

Rouhani warns UAE: Lest deal with Tel Aviv open way for Israeli presence in region **2**

Israel shivering with fear for its existence **10**

Iran's Kohansal featured in Malala Fund's initiative **11**

IRIB prepares new religious TV series for Muharram, Safar **12**

U.S. suffers defeat at UN Security Council

NIOC to offer \$476m worth of oil in IRENEX via salaf bonds

TEHRAN — The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) plans to offer 20 trillion rials (about \$476.1 million) worth of heavy crude oil in Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) through standard parallel salaf contracts (some kind of Islamic contract) on Sunday, the exchange's managing director told IRNA.

According to Seyed Ali Hosseini, the fund raised through this offering is going to be used to finance the oil

industry's development projects. "National Iranian Oil Company is the issuer of the salaf bonds and the purpose of this offering is to finance the company's development projects and its current expenses; the offering will be conducted under two separate indices," Hosseini explained.

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. **→4**

Iran ranks first for top universities among Islamic countries

TEHRAN — Iran ranks first in terms of the number of universities in the region and among Islamic countries, according to Shanghai Ranking's Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2020, ISNA reported.

Starting from 2003, ARWU has been presenting the world top universities annually based on a set of objective indicators and third-par-

ty data. ARWU has been recognized as the precursor of global university rankings and the most trustworthy league table.

ARWU adopts six objective indicators to rank world universities, including the number of alumni and staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals, the number of articles published in journals of Nature and Science. **→9**

Iranian composer Loris Tjeknavorian wins Books for Peace Awards 2020

TEHRAN — The 82-year-old Iranian composer Loris Tjeknavorian has been selected as the winner of the Books for Peace Awards 2020.

He had first received the nomination in May from Iran's Art for Peace Festival, which had nominated him for the 2019 edition of the awards.

The winners will be honored during a special ceremony on September 12 in Rome, Italy. **→12**

The Books for Peace Awards was launched in 2017 in a project by FUNVIC (Fundação Universitária Vida Cristã), UNESCO BFUCA-WFUCA Brazil club, Section Europe, and ANASPOL (Local Police) to honor works promoting peace through culture and words, not only as a concept between nations at war, but also among all individuals living in the world. **→12**



Security Council rejects U.S. resolution to extend Iran arms embargo

© Tehran Times / Photo Illustration by Bahman Vakhshour

The ambassadors of countries sitting on the UN Security Council voted virtually on the U.S. resolution intended to extend arms embargo on Iran.

By Farrokh Hesabi
Tehran Times Journalist

Dragan Skocic faces dilemma as qualifiers postponed

Despite the returning of football matches around the world after a long time on hiatus, the international games are still under the influence of the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, and the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers are still unclear as to when and how they will be held.

The 2022 World Cup scheduled this year was 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.

Iran national football team's training camp was supposed to start on Aug. 27 as part of the preparation for the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification.

Dragan Skocic, who was named Iran coach on February 6, has not yet had the opportunity to start the training with his players.

The AFC's decision to postpone the qualifiers left the Iranian national team without an agenda until the end of the year.

However, the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) confirmed last week that the national team's training camp would start as it was scheduled, and the "Persian Leopards" will face Uzbekistan in a friendly match on Sept. 7.

So far, Skocic has tried his best to work according to the plan for the preparation of the national team by appointing his assistant coaches and attending different Iran Professional League (IPL) games as much as possible.

The Croatian coach, however, in light of growing concerns and evolving nature on COVID-19 and given that the new schedule for the resumption of the World Cup qualifying matches has not been announced yet, will face some confusion about how to prepare the team for the four crucial games ahead in the competition.

While one of his concerns was the short time to prepare the national team for the matches, now Skocic sees too much time ahead of him without an official game.

As the virus spreads across the globe, sports bodies are canceling or postponing events. In such a situation, the national football team has a tough task for qualifying to the FIFA World Cup for the third time in a row.

UN Security Council rejects U.S. resolution amid Iranian glee and concern

TEHRAN — The UN Security Council on Friday rejected a U.S.-drafted resolution to extend arms embargo on Iran as most members abstained from voting.

A former diplomat tells the Tehran Times that these abstentions shouldn't be interpreted as a success for Iran.

While the U.S. plans to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran, the European parties to the Iran nuclear deal, who abstained on the U.S. resolution, make efforts to draft a new resolution to re-impose an international arms embargo on Iran, according to a report published by a regional newspaper.

Moreover, in a bid to ensure that the UN arms embargo on Iran is extended, the U.S. plans to unilaterally trigger a snapback of all UN sanctions on Iran after its resolution to extend the arms embargo was rejected by the UN Security Council.

The Security Council held a meeting to vote

on the U.S. resolution calling for an indefinite extension of the UN arms embargo on Iran that is due to expire on October 18. Only two countries — the U.S. and the Dominican Republic — voted in favor of the resolution. Russia and China opposed while 11 members of the Security Council including European signatories to the nuclear deal — France, Germany, and the UK — abstained.

In a statement on Friday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, "The Security Council's failure to act decisively in defense of international peace and security is inexcusable." He added the U.S. will continue to work to ensure that the 13-war arms embargo is not lifted in October.

It was widely expected that the Security Council would reject the U.S. resolution, and even U.S. officials raised the possibility of their resolution being rejected. Besides, Russia and China would have vetoed the resolution if it had gained nine "yes" votes. **→3**

U.S. Protests: Portland police declare unlawful Assembly amid protests

Portland police declared an unlawful assembly Friday night and ordered protesters to leave, saying people were throwing things at officers.

Anyone ignoring the order could face arrest or crowd control methods such as tear gas, police said. Police have been targeted with "paint bombs and other projectiles," according to authorities.

According to AP, demonstrations, often violent, have happened nightly in Oregon's biggest city for more than two months following the killing of George Floyd. Floyd, a black man, died in Minneapolis after a white officer pressed a knee to his neck.

Wednesday night and early Thursday morning authorities say protesters set a fire and exploded commercial grade fireworks outside the downtown federal courthouse. Several officers were injured and two people were arrested.

The protests in Portland last month outside the federal courthouse saw demonstrators clashing nightly with federal agents dispatched to the city to protect the facility.

The demonstrations dwindled after a draw-down of the agents, who were replaced by Oregon state troopers. But protests turned violent over the last week, mostly near a police union headquarters building miles from the federal courthouse.

Costs from weeks of protests take financial toll on cash-strapped cities across U.S.

