting remnants of historical Jundi Shapur

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — A documentation project has been commenced on the ancient Jundi Shapur University in the southwestern city of Dezful, ILNA reported.

The project aims at demarcating the historical area to prevent possible damage from agricultural activities, the director of the historical site Yaqub Zaleqi said on Wednesday.

The project will also provide necessary infrastructures for the future projects in the site, as well as prepare maps at different scales of all documented data, the official added.

He also noted that the first round of the documentation project was implemented in 2016, during which the hills and different parts of the ancient site were identified and documented.

Jundi Shapur, also spelled as Gundi Shapur, was one



of the world's birthplaces of knowledge and wisdom, which is a source of national pride and enthusiasm for

Historical sites and monuments in northeast Iran demarcated

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Some 562 aging monuments and six historical sites have been demarcated in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi province over the past three years, provincial tourism chief has said.

Considering the importance of hills and historical areas in the province and the need for their protection and preservation, some historical sites and monuments across the province have been demarcated, while a number of aging structures are still waiting for their turns, CHTN quoted Abolfazl Mokaramifar as saying on Wednesday.

He also noted that the demarcation of these historical areas, which date back to the fifth millennium BC to the Islamic era,



help their better preservation, protection, and maintenance.

The holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, in the province's capital city of Mashhad, attracts thou-

sands of pilgrims each day. Visiting the holy shrine and its complex is a pure and celestial journey for the Muslims. The complex includes the 15th-century Goharshad mosque, a museum, a library, four seminaries, a cemetery, the Razavi University of Islamic Sciences, a dining hall for pilgrims, vast prayer halls, amongst other buildings. The complex is one of the tourism centers in the country and has been described as "the heart of the Shia Iran".

The shrine is enveloped in a vast series of sacred precincts collectively known as the Haram-e Razavi, or Haram for short. This magical city-within-a-city sprouts dazzling clusters of domes and minarets in blue and pure gold behind fountain-cooled

courtyards and magnificent arched arcades. It's one of the marvels of the Islamic world, and it's worth savoring its moods and glories more than once by visiting at different times of day.

The province has also the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces a variety of cultural and historical sites that are generally crowded.

Mausoleum of Ferdowsi, the illustrious Persian poet, in Tus is one of the tourist attractions of the region. Many Iranians regard Ferdowsi as the greatest of their poets. Down through the centuries they have continued to read and to listen to recitations from his masterwork, the Shahnameh.

World Youth Day: can Iran meet growing youth population's needs?

1 → Zero population growth within next century

Nicholas Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) wrote in an article earlier in July that the fertility rate in Iran has dropped by 70 percent over the past 30 years, which has been the highest decline in human history.

Melinda Gates, an American philanthropist and co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, also wrote on her Twitter account that "The fastest decrease in the rate of childbearing per woman in the history of the world has happened in Iran!"

Seyed Hamed Barakati, deputy health minister for family and school population, said in May that Iran's population growth rate has decreased to less than one percent for the first time over the past four decades.

At the beginning of the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), the country's population grew by 2.5 percent annually, however, suddenly, population growth reached about 1.5 percent in the 1980s, he highlighted.

According to the data released by the National Organization for Civil Registration, comparing past three years shows some 1,196,134 infants were born in the country whose births were registered last year, while 1,366,509 births occurred a year before it, and 1,487,913 births have been recorded in the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), a difference of roughly over 120,000 per year.

■ Childbearing incentives were inefficient

Some 14 policies to support childbearing and the family were announced by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in [the Iranian calendar year] 1389 (March 2014-March 2015) when he stressed that social, cultural and economic development should be done in accordance with these general policies to support families.

Kimia Mohammadzadeh, a member of the working group for women's and family at the independent association of the University of Tehran, told Mehr news agency that thus, instead of considering family support



Iranian youths take a selfie on the Tabiat (Nature) bridge overlooking Tehran.

and youth marriage, policymakers adopt policies that lead to delays in marriage and family formation.

Childbearing, which should be a public issue, became an inefficient policy due to lack of follow-up, she said.

Policies like providing inexpensive houses for the youth, increasing monthly subsidies, fund provision for reducing infertility, promotion of childbearing culture through media, and granting incentives and supportive plans all remained incomplete, she lamented.

"Over the past two years, the marriage rate has been declining by 8 percent annually. With this trend, we will be one of the oldest countries in the world in the next 30 years, and this is dangerous in all scientific, social, cultural and economic fields," Barakati also told IRNA.

■ Youth's share in management, decision-making

Two years ago, members of the Majlis (Iranian parliament) passed a law banning the employment of retirees.

In fact, it was decided to remind once again the importance of youthfulness and the use of

young people in running the country, trusting the youth for executive affairs, however, how much this issue has taken practical form in different sectors so far should be announced by official institutions.

Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli Minister of Interior has stated in his latest speech that Youth's share in a managerial position is on the agenda; while the average age of managers in the ministry has decreased by only two to three years.

This statistic means that a quarter of the country's young population in decision-making positions is quite absent. However, if this young population is not exposed to practical empowerment, they will certainly face challenges in the future and will not be able to use the existing opportunities for growth and lose the opportunity in management and decision making.

Currently, there are 3,000 active youth organizations in the country, which is considered an important task, Rahmani-Fazli said, adding, Iran is a young country and has many capacities that should be used effectively.

In appointing young managers in the Min-

istry of Interior, we considered two categories; first, to employ younger managers, so that today the average age of our governors is 40 to 42 years, on the other hand, 16 women were elected as deputy governors, he stated.

■ Youth unemployment rate at 24.5%

The unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 in Iran stood at 24.5 percent in the spring, according to the latest statistics of the Statistical Center of Iran.

In addition, 16.7 percent of the active population aged 15 to 35 were unemployed during the spring.

Last year's total employed population was at 24.27 million, nearly 430,000 more than the year before.

According to statistics, the service sector has the largest share of employment with 49.7 percent, then comes to the industrial and agriculture with a share of 31.8 and 18.6 percent, respectively.

It might be the time that the officials and policymakers to start taking steps toward supporting the youth to start their own businesses and practice fund provision for small businesses.

■ Young people driving force for economy

It is necessary to address the needs of the youth because of their important role in the development of society. Young people's role is essential and valued in terms of the driving force that runs the economy of the country. Young people also pass on values and cultural heritage to the next generation.

In fact, the improvement of social factors for young people maximizes its functions and positive social consequences such as political, economic, and public participation, and their lack of enjoyment will have its harms and negative consequences.

Given the role of the young population as an investment for development, the country needs to pay more attention to youth in all aspects.

Otherwise, Iran will soon lose the demographic window of opportunity and its working-age population starts to shrink and face an old population in less than 30 years.