Protests following George Floyd's death could become one of the costliest displays of civil disorder in U.S. history.

From police injuries to financial losses from looters, the aftermath from weeks of cross-country protests is bringing some cities to their knees. **→10**

UAE and S. Arabia are part of the Zionist project in West Asia: Saudi analyst

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — A Saudi political analyst, Ali Hashim, is of the opinion that «The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are basically part of the Zionist project in the Middle East (West Asia), and it can help to show their true faces to all Arabs and Muslims.»

It was announced on Thursday that Israel and the United Arab Emirates had reached a deal that will lead to full normalization of diplomatic relations between the two sides.

The deal came after a phone call between United States President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi.

The agreement requires Israel to put West Bank annexation on hold, but Netanyahu says it's temporary.

The UAE is the first Persian Gulf state that rushed to normalize ties with the Zionist regime. It had normalized the relations with Israel a

long time ago, not when Trump announced the agreement.

Hashim tells the Tehran Times that the deal between the Emirates and Israel was announced by Trump to help Trump and Netanyahu in their election campaigns, as the Emirati regime wants to see Trump re-elected president for a second term.

«Mohammed bin Zayed believes that Trump will guarantee him the rule in the Emirates to succeed his brother,» Hashim adds. **→7**

Coronavirus: Isfahan historical sites to keep hosting online concerts if health rules observed

TEHRAN — Isfahan tourism department backs online concerts being held at historical sites of the central Iranian province if regulations both for the health of musicians and maintenance of the centuries-old sites are taken into account.

"Due to the coronavirus pandemic, [which mandates more restrict health measures], and the need to better protect historical monuments, holding public concerts have become prohibited in the historical sites and monuments in the province," Isfahan tourism chief Freydoun Allahyari announced on Saturday.

"Unfortunately, with the continuation of this disease, which has been affecting our country for almost seven months up to the moment, the need to increase social vitality is felt more than ever. However, we are trying to use new technologies, cultural functions to liven up cultural events and tourism for the locals and travelers especially by the means of virtual networks."

The official cited an example of a virtual concert recently held in Isfahan, saying: "Last week, an online concert was held for free in [the 17th-century royal palace of] Chehel Sotoun with the participation of [some] leading artists of the country and in compliance with all health guidelines."

Regarding the concert, the official noted: "First of all, it should be noted that the musicians of this concert that were limited numbers conducted their routine at the courtyard of the Chehel Sotoun palace complex, with a suitable [social] distance from each other and from the porch of the palace." **→8**



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Perseid meteor shower shines in dark sky

The annual Perseid meteor shower has just peaked, but it's not too late to spot one of the famed "shooting stars" in the night sky.

The best time to view the shower was Aug. 12, with rates of more than 50 visible meteors per hour.

The Perseid meteor shower peaks every year in mid-August. It was first observed over 2,000 years ago.

The cloud of debris is about 27 km wide, and at the peak of the display, between 160 and 200 meteors streak through the Earth's atmosphere every hour as the pieces of debris.

Iran urges intl. community to counter U.S. 'knee on neck' policy

POLITICAL TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has urged the international community to counter "knee on neck" policy by the United States, warning against regression into a power-based unilateralism.

"No one can deny the ongoing alarming trend of regression from a rules-based multilateralism into a power-based unilateralism. The international community should not allow the 'knee on neck' policy to be tolerated at our time anymore," Majid Takht-Ravanchi said in statement read out before the UN Security Council meeting on Friday.

Following is the full text of the statement published by IRNA:
Today, the Security Council is considering a draft resolution presented by a country which has a long dark record of fabrications and disinformation throughout the world and this Council is no stranger to such dissemination of falsehood. It seems that in order to promote its short-sighted political interests, the U.S. is addicted to spread lies. A lie has no legs.

For many years, the U.S., misusing its permanent membership in the Council, has attempted to portray Iran as a threat to international peace and security and to propose sanctions on Iran.

One example is its current proposal for imposing an indefinite comprehensive arms embargo on my country. Is there any sound legal and objective security justification for such action? Can arms import and export by Iran be considered a threat to international peace and security? And, what is the ultimate goal of the U.S. in this whole exercise?



From a legal perspective, under Resolution 2231, following the termination of current restrictions, no arms embargo can be imposed on Iran for the following reasons:

- 1) According to the JCPOA which is annexed to Resolution 2231 and through its endorsement by the Council, has become legally binding on all Member States, there will be no new Security Council sanctions;
- 2) It will be against the Council's policy of "fundamental shift" as well as its "desire to build a new relationship with Iran" as affirmed and expressed in Resolution 2231;
- 3) It will also be against the Council's intent, as expressed in Resolution 2231, on "promoting and facilitating the development of normal economic and trade contacts and cooperation with Iran", which naturally includes arms trade too;
- 4) Any change in the already-agreed measures or timelines, by changing a well-crafted balance embedded in Resolution 2231, will affect several other parts thereof. The Resolution, as itself defines, is based on "a step-by-step approach", "includes the reciprocal commitments" -- the implementation and termination of which are subject to identified timelines -- and requires States to comply with its provisions "for their respective durations";
- 5) It is against the call by the Security Council on all Member States "to support the implementation of the JCPOA" and to refrain "from actions that undermine implementation of commitments under the JCPOA" as well as for the JCPOA's "full implementation on the timetable established" therein;

According to Annex B to Resolution 2231, the "duration" of arrangements including on arms "may be reviewed". However, Annex B is inherently designed to ensure that the provisions be terminated on the agreed timelines, as such a decision must be made by the Council based on a consensual recommendation by the Joint Commission where the U.S. is not a member to propose such extension and Iran as a member will not accept such a proposal.

6) It is crystal clear that any arms embargo against Iran will be against all promises made to Iran in different parts of Resolution 2231 and JCPOA and endorsed by the Council. This can set a dangerous precedent, weakening the Council's authority and eroding the trust and confidence in the Council, in its decisions and, by extension, in the UN itself. The main victims however will be the principles of justice, rule of law, dialogue, diplomacy and trust; and

7) Even beyond the JCPOA and resolution 2231 -- which, due to their direct substantive relevance can, in no way, be disregarded or overlooked -- the Security Council may impose sanctions only when it determines "the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression"; and more importantly, exhausts employing all possible solutions other than sanctions, which must be the last choice if need be.

Now, the question is whether such conditions exist regarding Iran thus allowing the Council to act. This assessment, of course, cannot be made in vacuum or on political motivations, fabrications, lies and phony charges of certain member or members of the Council; rather it must be based on objective irrefutable facts, namely the security realities in the region.

So, let's take a quick look at the situation in the region, starting with the policies and practices of the U.S.: a country which is not located in our region but has been meddling, for decades, in our affairs some 6000 miles away from its shores.

Only in Iran's 6 neighboring countries in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. has deployed nearly 50,000 troops, with more than 300 combat aircrafts, an aircraft carrier as well as tens of destroyers and ships with four Central Command Headquarters for its Army, Air, Marine and Special Forces.

Out of over 40 Western military installations in the Middle East, 29 belong to America. Such massive buildup has turned the region into the highest concentration of foreign military installations in the world.

Let's now turn to the unquenchable appetite of the U.S. to export arms to this region and the inordinate craving of the U.S.' regional allies to import them.

Saudi Arabia, by importing over 12% of ALL arms exported globally, by far has been the largest arms importer in the world in 2015-2019, 73% of which came from the U.S. Only remember the \$110 billion worth of U.S.-Saudi arms deal in 2017, described by President Trump as "the largest order ever made". Saudi Arabia was the third largest military spender in 2018 and fifth in 2019 and devoted 8% of its GDP to military expenditure in 2019: the highest worldwide. Being by far the largest military spender in the Middle East, it also continues modernizing and expanding its military forces and according to SIPRI, currently, it "has the largest inventory of advanced weapons" among the Persian Gulf States.
(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Rouhani warns UAE: Lest deal with Tel Aviv open a way for Israeli presence in the region

Rouhani describes UAE agreement with Israel as a "treasonous act"

POLITICAL TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday condemned an agreement between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Zionist regime of Israel to normalize ties, warning Abu Dhabi that the agreement must never prepare the ground for the presence of the Zionist regime in the Persian Gulf region.

Noting that even until the present time the UAE has done a "great mistake and treasonous act", Rouhani said, "We warn the Emirates that lest it (agreement) finds a place for the Zionist regime in the region... then it will be different and they will be treated differently." Rouhani said while speaking at a meeting of the National Task Force for Fighting Coronavirus.

Rouhani said the UAE intentionally wanted the agreement be announced by U.S. President Donald Trump to increase his chances of reelection in the November election. Rouhani said the UAE has the illusion that if Trump is reelected it will have better security.

"If a wrong relationship has been established, why is it announced by a third party, the United States? They betray their country, the Muslims and the Arab world, because a person in Washington seeks to



gain vote or they think they can have security if they get close to the enemies of Islam and Iran, which is wrong," Rouhani stated.

Rouhani also noted that Iran has always supported security in the region and expressed hope that the UAE would return from the wrong path it has taken.

Israel and the UAE reached a deal on Thursday that will lead to full normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The deal came after a phone call between Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Sheikh Mohammed bin

Zayed Al Nahyan, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, according to Aljazeera.

Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Friday condemning the agreement. The ministry called the deal a "strategic stupidity" by the UAE and Israel and a "dagger in the back of Muslims" by Abu Dhabi.

■ 'JCPOA defeats U.S.'

Rouhani also said that the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, acted as a barrier against the illegal move by United States in the UN Security Council and "defeated" Washington.

He was referring to the United Nations Security Council's move in rejecting a U.S. resolution to extend an arms embargo on Iran that is due to expire in October.

Besides the United States, only the Dominican Republic voted in favor of the draft. China and Russia voted against the text, and the remaining 11 Security Council members, including the European allies of the United States, abstained.

Rouhani said that the UN Security Council session and the act of rejecting the U.S. draft resolution was a "political victory" for Iran and a "political and legal failure" for Washington.

U.S. suffers defeat at UN Security Council

Security Council rejects U.S. resolution to extend Iran arms embargo

POLITICAL TEHRAN - The United States' efforts to extend an arms embargo on the Islamic Republic of Iran ended in a humiliating defeat at the UN Security Council, as 13 out of 15 members of the Council did not support its anti-Iran resolution.

Only two of the Council's 15 members voted in favor, highlighting the division between Washington and its European allies since U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the nuclear accord in May 2018.

Besides the United States, only the Dominican Republic voted in favor of the draft. China and Russia voted against the text, and the remaining 11 Security Council members, including the European allies of the United States, abstained.

President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that the UN Security Council session and the act of rejecting the U.S. draft resolution was a "political victory" for Iran and a "political and legal failure" for Washington.

Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed a summit of world leaders to avoid "confrontation" over an American threat to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

The result increases the likelihood that the U.S. will try to unilaterally force a return of UN sanctions, which experts say threatens to plunge the Council into one of its worst-ever diplomatic crises.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the defeat of the resolution ahead of a very brief virtual council meeting to reveal the vote.

"The Security Council's failure to act decisively in defense of international peace and security is inexcusable," Pompeo said in a statement.

According to UN Security Council Resolution 2231, the UN arms embargo on Iran will end on October 18.

The United States, which unilaterally announced its withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018, has repeatedly claimed it will invoke the "snapback" mechanism within the Security Council should its draft resolution fail to pass.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi called the U.S. isolation in the UN Security Council unprecedented. "Throughout the 75-year history of the United Nations, the U.S. has never been so isolated, despite all its efforts and lobbying," he said.

The spokesman also said Washington should take a lesson from its total failures.

"The int'l community, once again & w/ a clear voice, rejected the US reckless & futile attempt to undermine the #UNSC credibility," Mousavi wrote on his Twitter page on

Saturday morning.

"The #American_regime should take a lesson from its total failures & stop shaming itself at UN, otherwise it will get isolated, even more than now," he added.

In a statement on Thursday, Iran's permanent mission to the UN had called on the UN Security Council to stand up to the "ill-intentioned" move by the U.S. government.

"The U.S. draft resolution, presented in gross violation of Security Council Resolution 2231, is aimed at addressing U.S. domestic policy and has nothing to do with maintaining international peace and security," the mission said, according to Press TV.

"The draft resolution undermines the integrity, authority, and credibility of the Security Council; and by extension, the United Nations, multilateralism, the rule of law and diplomacy," it added.

In a bid to gain more council support, the U.S. slashed its earlier draft resolution on Tuesday to just four paragraphs that would simply extend the arms ban on Tehran "until the Security Council decides otherwise," claiming it's "essential to the maintenance of international peace and security."

The Iranian mission said the United States baselessly accuses Iran of instability in the region to satisfy its deep addiction to sanctions and to justify its irresponsible behavior in the Council.