30 guidebooks compiled for environmental defenders

SOCIETY TEHRAN — A collection of thirty books

for environmental defenders have been compiled, eleven of which published as the guidance and training packages, head of environmental education center at the Department of Environment (DOE), said on Wednesday.

This collection of handbooks has been prepared and compiled with an educational approach to empower the rangers, IRNA quoted Arash Yousefi as saying on Wednesday.

In previous years, when holding special training courses for rangers, there was a lack of specialized training content and sources, he said, adding, good books on the environment have been written by Iranian professors, but very few of them specifically dedicated to promoting the rangers' skills in different situations.

The level of literacy, work experience, and the climatic diversity of service areas were other challenges that made some of the training sources less efficient so that it was decided to compile special educational resources, he explained.

Referring to the DOE approach on increasing the educational capacity as the main weapon of rangers, he noted that to address this pathology, several meetings were held with university professors, general managers, retired rangers, and commanders, and finally, it was decided to compile 30 educational books for rangers.

Principles of rescue, accidents, firefighting, principles of first aid, burns and injuries, animal bites, bleeding and fractures, anger management, weapons, individuals, cars, and places are book titles that are published and currently in use, he further stated.

"Other books were compiled including, Iran diversity, GPS, wireless, information protection, arrest and detention, health, effective communication with local communities, identification of protected areas, justice officers, environmental recognition, basics of environmental laws and regulations, and three titles of environmental pollutants such as soil contaminant, sound and radiation, air and dust pollution.

Wildlife books are also among the books such as basics of wildlife management techniques, familiarity with aquatic species, endemic mammals, and wildlife diseases are in the final stages of publication," he explained.

The current booklets, in addition to being taught in training courses, will also be made available to the environmental defenders of each province, he concluded.

FAO supplies Iran more desert locust equipment to help contain pest invasion

Tehran — The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) delivers two more consignments of desert locust control equipment and materials to Iran to further enhance national technical capacity to prevent and decrease the damages caused by this migratory pest.

According to a press release published by the FAO Representation in Iran, as part of an ongoing Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) emergency project being funded by FAO and implemented in close cooperation with Iran's Plant Protection Organization (PPO) under the Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad, the Organization hands over 57 Ultra Low Volume (ULV) pesticides sprayers (including 50 handheld and seven knapsack sprayers) along with 10.4 metric tonnes of ULV Deltamethrin pesticides, worth over USD 100 thousand, to PPO.

"Procured through the FAO allocated fund, these pieces of equipment and materials, including current deliveries as well as 25 vehicle-mounted sprayers handed over previously, will boost the technical capacity of Iranian authorities to control and decrease the volume and extend of pest infestations in the country," said Mahnaz Shabani, the FAO Pest Management Specialist.

According to her, conducting training workshops for 320 plant protection officers and facilitating the development of an integrated desert locust management strategy for the country are among the other important components of this USD 500,000 TCP project — entitled Urgent Action for Capacity Building to Control Desert Locust Infestation in Iran — being implemented by FAO in Iran.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Big Cat in danger

(April 26, 2004)

The Iberian lynx, a wild cat which lives only in Spain and Portugal, is at risk. With only about a hundred and fifty animals left in the wild, it's become the world's most endangered big cat. This report from Helen Briggs:

Sometimes known as Europe's tiger, the continent's only **native** wild cat once **roamed** Spain, Portugal and southern France. Now there are only two breeding populations left, and **conservationists** say the last few animals may **die out** in the next few years. The report says the EU's contributed to the lynx's decline by **subsidizing** roads, dams and farming schemes that have killed wild cats and destroyed their **habitat**.

The organisation that carried out the research, SOS Lynx, says there's little time left to save the species because it's so close to **extinction**. It's calling for a change in political policy to protect the animal's habitat and safeguard its future. Priorities include setting up a captive breeding programme to release animals back into the wild, and legislation to control hunting and development in lynx areas.

If more isn't done, it says, Europe faces the terrible embarrassment of the first extinction of a big cat species since pre-historic times.

■ Words

native: a native animal is one that lives naturally in a particular area, it has not been brought in from somewhere else

roamed: travelled around

breeding populations: groups of the animal that are mating and producing children

conservationists: people who work to protect the environment

die out: if an animal species dies out, then they are all dead

subsidizing: giving money to help pay for something

habitat: the natural area where an animal lives

extinction: when all of a particular animal or plant species are dead and there can be no more, ever

(Source: BBC)

Iran calls for enhanced regional cooperation against COVID-19

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — The health program of the

Mediterranean countries, in which Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan work together under the auspices of the World Health Organization (WHO), should be expanded in the region, especially in the fight against coronavirus, Health Minister Saeed Namaki has stated.

Namaki made the remarks during a virtual meeting with Ahmed Al-Mandhari WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean and the health ministers of the member countries on Tuesday with the focus on responding to COVID-19.

He further suggested holding a special virtual meeting to obtain the approval of the health ministers of the countries in the region to delegate responsibilities for the implementation of the proposed plan to combat the pandemic.

The proposed plan can be presented in four main areas, including awareness of risks and social participation, infection prevention and control, universal health coverage and primary health care, governance, and health security, he explained.

He went on to highlight that implementing such



an initiative to respond to COVID-19 will be possible through continuous, active, and committed joint communication and follow-up.

Emphasizing that this cooperation should lead to strengthening COVID-19 response, readiness, and accountability,

he expressed hope that this cooperation would lead to the establishment of primary health care and the active participation of the community in cross-sectoral cooperation and global access to essential health services.

Given the multidimensional response to the pandemic, I urge the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office to coordinate the executive programs with the UN Resident Coordinator, relevant UN agencies such as UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations AIDS Program, UNHCR and the WFP, he stated.

Finally, I urge the Regional Director of the WHO to present the results of this initiative at the 67th Regional Committee Meeting to be held in October 2020, he concluded.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 333,699 on Wednesday, of whom 18,988 have died and 290,244 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,510 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 188 died, Lari said.

Currently, 3,940 patients with coronavirus are in critical condition, she added.

Economic cost of climate change strains U.S. economy: report

Billion-dollar weather disasters fueled by climate change are becoming more frequent and more devastating to state and local economies, according to a report by Datu Research commissioned by Environmental Defense Fund.

The report, Climate Fueled Weather Disasters: Costs to State and Local Economies, quantifies the economic cost of specific

extreme weather disasters on Americans today, including in specific states, as well as likely future costs if greenhouse gas emissions continue unabated and global temperatures continue to climb. Each of the weather events detailed in the report caused damages equaling or exceeding \$1 billion in states such as Texas, Florida, North Carolina, and Iowa, among others,

edf.org reported.