"While its interventions, destructive behavior, divisive policies, and insatiable appetite for exporting its deadly weapons to countries in the region as well as the presence of a large number of its forces in the Middle East (West Asia), their involvement and spreading lies and destructive acts are the main sources of instability, insecurity and human suffering in this region," it underlined.

On Wednesday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif pointed out that Washington has no legal right to invoke the snapback mechanism to reinstate sanctions against Tehran under the nuclear deal that the U.S. unilaterally left in May 2018.

"Legally speaking, the United States is no position to use the snapback [mechanism]. The three European allies of the United States also explicitly stated at a previous meeting of the UN Security Council that the United States could not use this mechanism," Zarif told reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

On Friday, Iran's ambassador to the UN urged the international community to counter the "knee on neck" policy by the United States, warning against regression into a power-based unilateralism.



"No one can deny the ongoing alarming trend of regression from a rules-based multilateralism into a power-based unilateralism. The international community should not allow the 'knee on neck' policy to be tolerated at our time anymore," Majid Takht-Ravanchi said in statement read out before the UN Security Council meeting.

He said appeasement has never served humanity's common interests, but it has only further emboldened the bullying powers.

"In this turbulent time, all States, particularly members of this Council, have a moral and ethical responsibility to do whatever in their power to restore faith in values, purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter," the envoy noted.

"We owe it to ourselves and to future generations who will have to live with the consequences of our action and inaction," he added.

Following the meeting, Takht-Ravanchi said the vote once again showed the U.S.'s deepening global isolation.

"The result of the vote in #UNSC on arms embargo against Iran shows—once more—the US' isolation. Council's message: NO to UNILATERALISM. US must learn from this debacle. Its attempt to 'snapback' sanctions is illegal, and was rejected by int'l community, as was evident today," he tweeted on Friday.

Iran's Ambassador to London Hamid Baedinejad also said on Saturday that rejection of the U.S. draft resolution demonstrated Washington's isolation.

"UN Security Council's total rejection of the US draft resolution on extension of arms embargo against Iran, demonstrates the level of intl' isolation of the US administration. Maximum international pressure is mounting against US to change its policy re Iran's nuclear deal. #JCPOA," Baedinejad wrote in a tweet.

U.S. has become increasingly isolated over Iran: CGTN

By staff and agency

In a commentary on Saturday, China Global Television Network (CGTN) said the United States has become increasingly isolated over Iran at the UN Security Council since U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, in May 2018.

The UN Security Council on Friday rejected a resolution drafted by the U.S. that would extend the current arms embargo against Iran.

The draft resolution failed to get the

required nine votes in favor of adoption. China and Russia opposed and eleven members abstained, including France, Germany and the United Kingdom. The U.S. and the Dominican Republic were the only votes in favor.

China's Ambassador to the UN, Zhang Jun, said in a statement after the vote that the result "once again shows that unilateralism receives no support and bullying will fail."

The United States may now trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran using

a provision in the nuclear deal, known as snapback, even though the U.S. abandoned the accord in 2018.

"In the coming days, the United States will follow through on that promise to stop at nothing to extend the arms embargo," U.S. Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft said in a statement, suggesting the move could start as early as next week.

Iran's Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi warned the U.S. against trying to trigger a return of sanctions.

"Imposition of any sanctions or restrictions on Iran by the Security Council will be met severely by Iran and our options are not limited," he said in a statement. "And the United States and any entity which may assist it or acquiesce in its illegal behavior will bear the full responsibility."

Under Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the July 2015 nuclear deal, the arms embargo against Iran expires on October 18, 2020. The U.S. draft resolution sought to extend the embargo indefinitely.

Compensation for Ukrainian plane will be based on intl. regulations: ambassador

POLITICAL TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador to Ukraine has said that compensation for the Ukrainian plane which was downed mistakenly near Tehran in January 2020 will be based on international regulations.

"As it was raised in recent constructive and fruitful negotiations in #Kyiv, any compromise on compensation will be just based on the international regulations and is according to commitments of conventions in which I.R. #Iran is a member," Manouchehr Moradi tweeted on Saturday.

The chief of Iran's Central Insurance Organization announced on August 10 that the Ukrainian plane had been insured by European insurers and therefore they should pay for incident.

"The Ukrainian plane is insured by European companies in Ukraine and not by Iranian companies, therefore the compensation should be paid by those European compa-



nies," Gholamreza Soleimani told a press conference, the Mizan online reported.

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

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

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

The airplane had been mistaken for an invading missile. The victims of the crash included 82 Iranians, 63 Iranian-Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans, and three British nationals.

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

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

IRGC slams Israel-UAE agreement as 'historic idiocy'

UAE move is a "poisonous dagger" thrust into the body of Islamic community, the IRGC laments

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has condemned the normalization of relations between the UAE and Israel, saying the move was "historic idiocy" and a "poisonous dagger" thrust into the body of the Islamic community.

"This move not only will not secure the Zionist regime's interests, but it will bring about a dangerous future for the U.S. and the supporters of the agreement by invalidating the New Middle East dreams," the IRGC said in a statement on Saturday, Mehr reported.

It further described the agreement as one of the biggest betrayals of the Palestinian cause.

"The Emirates' blatant betrayal to the common cause of the Islamic Ummah has made the rulers of that country subject to the hatred and sacred anger of the Islamic world," the statement read.

The IRGC added that the UAE rulers will



face the fate of other traitors to the pure blood of the Palestinian martyrs.

Israel and the UAE reached a deal on Thursday that will lead to a full normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The deal came after a phone call between U.S. President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, according to Al Jazeera.

Trump hailed the deal as a "huge breakthrough" and a "historic peace agreement between" its "two great friends".

The White House says the agreement will see Israel suspend its plans to annex Palestinian areas of the occupied West Bank.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has called the UAE move "shameful" and a "dagger in the back of the Palestinians and all Muslims".

Israel-UAE agreement was 'election gift' to Trump: Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Government spokesman Ali Rabiei has said the normalization of relations between Israel and the UAE was a gift to U.S. President Donald Trump who is seeking re-election in the November presidential polls.

"This was an election gift to Trump and a hideous gift to Netanyahu," Rabiei wrote in a note published on Saturday.

"In fact, this is not the first time an Emir, ruler or Khan in some corner of the Islamic civilization is justifying a betrayal to Quds," he said.

He called on Muslims across the world not to allow occupiers to "occupy our minds and make us see occupation as our destiny."