"COVID-19 and recent climate disasters have shown that we must step up investment in preparedness now, instead of waiting for the next crisis to hit," said Elgie Holstein, Senior Director for Strategic Planning, Environmental Defense Fund. "Mounting climate impacts are leading to a perfect storm, where federal, state,

and local governments will be staggered by mounting disaster assistance demands while simultaneously trying to recover from deep recession and the COVID-19 pandemic. Faster action to reduce climate change and more proactive investment in resilience are crucial to safeguard our future—and to help places and people adapt and succeed in the face of tremendous change."

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Recent rainfalls not to fully address prolonged droughts: expert

Despite above normal rainfalls the country has received, it cannot be claimed that the long-term droughts are set right, director for flood control and aquifer at Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization has said.

That's why water management policies must be still drawn up with regard to water scarcity, ISNA news agency quoted Abolqasem Hosseinpour as saying on Saturday.

بارش های اخیر خشکسالی کشور را جبران نمی کند

مدیرکل دفتر کنترل سیلاب و آبخیزداری سازمان جنگل ها، مراتع و آبخیزداری گفت: پس از بارش های اخیر در کشور، نمی توان ادعا کرد که خشکسالی های بلند مدت ما جبران شده است.

ابوالقاسم حسین پور در گفت و گو با ایسنا، اظهار کرد: سیاست های آبی ما همچنان باید منطبق بر کمبود منابع آبی باشد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“dextro-, dextero-, dextr-”

■ Meaning: right

■ For example: A good handyman is skillful, *dexterous* and proficient in whatever it is he is doing.

PHRASAL VERB

Nod off

■ Meaning: to begin to sleep, usually when you do not intend to and are sitting somewhere

■ For example: I missed the movie because I kept nodding off.

IDIOM

Crest of a wave

■ Explanation: If you are on the crest of a wave, you are very successful in what you are doing

■ For example: Our company is going from success to success. We're on the crest of a wave right now.

Biden picks Kamala Harris as running mate, first Black woman

Joe Biden named California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate, making history by selecting the first Black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket and acknowledging the vital role Black voters will play in his bid to defeat President Donald Trump.

In choosing Harris, Biden embraced a former rival from the Democratic primary who is familiar with the unique rigor of a national campaign. The 55-year-old first-term senator, who is also of South Asian descent, is one of the party's most prominent figures. She quickly became a top contender for the No. 2 spot after her own White House campaign ended.

She will appear with Biden for the first time as his running mate at an event Wednesday near his home in Wilmington, Delaware.

In announcing the pick Tuesday, Biden called Harris a "fearless fighter for the little guy, and one of the country's finest public servants." She said Biden would "unify the American people" and "build an America that lives up to our ideals."

Harris joins Biden at a moment of unprecedented national crisis. The coronavirus pandemic has claimed the lives of more than 160,000 people in the U.S., far more than the toll experienced in other countries. Business closures and disruptions resulting from the pandemic have caused severe economic problems. Unrest, meanwhile, has emerged across the country as Americans protest racism and police brutality.

Trump's uneven handling of the crises has given Biden an opening, and he enters the fall campaign in strong position against the president. In adding Harris to the ticket, he can point to her relatively centrist record on issues such as health care and her background in law enforcement in the nation's largest state.

The president told reporters Tuesday he was "a little surprised" that Biden picked Harris, pointing to their debate stage disputes during the primary. Trump, who had donated to her previous campaigns, argued she was "about the most liberal person in the U.S. Senate."

"I would have thought that Biden would have tried to stay away from that a little bit," he said.

Harris's record as California attorney general and district attorney in San Francisco was heavily scrutinized during the Democratic primary and turned away some liberals and younger Black voters who saw her as out of step on issues of racism in the legal system and police brutality. She declared herself a "progressive prosecutor" who backs law enforcement reforms.

Iraq slams Turkish drone strike, cancels defense minister's visit, summons envoy

→ 1 It also infringes upon the principle of good neighborliness, which should be the basis to carry out participatory security work in the service of both sides."

The ministry then censured the repetition of such acts and Ankara's failure to respond to Baghdad's demands for a halt to violations and withdrawal of Turkish forces from the Iraqi territory, calling for a review of the volume of cooperation between the two countries at various levels.

"Iraq stresses that its territory will never be used as a launching pad or conduit to harm neighboring countries, and refrains from being drawn into the rivalry of external parties," the statement pointed out.

The ministry said that it had cancelled Akar's visit to Baghdad, which was scheduled for Thursday, and that it would summon Turkish Ambassador Fatih Yildiz to hand him "a strong protest note and inform him of Iraq's confirmed rejection of his country's attacks and violations."

The Iraqi Security Media Cell said in a statement that the Turkish drone strike killed two border guard battalion commanders and the driver of their vehicle in northeastern Iraq on Tuesday.

Ihsan Chalabi, the mayor of Sidakan, said the drone targeted Iraqi border guard commanders while they were in meetings with members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Resistance News

Renewed Israeli airstrikes rock different areas of Gaza

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— Israeli warplanes at dawn Wednesday bombed several sites in the besieged Gaza Strip, with no reported casualties.

According to local sources, airstrikes targeted a resistance site in the west of Gaza City and a swath of land in the east of Rafah, south of the Strip.

Other air raids targeted an observation post belonging to the resistance in al-Nahda neighborhood in Rafah and a field control point in the east of Gaza City.

Some material damage reportedly happened in the bombed areas.

The Israeli army claimed its renewed airstrikes were in response to recent airborne arson attacks that sparked more than 60 fires in Israeli areas.

However, local sources in Gaza described the flying of balloons carrying incendiaries towards Israel by young men as acts of protest against Israel's failure to honor previous ceasefire pledges to ease the blockade on Gaza.

Hamas: Our people will not remain silent on Gaza siege

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN— The Hamas Movement has affirmed that Israel's aerial attacks on the Gaza Strip will not intimidate the Palestinian people and stop them from resisting the occupation and breaking its blockade.

"The continued Israeli escalation against Gaza and the bombing of resistance sites reflect the occupation's persistence in its policies and crimes, which will not discourage our Palestinian people and their valiant resistance from upholding the path of struggle to defend their rights and freedom and put an end to the suffering and siege of Gaza," senior Hamas official Fawzi Barhoum said in press remarks.

He stressed that the Palestinians in Gaza could not accept Israel's ongoing blockade on their lives as a fait accompli and would not remain silent.

U.S. did not fully assess civilian risks when pushing Saudi arms sales



by Congress of the sales. At the time, members of Congress were seeking to block the transfer of military equipment to Saudi Arabia and the UAE because of the civilian death toll from the U.S.-backed air campaign in Yemen.

Tens of thousands of Yemenis, many of them civilians, have been killed by the Saudi-UAE air strikes - often with American-made weapons, targeting information and aerial refueling support.