In a joint statement issued by the White House on Thursday, the UAE and Israel announced that they had "agreed to the full normalization of relations."

According to the statement, delegations from Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi will meet in the coming weeks to sign bilateral agreements regarding investment, tourism, direct flights, security and the establishment of reciprocal embassies.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, has said that another Arab country is likely to establish relations with Israel.

Observers indicate that Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia may be the next to follow the UAE.

"There is a good chance that another country could make a deal with Israel in the coming days," Kushner told reporters after the UAE-Israel deal was announced.

"We hope this is an icebreaker where Israel can now normalize relations with other countries," he said, adding that Washington had been in talks with other Arab states to forge ties with Tel Aviv, too.

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Friday denounced the agreement, describing it as a "strategic stupidity" by the UAE and Israel.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran considers this 'shameful' action of Abu Dhabi in normalizing ties with the fake, anti-human and illegitimate Zionist regime a dangerous action and warns about any interference of the Zionist regime in equations of the Persian Gulf region and announces that the government of the Emirates and other



accompanying governments must admit responsibility for consequences of this action," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

UN Security Council rejects U.S. resolution amid Iranian glee and concern

1→ "The U.S. was sure that its resolution would fail to get nine votes, and even if the resolution had obtained the required votes, it would have been vetoed by Russia and China," Fereydoun Majlesi, a former Iranian diplomat, told the Tehran Times.

With the failure of the resolution, the U.S. is now bracing for another legal battle over how to restore international sanctions on Iran. He said that it would resort to triggering the snapback of UN sanctions on Iran if the UN Security Council rejected its resolution.

"Under Resolution 2231, the United States has every right to initiate snapback of provisions of previous Security Council resolutions. In the coming days, the United States will follow through on that promise to stop at nothing to extend the arms embargo," Kelly Craft, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, said in a statement on Friday, shortly after the Security Council rejected the U.S. resolution.

However, diplomats and analysts say the U.S. has no right to trigger the snapback of sanctions, a mechanism designed to allow parties to the nuclear deal to re-impose the UN sanctions on Iran in case it violated the deal.

"The U.S. can't trigger the snapback of UN sanctions on Iran because it has chosen to quit the JCPOA (the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal)," Majlesi asserted, adding that there is no need for the U.S. to re-impose the UN sanctions given that almost all countries around the world currently abide by its unilateral sanctions on Iran.

Iran hailed the Security Council to reject the U.S. resolution. Abbas Mousavi, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, has warned the U.S. of further isolation if it failed to take lesson of its "total failure."

"The international community, once again and with a clear voice, rejected the US reckless and futile attempt to undermine the UNSC credibility. The American regime should take a listen from its total failures and stop shaming itself at UN, otherwise it will get isolated, even more than now," the spokesman said in a tweet on Saturday.

However, Majlesi believes that the Security Council's decision to reject the U.S. resolution has also highlighted Iran's isolation. He said that 11 countries have abstained on the U.S. resolution, underlining that these abstentions should not be considered as a success for Iran.

"The abstention vote cannot be interpreted as the consent of a particular country towards Iran, but rather as an indication of isolation while Iran is right," Majlesi noted.

A European resolution
It remains to be seen whether the U.S. would follow through on its promise to snapback UN sanctions. Some foreign media outlets suggest that the European signatories to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) could reach a compromise with the U.S. on the arms embargo.

The Europeans seem to be working with Russia and China as well as the U.S. to ensure that the nuclear deal is saved while the UN arms embargo is extended one way or another, according to a report published by the Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper.

Citing a diplomatic source, the newspaper reported that in a bid to prevent a "deep disagreement" between Europe and the U.S. over the snapback, the E3 — France, Germany, and the UK — are making efforts to prepare a separate draft resolution to impose international sanctions on Iran with regard to weapons, especially ballistic missiles, and Iran's "destabilizing" behavior in West Asia.

"The European side also fears that the

American move [to trigger the snapback], if successful, will completely destroy the nuclear deal, and thus free the Iranian establishment from its obligations under Resolution 2231," the newspaper quoted the source as saying on Saturday, adding that such a move means that the Security Council would find itself in a legal battle that would take some time to be resolved.

Meanwhile, the Europeans expressed readiness to work with other members of the Security Council to find a way out of the arms embargo dispute.

"The UK abstained on this resolution because it was clear that it would not attract the support of the Council and would not represent a basis for achieving consensus. It would therefore not contribute to improving security and stability in the region. Nevertheless, we stand ready to work with Council Members and JCPOA participants to seek a path forward that could secure the support of the Council," the UK mission to the UN said in a statement on Friday.

The statement also said, "We do not support a move to snapback at this time, which would be incompatible with our current efforts to preserve the JCPOA."

Pompeo frustrated as UN Security Council rejects to extend arms embargo on Iran

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday condemned the United Nations Security Council for rejecting a U.S. resolution to extend the arms embargo on Iran, Politico reported.

The council voted to allow the 13-year embargo to expire this October despite the protestations of the U.S., Israel and some Arab states.

"The Security Council's failure to act decisively in defense of international peace and security is inexcusable," Pompeo said in a statement.

Earlier Friday, Pompeo said allowing the embargo to expire would be "just nuts."

Russia and China — two permanent members of the Security Council — had opposed the push for an indefinite extension. The Russian delegation asserted an extension would violate a UNSC resolution that endorsed the Iran nuclear deal. It said the U.S. forfeited its right to negotiate the terms of an arms embargo under that resolution because it left the nuclear deal in 2018.

Russian President Vladimir Putin invited the heads of the Security Council, Germany and Iran to meet to "outline steps that can prevent confrontation or a spike in tensions in the UN Security Council," according to a statement from the country's delegation.

France, Germany and the United Kingdom had also pushed back on a U.S. threat to impose sanctions on Iran if the Security Council voted to let the embargo expire. The U.S. negotiated the right to do so under the 2015 Iranian

nuclear deal. But the European countries argued the U.S. was not in a position to use the so-called snapback option after withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018.

President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron spoke before the vote and discussed the measure to extend the arms embargo, according to a White House readout. But the French delegation ultimately voted to abstain, saying the measure "does not constitute an appropriate response to the challenges posed by the expiry of the embargo and because it is not likely to advance the security and stability of the region, as it cannot gather the support of the Council, nor is it a sufficient basis for working towards a consensus."