The Saudi-UAE air raids hit farms, schools, water supplies, and energy sources, triggering what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Pompeo's use of an emergency declaration to clear the 2019 arms sales prompted a political backlash in the U.S. Congress, with a number of Republicans joining Democrats to vote their disapproval in a rebuke to Trump. Ultimately, those votes proved non-

binding because most Republicans in the U.S. Senate supported Trump's authority as president to sell the weapons without congressional approval.

On Monday, a senior official at the State Department, speaking to reporters on the condition of anonymity, previewed of the OIG's internal probe claiming that the department had "acted in complete accordance with the law".

The investigation by the OIG "found no wrongdoing in the administration exercise of the emergency authorities that are available under the arms export control act", the unnamed official told news agencies.

In a statement on Monday, Representative Eliot Engel, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the unnamed State Department official was Assistant Secretary Clarke Cooper, who had been a subject of the probe. "This obvious pre-spin of the findings

Top German diplomat: Lebanon needs reboot to regain trust

Lebanon needs a "strong reboot" and far-reaching economic reforms to rebuild trust with its citizens, Germany's foreign minister said ahead of his trip Wednesday to Beirut, following last week's massive explosion at the city's port that killed at least 171 people and wounded thousands.

Heiko Maas said he was traveling to the Lebanese capital to "find out about the situation and consequences of the explosion and express our condolences and support." He landed a few hours later in Beirut and was scheduled to tour the destroyed port and meet with members of local NGOs, as well as the country's president, AP reported.

Germany has pledged 20 million euros (about \$23 million) in immediate help after the



catastrophic Aug. 4 explosion that tore through the Lebanese capital with such intensity that it created a tremor felt in neighboring Cyprus.

More than 170 dead in Yemen floods

Flash floods triggered by torrential rains have killed at least 172 people across Yemen over the past month, damaging homes and UNESCO-listed world heritage sites, officials said.

The destruction has dealt a new blow to a country already in the grips of what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis after years of war between a Saudi-backed government and Iran-allied rebels, AFP reported.

In the mainly government-held province of Maarib east of the capital, 19 children were among 30 people killed by the floods, a government official said. In the province's displaced persons



camps, 1,340 families saw their tents and belongings swept away, the agency in charge of them said.

Amnesty International urges Bahrain monarch to commute death sentences handed down to 12 prisoners

Amnesty International has appealed to Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah to commute all death sentences handed down to a dozen inmates, amid growing criticism of the kingdom's judicial system for unfair trials and extraction of confessions under torture.

The London-based organization, in a letter released on Tuesday, asked the 70-year-old monarch to take the measure and to establish an official moratorium on executions. "The death penalty is the ultimate irreversible cruel punishment. We believe that the death penalty is not an effective way to deter crime and that it is discriminatory: it tends to be disproportionately carried out against minorities and those with less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Its application can be subject to political motivation," it pointed out.

The London-based organization, in a letter released on Tuesday, asked the 70-year-old monarch to take the measure and to establish an official moratorium on executions.

"The death penalty is the ultimate irreversible cruel punishment. We believe that the death penalty is not an effective way to deter crime and that it is discriminatory: it tends to be disproportionately carried out against minorities and those with less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Its application can be subject to political motivation," it pointed out.



"We believe that your decision to commute all death sentences would have a hugely beneficial impact on Bahraini society at this difficult time, and help foster a culture where the right to life is respected," Amnesty International asked the Bahraini king.

On June 15, Bahrain's Court of Cassation upheld death sentence against political detainees Zuhair Ibrahim Jassim Abdullah and Hussein Abdullah Khalil Rashid.

International human rights organizations say Ibrahim and other defendants were severely tortured to make confessions.

Zuheir, along with others, was accused of targeting a bus for regime forces in the western coastal village of Dumistan

U.S. protests: Family of Elijah McClain sues city, police

→ 1 The case drew renewed scrutiny and public ire in June as protesters against racial injustice and police brutality took to the streets across the United States after George Floyd, a Black man, died in Minneapolis when an officer knelt on his neck.

The officers' forceful restraint of McClain lasted 18 minutes, and he was handcuffed and on the ground for 15, the complaint said.

"I can't breathe. I can't breathe please. I can't. I can't breathe. I can't breathe, please stop," were among his last words, according to the complaint.

The officers have said McClain tried to take their guns, but there is no body camera footage supporting those statements, the complaint said.

The lawsuit also named Aurora Fire Res-

cue Department personnel as defendants, alleging that medics failed to care for McClain when they injected him with ketamine, which impaired his breathing. The complaint said McClain showed no signs of resisting when medics administered the sedative.

■ Chicago protests: Restrictions imposed after chaotic night of unrest
Meanwhile, Chicago police will limit access to the city center after a night of violence and looting following reports of a police shooting.

Police Superintendent David Brown said the area would be restricted from 20:00 to 06:00 and a "heavy police presence" would continue until further notice, BBC reported.

He said the "shameful destruction" was "fueled by misinformation" about a suspect shot by police on Sunday.

Social media videos showed hundreds of people looting and confronting police.

As of Monday, Chicago police had arrested over 100 individuals for looting, disorderly conduct and battery against police, among other charges.

In addition to widespread damage, police reported an exchange of gunfire with suspects in the early hours of Monday. City officials had temporarily suspended public transport services to the city centre area and raised bridges.

A number of videos posted on social media show vandalism and damage to shops - some of it miles from the downtown area. Some clips show individuals walking out of shops with items. In one video, a police officer is struck in the face with an object apparently



flung by an individual in the street.

Officials said 13 officers were injured throughout the night, including one who was struck by a bottle. A civilian and a security guard were also injured by gunfire.

Asian World Cup qualifiers postponed

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — All Asian qualifying games for the 2022 World Cup scheduled this year were postponed to 2021 on Wednesday due to the coronavirus pandemic.

FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation issued a joint statement saying the delay is to protect the health and safety of all participants from COVID-19. The games will be rescheduled in 2021.

Each of 40 nations involved were due to play three or four rounds to complete the current phase of World Cup qualifying in Asia which now fell further behind schedule with no games played in 2020.

FIFA's global calendar of national-team games now has too few dates to complete the qualifying program as originally planned after the latest round of postponements.

The slots in June 2022 protected for national-team games are fast becoming key to deciding the 32-nation World Cup lineup. Yet those dates are available only because of the disputed FIFA decision in 2015 to move the finals tournament to November and December to avoid Qatar's searing summer heat, AP wrote.

Soccer governing bodies for Europe and South America already proposed changes to make space for more national-team games.

FIFA and the AFC said they would work together "to identify new dates for the respective qualifying matches."



The four rounds of games postponed Wednesday would have completed the second round of World Cup qualifying in Asia, that also feeds into teams advancing to the 2023 Asian Cup hosted by China.