Speaking in Vienna on Friday, just as the Security Council started voting on the embargo extension, Pompeo brushed aside the Trump administration's contentious withdrawal from the nuclear deal, saying Iranian arms dealings were a separate issue.

"We don't think Iran has given any indication that it is in a place remotely where the world [should] sell them high-end weapon systems," he said.

In his statement, the secretary characterized the Security Council's vote as neglecting the needs of the Persian Gulf states and Israel, who had also requested an extension to the embargo.

"These countries know Iran will spread even greater chaos and destruction if the embargo expires, but the Security

Council chose to ignore them," Pompeo said in the statement. "The United States will never abandon our friends in the region who expected more from the Security Council."

Contrary to claims by Pompeo, Mutlaq bin Majed al-Qahtani, a senior Qatari Foreign Ministry official, has said that the latest anti-Iran stance of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council does not reflect the position of member states.

In an interview with al-Jazeera on Wednesday, he said that the council's positions are usually taken and announced at foreign ministerial meetings and that the latest stance of its General Secretariat on extension of arms embargo on Iran does not reflect the position of member states.

"We in Qatar do not think that current sanctions on Iran would lead to positive results and contribute to the resolution of crises. Crises must be overcome through dialogue and negotiations," Press TV quoted him as saying in the interview.

"Iran is a neighboring country with which we have good neighborly relations, and it enjoys a position that the State of Qatar, the government and the people value, especially during the unjust blockade on Qatar," Qahtani noted.

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.

Iran-China partnership to be better for Iran in short run: professor

POLITICAL TEHRAN — A political science professor at New Hampshire University says the partnership plan between China and Iran will be better for Iran than for China in the short run.

"In the short run, the deal between China and Iran will be better for Iran than for China, because Iran will be able to sell its oil at a time of low demand," Kurk Dorsey said in an interview with ILNA published on Saturday.

Dorsey, who is a member of the master in public policy faculty and a professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, said that in general, expanding trade with China will help the Iranian economy.

Iran and China are in the process of negotiating a long-term strategic cooperation plan that would bolster the two countries' ties for years to come. The plan isn't finalized yet. However, some of its details have been leaked to the press. According to the leaks, China will invest a whopping \$400 billion in various Iranian sectors including oil and gas. In exchange, Iran will ensure steady energy supplies to China for a period of 25 years at a discounted rate.

The U.S. has expressed concerns over the plan, claiming it would "destabilize" the region. In an interview with the Fox News network on August 2, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, "China's entry into Iran will destabilize the Middle East [West Asia]."

■ 'Trump mad at Iran for not doing what he wants'

Asked to comment on the U.S. government's sanctions on Iran, the professor said U.S. President Donald Trump is mad at the Iranian leadership for not doing what he wants.

"Trump believes that his supporters really hated the deal that President Obama made with Iran, so he cannot make a deal with Iran unless it makes him look like the winner," he said.

Professor Dorsey explained that Trump's foreign policy has been driven by two factors, namely doing the opposite of whatever Obama did and worrying less about U.S. values and worrying more about personal transactions with foreign leaders.

U.S. President Donald Trump quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions in history on Iran as part of his administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

On May 8, 2019, exactly one year after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, Tehran said its "strategic patience" is over and began to gradually reduce its commitments under the pact to both retaliate for Washington's departure and Europeans' failure to honor their commitments.

On January 5 of this year, Iran took a fifth and last step in reducing its commitments and said it would no longer observe any operational limitations on its nuclear industry, whether concerning the capacity and level of uranium enrichment, the volume of stockpiled uranium or research and development. However, Iran has insisted if the Europeans honor their obligations it will immediately reverse its decisions.

Iran's new ambassadors to six countries meet Rouhani

POLITICAL TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani met on Saturday with Iran's new ambassadors to Azerbaijan, Oman, North Korea, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Namibia and Georgia.

Rouhani wished the ambassadors success and asked them to introduce Iran's potential to investors as well as private and public sectors.

He also asked them to make efforts in line with expansion of relations with other countries.

Rouhani attached great importance to expansion of cooperation in areas of science and technology.

Following is the names of the ambassadors published by the presidential website:

Abbas Mousavi, ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan; Najafi Khoshroudi, ambassador to Oman; Esmaeilzadeh, ambassador to North Korea; Qelich Khan, ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina; Sharifi Sadati, ambassador to Namibia; and Ghasemi, ambassador to Georgia.

Pakistan Independence Day celebrated in Tehran

POLITICAL TEHRAN — An official ceremony to mark the 74th Independence Day of Pakistan was held at Pakistan House in Tehran on Friday.

According to a press release by Pakistan's embassy, members of Pakistani community in Iran and the officials of the embassy attended the ceremony.



Ambassador of Pakistan Rahim Hayat Qureshi cutting a cake on Pakistan's Independence Day in Tehran on August 14, 2020.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and to ensure safety requirements for those in audience, the ceremony was kept simple, it said.

The ceremony commenced with playing of national anthem and hoisting of the national flag by Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi. It was followed by reading out of messages of president and prime minister of Pakistan.

Recalling the historical importance of the day, Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi paid rich tributes to the founding father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other leaders who led the Pakistan movement and offered sacrifices for the creation of an independent Muslim state.

Milak border crossing between Iran, Afghanistan reopened

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Milak border crossing between Iran and Afghanistan in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan was reopened following the signing of a border agreement between the two neighbors, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said.

The mentioned border crossing was closed and reopened several times in the past few weeks due to a strike by Afghan truckers and their blockade of the return route of Iranian trucks and the Iranian retaliation.



According to Ruhollah Latifi, the signing ceremony was attended by officials from both sides including the Acting Deputy Governor of Sistan-Baluchestan Province for Economic Affairs Madana Zanganeh, and the head of Milak Customs.

Milak border terminal was first reopened earlier this month after a week of closure and over 70 Iranian truckers returned to the country, however, Afghan truck drivers once again closed the crossing in Afghanistan's Nimruz Province and Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan Province, only a couple of days after it was reopened.

Milak is a village in Jahanabad Rural District, in the central district of Hirmand County, Sistan-Baluchestan Province.

TEDPIX falls 72,000 points on Saturday

ECONOMY TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which is Iran's major stock exchange, lost 72,447 points on Saturday, which is the first day of the Iranian calendar week.

As reported by Tasnim news agency, the index closed at 1,902 million points at the end of the Saturday trades. TEDPIX has fallen two percent in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index, which had hit the record high of two million points on August 2, closed at 1,975 million points in the previous week.

As reported, the indices of Iran Khodro Investment Development Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Ghadir Investment Company, Bank Saderat, Mobarakeh Steel Company, and Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company were the major contributors to the index's rise in the past week.

TEDPIX, which had been experiencing an unprecedented trend of rising over the recent months, experienced several days of drop in the past week, and it has started the present week with a sharp decline as well.

The index had surpassed two million points on August 2 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).

It 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.



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

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

Last month, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand announced that the value of trades in Iran's stock market has risen 625 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year.

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

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

As announced by the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), the amount of liquidity absorbed by Iran's capital market reached 500 trillion rials (about \$12 billion) during the first quarter of the current year (March 20-June 20).

Hasan Qalibaf-Asl said, "It is while the total amount of liquidity entered into this market stood at 300 trillion rials (about \$7.14 billion) during the past year."

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

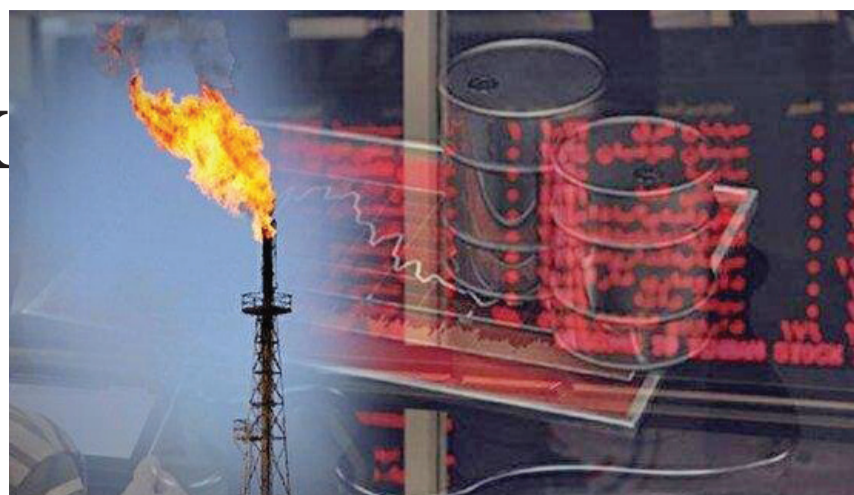
NIOC to offer \$476m worth of oil in IRENEX via salaf bonds

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Hosseini noted that each salaf contract has an equivalent value of one barrel of heavy crude oil which is priced at 9,446 million rials (about \$224) in Iran.

Mentioning the difference between the initial public offering of parallel Salaf contracts and a plan proposed by President Hassan Rouhani called oil pre-sale (or economic involvement), the official said the president's plan is currently going through the expert assessment processes and is not yet finalized.

This plan will also be implemented and the shares will be offered at the energy exchange as soon as it is approved by the relative assessing bodies, he added.

According to Hosseini, since the Iranian calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016), the private sector and the government have repeatedly financed their projects through offering standard parallel salaf contracts for basic assets like heavy crude oil, light crude oil, gas condensate,



gasoline, fuel oil, and electricity, through the energy exchange.

IRENEX is a commodity exchange in Iran

in which physical energy carriers (oil, gas, electricity) and commodity-based securities are exchanged.

Steel ingot production up 9% in 4 months on year

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Production of steel ingot in Iran increased nine 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, IRIB reported.

As reported, over 9.483 million tons of steel ingot was produced during the mentioned four-month period of this year, rising from 8.683 million tons of the product produced in the first four months of the previous year.

As previously reported, production of steel ingot in Iran increased eight 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.

Over 5.702 million tons of steel ingot was produced during the first quarter of this year.

Production of steel ingot in Iran is expected to surpass 30 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Darioush Esmaili has announced.

Saying that Iran is currently the world's 10th biggest steel producer, the official underscored that the country is planning to rise to 8th place by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025).

He said the Industry Ministry has it on the agenda to increase the country's steel ingot production to 55 million tons by 2025, for which 160 million tons of iron ore is required annually.



"Given the country's 2.8-billion-ton iron ore reserves, we need new explorations in this field, because when the annual steel ingot production capacity reaches 55 million tons, the current production levels of iron ore can only supply the industry for 12 to 13 years," the official stated.

He further noted that over 90 million tons of iron ore were produced in the country during the previous

Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) of which only seven percent was exported.

The reduction in the exports of iron ore came as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has urged the government to prevent the exports of raw minerals in order to be processed in the country for making products with more added value.

Following the leader's remarks, the government levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) as from September 23, 2019.

The ministry believes that the duty is going to encourage the production of more processed minerals such as pellets and concentrate instead of selling the raw minerals.

Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has announced that production of iron ore concentrate in Iran reached 47,306 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, registering a four-percent rise compared to the preceding year.

Iran's export of steel products in the past Iranian calendar year rose 27 percent compared to its preceding year.

As reported, the country's major steel producers managed to export about 7.33 million tons of the products in the previous year.

According to Esmaili, 10 years ago Iran exported more than 20 million tons of unprocessed iron ore and the figure fell to a maximum of six million tons last year.

CBI governor outlines measures for reforming banking system

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has outlined seven major steps that the bank has taken for reforming the country's banking system.

Abdolnaser Hemmati underlined the mentioned measures in a statement published in his Instagram account on Saturday, ISNA reported.

According to Hemmati, the first step in this regard has been organizing corrupted banks by taking actions like changing the managers of such banks, reducing the dominance of major shareholders over them, and reducing the reliance of such banks on withdrawals from the central bank.

The second measure taken by the CBI

was appointing a board of trustees for monitoring credit institutions and stopping the destructive activities of some corrupt institutions in the market.

The third step was the merger of banks and credit institutions affiliated with the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Bank Sepah.

"This plan is being implemented based on schedule and in collaboration with the General Staff of the Armed Forces and it currently is in the final stages," Hemmati wrote.

Formulation and implementation of a new monetary policy, which includes organizing the overdrafts by banks and reducing the volume of such overdrafts was another step taken by the CBI for

managing the banking system.

Amending the criteria for appointing new managers, in addition to the assessment of the banks' income and shares, with the aim of improving the supervision of the central bank on the banking system was the fifth measure mentioned by Hemmati.

The sixth step was establishing new rules in banking transactions including separation of commercial accounts from personal accounts, restrictions on transactions by natural persons, and the need to provide positive documents for legal entities as well as commercial accounts in order to conduct large transactions.