The eight group winners and the four best runners-up advance to the third stage

of qualifying for the finals tournament in Qatar 2022.

Japan leads their group after four straight wins without conceding a goal. South Korea, a 2002 World Cup semifinalist, are in a tight group tied with North Korea and Lebanon, and trailing leader Turkmenistan

by a point.

Australia also have four straight wins to be two points clear of Kuwait and Jordan. Syria have won five straight to lead the group by eight points from China and the Philippines.

Iran sit five points behind Bahrain and Ira in Group C.

The postponement means the "Persian Leopards" will cancel their friendlies against Syria and Uzbekistan in early September.

The next scheduled phase involves 12 nations in two round-robin groups of 10 games for each team. Those will send four teams to Qatar.

Two further playoff rounds are in the intended Asian program. Two teams would play a two-leg series to decide which advances to an inter-continental playoff round with one nation from each of South America, Oceania and North American region CONCACAF.

FIFA already pushed back the inter-continental round from March 2022 to June that year because of the pandemic.

Across AFC member countries, domestic leagues have resumed in under strict health protocols in China, Japan, South Korea, Iran and Australia. The Chinese government said last month it would not host any international sports event for the rest of 2020 unless it was to test venues for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

Milad Mohammadi on West Bromwich's radar

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — West Bromwich Albion have joined the race for KAA Gent defender Milad Mohammadi, according to Football Insider.

Leeds United are also interested in the 26-year-old left-back, and now their promoted club mate West Brom have shown interest in signing the player.

Leeds and West Brom have both won automatic promotion to the Championship and are preparing to live in the top flight of English football for the 2020-21 campaign. Although the Whites and Baggies have strong squads, they need to strengthen themselves to be competitive in the Premier League next season.

Mohammadi joined Gent on a free trans-



fer last summer and did well for the Belgian club at left-back last season. Also capable of operating as a winger, the 26-year-old Iran international is reportedly costing £ 6.3million in transfer fees this summer.

Iran's wrestler Hedayat gets four-year ban for doping

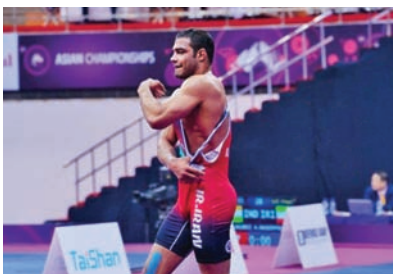
S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Behrooz Hedayat has been banned for four years due to use of prohibited substance.

He lost an appeal against his ban, Iran's national anti-doping agency (IrNADO) announced on Wednesday.

Hedayat's ban was the result of a historic adverse analytical finding (AAF) for stanozolol and trenbolone at the Takhti Cup – an Iranian competition to honor famous wrestler Gholamreza Takhti.

Hedayat was also involved in a controversy during the semi-final of the 87kg Greco Roman Wrestling at the 2020 Asian Wrestling Championships.

He was 7-0 up with six seconds left



but he had sprained an ankle, forfeited, and was later seen climbing stairs, reported ESPN.

Hedayat failed to turn up for the bronze medal match, making him technically ineligible for testing.

Iran hosts AFC Media online workshop

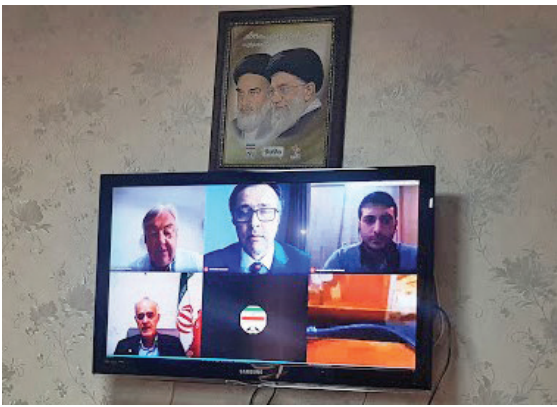
S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — The "Media Rules and Responsibilities Workshop" with the cooperation of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), successfully took place in an online format on 11 August.

The virtual workshop, which held for the appreciation of professional journalists and the work that they do, took place for the second time in the Central Zone following the last year workshop held in Tehran and attended by more than 100 media representatives.

The joint workshop organized by the FFIRI and the AFC, received support from the media in IR Iran, despite being held virtually due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

The webinar started with a speech by Mehdi Mohammad Nabi, the secretary general of the Iranian football federation.

Then, Colin Gibson, the AFC Director of Media and



Communications, as the principal lecturer and presenter of the webinar, conducted the online workshop, which covered topics such as digital journalism, the concepts of sports journalism, journalism in the coronavirus era, the AFC media chart, etc.

The virtual workshop concluded with a Q&A part conducted by highly respected AFC Director of Media and Communications, Colin Gibson.

Meanwhile, Mehrdad Masoudi, the highly experienced Iranian member of the FIFA Media department, also spoke in a part of the webinar and emphasized the importance of media transparency while mentioning essential points in this regard.

The webinar was attended by more than 180 media representatives and proves the Iranian media's interest in participating in such professional courses.

Mahsa Saberi: Living and breathing volleyball

Iranian volleyball player Mahsa Saberi expressed her commitment to success with a quote posted on Instagram: "Your team becomes your family, the ball becomes your best friend, the court becomes your home, and the game becomes your life."

"My life was bound up in volleyball," explained Saberi on the quote. "I have lived and spent most of my time playing volleyball. Most of the time we are in national training camps rather than being with our families. Volleyball is part of my family and the volleyball court is my home."

Saberi is one of Iran's key players that helped become one of the up-and-coming teams in the Asian region.

"I was part of the group that helped the Iranian women's team tier up to play on a higher level at Asian tournaments for the first time in its history. Twelve years have gone by and I have witnessed the process and all the improvements made by the Iranian women. I

am honored and proud to be a witness on how all our efforts progressed through the years."

Her proudest memory was at the Asian Cup in 2016, when Iran gained its best finish in an AVC event.

"My most memorable match was at the Asian Cup in 2016, under the tutelage of coach Majda Cicic. We had a good relationship with our coach and all my best friends were there with me in the team. We finished sixth in Vietnam – our best record in an AVC event."

After all these achievements, she remains driven and passionate to taste success.

"I really hope we could climb up the podium of an Asian event someday. I wish to stay healthy and fit for a long time. I would also like to be a good and useful person to my family and the society."

Mahsa enriched her volleyball experience when she played overseas in a Turkish club.

"I gained a lot of experience from playing overseas and it improved many aspects of



my game. I got better at digging and now I could perform much better in matches with the national team."

The 27-year-old got into the sport with her sister and her mother as her role models. In spite of her busy schedule in volleyball, she was able to balance her time between playing and earning a degree in chemical engineering.

"My older sister enrolled to a summer sports club near our home and she took me with her there, so I registered for volleyball

classes. That was when I got into volleyball. My biggest influence is my mother who was so kind to allow me to pursue playing the sport.

"It was a tough job to study and play at the same time, but one could possibly do it if you plan for it and you stick to your plan with strong desire. It was a fulfilling experience. I kept telling myself 'Try Mahsa and you will have a better life.' It was tough for me to get my university degree, but when I finally got it, I was proud with all my efforts.

Apart from her mother and sister, Saberi looks up to her compatriot Saeid Marouf and Korean superstar Kim Yeon-Koung.

"Iran men's national team captain Saeid Marouf is a very good leader inside the court. He is very effective, and he has good influence on his teammates in terms of technique. I am trying my best to learn from him.

"In the women's side, Kim is someone I look up to in international volleyball."

(Source: asianvolleyball.net)

Concacaf preliminary draw for FIFA World Cup 2022™ to take place on 19 August

The qualification pathway for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ in North, Central America and the Caribbean will take shape later this month following FIFA's confirmation this week that the Concacaf preliminary draw will be held on Wednesday, 19 August at 19:00 CET at the Home of FIFA in Zurich.

With 35 member associations from across North, Central America and the Caribbean set to be involved, the preliminary draw is a significant moment that will determine the tournament pathway for the first and final rounds under the new qualification format.

Based on the FIFA World Ranking as of 16 July 2020, the draw for the first round will allocate the 30 lowest-ranked Concacaf teams to six groups. This will be followed by the draw for the final round, which will indicate the position of each team within the final qualification stage, which will also be contested in a group format.

The pots for the first-round draw are as follows:

● **Pot 1:** El Salvador, Canada, Curaçao, Panama, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago

● **Pot 2:** Antigua and Barbuda, Guatemala, St Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic

● **Pot 3:** Grenada, Barbados, Guyana, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Bermuda, Belize

● **Pot 4:** St Lucia, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Montserrat, Dominica, Cayman Islands

● **Pot 5:** Bahamas, Aruba, Turks and Caicos Islands, US Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla

The six highest-ranked teams in the first round – El Salvador, Canada, Curaçao, Panama, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago – will be pre-seeded into groups A to F respectively. The first round will be played in a single round-robin format, meaning each team will play four matches: two home and two away.

During the second round, the six group winners will face off in a home-and-away elimination format in three predetermined pairings. The winners of each tie will proceed to the final round.

The final round will see the three winners from the second round join the five highest-ranked Concacaf teams according to the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking as of 16 July 2020, who will play each other in a home-and-away round-robin format.

The pots for the final-round draw are as follows:

● **Pot A:** Mexico, USA, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Honduras, winner of A vs F, winner of B vs E, winner of C vs D

● **Pot B:** teams 8-1

Fans around the world will be able to follow the draw live on FIFA.com, with the exception of the territories where the draw will be broadcast live on TV.

(Source: FIFA)

Sepahan eye Ivankovic's as replacement for Ghalenoei

Tasnim — Sepahan football club want to hire Branko Ivankovic as Amir Ghalenoei's replacement, the Iranian club's spokesman said.

Ghalenoei stepped down as coach of Sepahan Monday night after his team failed to book a place in Iran's Hazfi Cup semifinals.

The decision means Sepahan will need to act quickly to find a replacement, not only for its two remaining Iran Professional League matches, but for the AFC Champions League resumption.

Ghalenoei walks away from Sepahan as a five-time league champion, winning a total of three titles as Esteghlal boss and a further two across two stints with Sepahan.

He also led Iran at the 2007 AFC Asian Cup, where they were eliminated on penalties by Korea Republic in the quarter-finals.

Sepahan finished second in the 2018-19 Iran Pro League campaign, but a poor run of recent results has seen the club drop to fifth place with two matches remaining this season.

The club have won just once in its past eight matches, suffering defeats in the last three outings.

"We have negotiated with 10 coaches for the empty seat and Ivankovic also is among them," Ali Pezeshk said.

Ivankovic, now at the helm of Oman national football team, inspired Persepolis to seven titles in Iran football.



Hazfi Cup semis: date confirmed for Tehran derby

IRNA — The date has been confirmed for the Hazfi Cup semifinals match between Persepolis and Esteghlal in Tehran derby.

Holders Persepolis will meet Esteghlal in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on August 26.

Tractor will face Naft Masjed Soleyman in Tabriz on August 25. Esteghlal, as the most decorated team in Hazfi Cup, look forward to winning the title for the eighth time.

Paris marathon cancelled as COVID-19 cases pick up in France

PARIS (Reuters) — This year's Paris marathon has been cancelled, organizers said on Wednesday, as France battles against a resurgence of the COVID-19 virus.

The marathon was originally due to take place on April 5 but had been postponed to Nov. 15 because of the pandemic.

"After having tried everything to maintain the event, we, alongside the City of Paris, feel obliged to cancel the 2020 edition of the Schneider Electric Marathon de Paris and the Paris Breakfast Run," organizers said in a statement.

"Faced with the difficulty that many runners, especially those coming from abroad, had in making themselves available... it was decided that it would be better... for those concerned if we organized the Schneider Electric Marathon de Paris in 2021.

"We will be working side-by-side with the City of Paris to put on a 2021 edition that brings together the most passionate runners on the most beautiful streets in the world."

The Paris marathon, one of the most popular events on the global running calendar which routinely attracts over 40,000 participants, is the latest to be disrupted by the worldwide novel coronavirus outbreak.

In June, the New York City Marathon was cancelled while the Boston Marathon was also scrapped for the first time in its 124-year history. Marathon majors in Berlin and Chicago were also cancelled while the London Marathon, originally set for April, was postponed to Oct. 4 and will be run as an elite-only event.

France has reported over 236,000 infections and more than 30,000 deaths from COVID-19.

Barcelona player tests positive for coronavirus

A Barcelona player has tested positive for the coronavirus, the club confirmed Wednesday, as Spanish clubs' preseasons continue to be disrupted by the virus.

The player has not been named but was one of nine players who returned for preseason training this week.

Barca confirmed in a statement he has not had any contact with the players or staff due to travel to Lisbon for the Champions League quarterfinal against Bayern Munich on Friday.

La Liga ended on July 19, but clubs have already returned to training with Sept. 12 slated as the provisional start date for the 2020-21 season.

However, clubs returning to work have been hit by a number of coronavirus cases. Ten other clubs across Spain's top two divisions have confirmed positives.

Real Betis announced that striker Loren Moron had contracted the virus and was isolating at home, while Valencia, Granada, Alaves, Huesca, Espanyol, Mallorca, Las Palmas and Tenerife also confirmed cases.

Athletic Bilbao also confirmed on Wednesday that they have six positive cases among first team players and staff

The majority of the identities of players who have contracted the virus remains anonymous.

Barca's first-team squad are involved in the Champions League, but new signings Pedri and Francisco Trincao and those returning from loans were due to begin preseason training this week.

In total, a group of nine players underwent coronavirus tests Tuesday, and one result came back positive.

"The player has no symptoms, is in good health and has been quarantined at his home," Barca said.

A La Liga spokesperson told ESPN the league is focused on finishing the second division playoffs -- which have been delayed by coronavirus cases at Fuenlabrada, Real Zaragoza and Almeria -- and will then move on with plans to start the new season on Sept. 12.

"Of course we continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and, as was the case with the restart back in June, we will do what we can to play in a safe, responsible way," the spokesman said.

(Source: ESPN)

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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

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Zip Code: 1599814713

GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who constantly jests, exposes a part of his intelligence to destruction.

Imam Ali (AS)

Designs from Iranian architects competing for Dezeen Awards 2020

→1 This way, a different dynamism of the building is seen all over the construction.

The facade can be reshaped continuously, and therefore, the visitor will perpetually face a new shape of the building. The wooden surface has a special design pattern inspired by the growth of leaf plants, metaphorically the cedar.

Pardis Khaneh has been longlisted in the housing project category.



A number of students play in the courtyard of Nur-e Mobin Primary School in Bastam, Semnan Province, a submission for the Dezeen Awards 2020.

The Nur-e Mobin Primary School in Bastam, Semnan Province, is an educational neighborhood, which performs like a city, with spaces set together that create their own neighborhoods and alleys.

It is a space that is no longer enclosed, so distances mean something new and borders are defined by the children themselves. Alleys are for building up friendships and playing games. In this complex, the children grow and taste life.

The Nur-e Mobin project has been longlisted in the civic building category.

In November 2018, the project won first prize in the Asia Public category at the 2A Continental Architectural Award for Asia and Europe in Barcelona, Spain.

The Kohan Ceram Central Office by Hooba Design Group is the headquarters for the Kohan Ceram Brick Manufacturing Company, which includes a showroom, sales office and a guest unit.

Situated alongside a highway in Tehran, this project marks the boundary between the residential neighborhood and the freeway in the urban fabric. The main criterion here was to remain neutral on the urban scale while creating a tangible entity on the local scale.

The brick design for this project is used as the main representative of the company. The brick module not only forms the facade, but also forms the entirety of the project both on the interior and the exterior.

This project has been longlisted in the business building category.

Now in its third year, the awards program has become the benchmark for international design excellence and the ultimate accolade for architects and designers around the world.

“Sound of a Wild Snail Eating” echoes at Iranian bookstores

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of Elisabeth Tova Bailey’s novel “Sound of a Wild Snail Eating” has been published by Nashre No Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Kaveh Feizollahi.

In a work that beautifully demonstrates the rewards of closely observing nature, Bailey shares an inspiring and intimate story of her encounter with a Neohelix albolabris, a common woodland snail in this book.

While an illness keeps her bedridden, Bailey watches a wild snail that has taken up residence on her nightstand. As a result, she discovers the solace and sense of wonder that this mysterious creature brings and comes to a greater understanding of her own place in the world.

Intrigued by the snail’s molluscan anatomy, cryptic defenses, clear decision making, hydraulic locomotion, and courtship activities, Bailey becomes an astute and amused observer, offering a candid and engaging look into the curious life of this underappreciated small animal.

“The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating” is a remarkable journey of survival and resilience, showing the readers how a small part of the natural world can illuminate human existence, while providing an appreciation.

The book received the 2012 William Saroyan International Prize for Nonfiction, a 2011 John Burroughs Medal Award for Distinguished Natural History, a 2010 National Outdoor Book Award in Natural History Literature and a Gold Award from Foreword Book of the Year for Memoir.

Online version of Dehkhoda Lexicon launched

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The online version of the Dehkhoda Lexicon, the most comprehensive Persian language dictionary, was launched on the new website of the Dehkhoda Lexicon Institute on Tuesday.

Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda (1879–1959) was the author of the Persian language dictionary.

The launching ceremony was attended by the dean of the University of Tehran, Mahmud Nili Ahmadabadi, and the director of the Dehkhoda Lexicon Institute, Mahmud Bijankhan, at the International Center for Persian Studies in Tehran.

Speaking at the ceremony, Nili Ahmadabadi said that Dehkhoda made a tremendous, precious effort in compiling the dictionary and has lent an everlasting treasure for the next generations with his strenuous endeavors.

“Today, despite the development of the Persian language, the Dehkhoda Lexicon is still used as an official and comprehensive source by the Persian language scholars,” he said.

He next expressed thanks to those who helped prepare the online version of the lexicon and said, “We had noticed that the lexicon was used on different websites illegally, however, this online version released on the



Dean of the University of Tehran Mahmud Nili Ahmadabadi autographs a poster for the new website of the Dehkhoda Lexicon Institute on August 11, 2020. (UT)

official website is a valuable resource for the Persian language and culture aficionados.”

He also proposed that there should be more efforts to make the search in the online

version of the lexicon much faster and added, “If the scholars and literati can also leave their comments on the website for further development of the website, it will bring a big asset to the institute.”

Next, Bijankhan said that the institute was long determined to update the website and launch the online version of the lexicon.

“Since the institute has the most relations with Persian aficionados across the world, the website has been updated both technically and graphically. We are also planning to better present the website in the future,” he said.

He also noted that the institute has so far published eight Persian language teaching books for the non-Persian speakers and they have been highly welcomed.

“We are compiling more books. The institute has also trained over 20,000 international students, while besides learning the Persian language, Persian art and culture have also been taught during the courses,” he said.

Akram Soltani, the director of the editing department of the institute also said, “The institute published the lexicon in 14 volumes in 1993 after it was completed in 1980, later it was republished in 1998 in 15 volumes with an introduction and a collection of its CDs was released in 2000.”

Iranian photographers win awards at New York contest

A R T **TEHRAN** — Several Iranian photographers have won awards at the International Photography Contest New York – Manhattan.

The Photographic Society of America (PSA) and Fédération Internationale de l’Art Photographique (FIAP) organize the contest in collaboration with several other photographic centers every year.

The competition is organized in four categories, and in the Open Color Section “Prayer and Mosque” by Babak Mehrfashar won the MoL Gold award.

In this section, “People and Flowers” by Seyyed Ehsan Mortazavi was honored with the FIAP Silver award and “Afghanistan” by Mehdi Zabolabbasi won the MoL Bronze.

Zabolabbasi’s “Bondage” also won the Art Bureau Silver in the Monochrome Section, which also honored Babak Mehrfashar with a FIAP Ribbon for his photo “Kurdish

Girl II”. Another FIAP Ribbon in this section went to Reza Mohammadi for his photo “Her Eyes”.

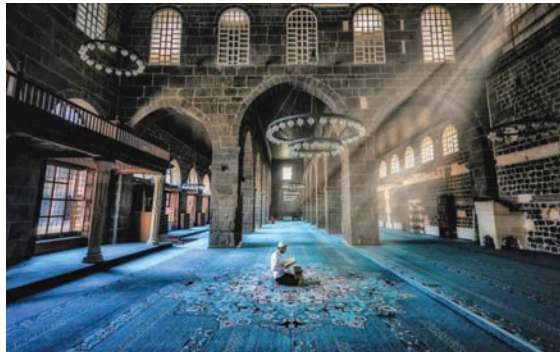
In the Photojournalism Section, Reyhaneh Shadab Juposhti won the MoL Ribbon for her photo “Motherly Sadness”.

Iran had no winners in the Nature Section. Colleen Price from Australia won the PSA GOLD for “Turtle Snack Time” while Roshana Prasad from Sri Lanka was awarded the FIAP GOLD for “Running for Their Lives”.

In this section, the FIAP Silver went to “Snatching Food” by Cyril Kwok Keung Leung from Hong Kong and the FIAP Bronze was presented to “Cheetah Cubs Seeking Attention” by Ian Whiston from England.

Borislav Milovanovic, Nikola Veljic and Braulio Cuenca were the jury members of this year’s competition.

The awards ceremony is scheduled to take place by October 1 and the winning photos will be showcased in an exhibition, which will open on January 1, 2021.



“Prayer and Mosque” by Babak Mehrfashar won the MoL Gold award in the Open Color Section of the International Photography Contest New York – Manhattan.

Iranian movies scoop awards at Beirut Intl. Women’s Film Festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Several Iranian movies have won awards at the Beirut International Women’s Film Festival in Lebanon.

“Dressage” directed by Puya Badkubeh won the awards for best feature film and screenplay. Hamed Rajabi is the writer of the film co-produced by Samira Baradari and Ruhollah Baradari.

“Dressage” is about Golsa and her friends who rob a corner shop, but while evaluating the booty, they are dismayed to realize that they forgot to take the security camera footage. One of them must return to the crime scene and retrieve it. The vote falls on Golsa, who bravely completes the mission. Her friends’ behavior makes

her think, and she hides the hard drive somewhere in secret. But her accomplices and their well-to-do families, worried about their social standing, put more and more pressure on Golsa.

Directed by Farhad Delaram “Tattoo” was picked as best short. The film is about a young girl who wants to renew her driver’s license but she is sent to the traffic police center for her tattoos.

“Driving Lessons” directed by Marzieh Riahi won the award for best short screenplay, which has been written by Marjan Riahi.

The film is about Bahareh, a young woman who, according to Iranian law, must have a man from among her relatives



“Dressage” directed by Puya Badkubeh won the awards for best feature at the Beirut International Women’s Film Festival, Lebanon.

accompany her on driving lessons so she and her male instructor won’t be alone.

The Iranian documentaries “Beloved” and “Finding Farideh” were also screened at the event.

The Beirut International Women’s Film Festival, which was held online, announced the winners in the Lebanese capital on Sunday. The festival was scheduled to take place in March, but it was postponed until August due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shahad Ameen from Saudi Arabia was selected best female director for her film “Scales” in the feature film section while Meryam Joobeur from Tunisia was named best female director in the short film competition for her movie “Brotherhood”.

Sculptor Parviz Tanavoli’s new book reveals his craze for collecting uncommon objects

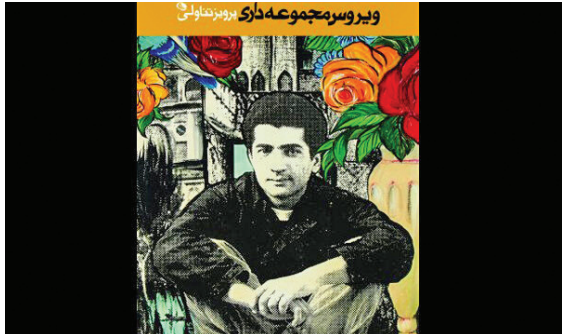
CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Sculptor Parviz Tanavoli, also known as an eminent Persian art scholar, tells about his passion for collecting strange and rare objects in his new book titled “Mania for Collecting”.

The book, which carries pictures of various objects the Canada-based Iranian artist has collected during his life, has recently been published by the Nazar publishing house in Tehran.

In a preface to the book, Tanavoli has written, “The craze for making collections had captured my soul during childhood and as time passed, it was turned into a permanent trend when I was a teenager.”

“The mania that had captured my soul was really different from what governmental officials have. “Some collectors insist on collecting everything; some of them only collect renowned objects; some of them also only regard the quantity of the objects, but my mania was for making collections of odd and rare items.

“Although the central theme in my movement was the traditional Iranian industries, I did not ignore contemporary art. Therefore, I never could achieve what I wanted in contemporary art and my findings



Front cover of sculptor Parviz Tanavoli’s new book “Mania for Collecting”.

in this category would never go beyond what has been reflected in the book.”

The book is composed of two sections, first of which covers the items collected during the 1960s and 1970s and the second section features the objects amassed over the past two decades.

Tanavoli, mostly famous for his sculpture series

Meyburgh from South Africa and

“Enclosure, Body and Wall, Saudade Mundaó” by Julia Guggisberg Hannud and Catharina Scarpellini from Brazil are the other winners of the award.

“Kiarostami and His Missing Cane” is a new narrative of Abbas Kiarostami’s point of view on life, his vision and worldview that director Mahmudreza Sani tried to portray during four years of cinematic workshops held by Kiarostami around the world.

The film also features Kiarostami’s

restlessness for the future of the cinema.

In 2019, the film won the award for best documentary feature at the 4th Salto Independent Film Festival in Uruguay.

Lefteris Charitos was presiding over the jury for the international documentary competition, which was composed of Christos Karakapelis and Michel Garance.

Christoforos Charalampakis, a professor of linguistics at Athens University, was the honorary president of the festival, which announced winners on August 10.



A scene from “Kiarostami and His Missing Cane” by Mahmudreza Sani.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** —

The Iranian film “Kiarostami and His Missing Cane” has been honored at the 7th International Documentary Festival of Ierapetra in Greece, the organizers have announced.

“Kiarostami and His Missing Cane” was among four movies that received the International & European Feature Length Documentaries Award at this event.

“A Dilo” by Mezour Shein from Australia, “Dying for Gold” by Cathrine