Preparing instructions on pursuing the banks' deferred overdue receivables



in compliance with the considerations and rules of Sharia was yet another step taken for amending the country's banking system, according to the CBI governor.

Over 60,000 tons of date exported to 52 countries

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran exported over 60,000 tons of date to 52 countries during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Ruhollah Latifi put the value of the four-month export at \$53.051 million, and mentioned Sweden, the Netherlands, Russia, Turkey, Qatar, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, Britain, Iraq, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, China, and Hungary as some of the export destinations of Iranian date, IRIB reported.

The official said that through importing \$9.729 million worth of date, Iraq was the major importer of the Iranian product, while Pakistan and Kazakhstan came next, importing \$7.647 million, and \$5.91 million worth of the product, respectively.

Every year, up to 1.2 million tons of various types of dates are produced in 203,763 hectares of land in Iran, making the country the second largest producer in terms of production and area under cultivation and the fifth largest exporter.

As previously announced by an IRICA official, the value of Iran's agricultural exports increased 6.8 percent



during the first four months of the current Iranian year, compared to the same period of time in the past year.

IRICA Deputy Head for Technical and Customs Affairs Mehrdad Jamal Orounqi put the four-month

agricultural exports at 2,706 million tons worth \$1.69 billion and said that the exports also show a 30-percent rise in terms of weight.

Last year, 2,074 million tons of agricultural products valued at \$1,582 billion had been exported during the first four months, the official added.

The acting head of Agriculture Ministry's Economic Affairs Department Shahrokh Shajari has put Iran's exports of the mentioned products at about 7,104 million tons worth \$5.8 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

In the previous year, over 6.941 million tons of agricultural and foodstuff products worth \$6.392 billion were also imported into the country, according to Shajari.

Watermelons, apples, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and shallots were the top five exported products in the previous year in terms of weight, while in terms of value, pistachios, apples, tomatoes, pistachio kernels, and watermelons were the five major export products, the official said.

Shajari further pointed to the major imported items in terms of weight, saying, corn, barley, soybean meal, soybean, and untreated sugar were the top five imported items, while in terms of value livestock corn, rice, barley, and soybeans were the top imported products.

Monthly red meat output rises 19%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced that production of red meat in Iran stood at 36,200 tons in the fourth month of the current Iranian calendar year (June 21-July 21), showing 19 percent growth compared to the same month in the past year, IRNA reported.

The SCI's report said that beef and veal had the lion's share in the country's red meat output during the fourth month with 20,400 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 12,400 tons, and red meat from other livestock with 709 tons.

As previously reported by the SCI, production of red meat in Iran stood at 30,400 tons in the third month of the current Iranian calendar year (May 21-June 20), indicating 39 percent growth compared to the same month in the past year.

The SCI's report said that beef and veal had the lion's share (56.4 percent) in the country's red meat output during the third month with 17,200 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 10,500 tons, goat meat with 2,100 tons, and red meat from other livestock with 623 tons. Production of red meat in Iran stood



at 94,900 tons in the last quarter of the past Iranian calendar year, indicating

16 percent growth compared to the same quarter in the preceding year.

Iran is among the leading consumers of red meat in the West Asia region with lamb being the most sought after.

However, the consumption per person is around a third of what is normally seen in countries like the U.S. and Australia, mainly due to the prohibition of pork in Islamic law.

The major part of Iran's red meat imports comes from countries like Brazil, where Iranian supervisors directly control culling methods to ensure they comply with religious rules.

Gas stations start gasoline vapor recovery

ENERGY TEHRAN — Head of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) has announced the implementation of the first phase of a plan called KAHAB for recovery of gasoline vapor in the country's gas stations, Shana reported.

The KAHAB project (the acronym stands for reduction, conduction, transmission, and recycling of gasoline vapor in Persian), is currently being implemented in all the gas stations of the capital Tehran, Keramat Veis-Karami told the national TV.

According to the official, the plan is also being conducted for the three oil storages in the three corners of Tehran.

"The northwest oil storage is already equipped with this vapor recycling system, the system for the other two, namely Rey oil storage and the northeast oil storage has also been financed and we are in the design stage to award the projects to the contractors," Veis-Karami explained.

The official expressed hope that the contractor for the mentioned projects would be selected in the current Iranian calendar year



(ends in March 2021).

He noted that the KAHAB program is going to be implemented in three phases and the first phase of which has already been implemented in the country's gas stations especially in the capital Tehran.

At first, KAHAB was established to pursue environmental goals, but now it has been considered as an economic plan.

The project entails equipping about 80 depots, 3400 gasoline refueling stations, and 10,000 road tankers across the country with the recovery system.

The evaporation of organic compounds in the gasoline will cause physiological damage, including damage to the human central nervous system, nose, throat and eye irritation, genetic mutation, premature delivery and etc.

Also, harmful environmental effects such as acid rain, global climate changing, earth's temperature increasing, the phenomenon of photochemical smog creation, and ozone layer depletion arise from these compounds.

Volatile products in contact with Oxygen evaporate and enter the air.

South Pars refinery 2 gas output up 2% in 4 months

ENERGY TEHRAN — The supervisor of the second refinery of Iran's giant South Pars gas field has said the refinery's gas production has increased by two percent in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21) due to the rise in its received feedstock.

According to Hossein Baghban, the increase in the supply of feedstock to the refinery in the mentioned four months has come from the rise in the production capacity of the field's phases 6, 7, and 8 which send their gas to the mentioned refinery for processing, ISNA reported.

Reducing the downtime of process units and improving process conditions are also on the agenda to realize the goals of further increasing the refinery's output in the current Iranian calendar year (ends in March 2021).

He said that timely overhaul operations and the realization of all overhaul programs based on schedule are also among the important activities planned for the current year to sustain

production in phases 2 and 3.

South Pars Gas Complex is comprised of 14 gas refineries in Southern Iran that are currently processing the gas extracted from the country's giant South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

The mentioned gas field 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, currently divided into 24 standard phases in the Iranian side, 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.

All the offshore operations of the development project of the field, except for phase 11, were completed in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).



Renewables generate more energy than fossil fuels in Europe for 1st time

Over a fifth of Europe's energy was generated by solar panels and wind turbines in the first half of 2020, Euro News reported.

Solar and wind energy generation was higher in some European countries. Denmark came out on top, generating 64 percent of its energy from these renewable sources, closely followed by Ireland (49 percent) and Germany (42 percent), according to the report from independent climate think-tank Ember.

In a half-year review released in July by the think tank, all renewables - including wind, solar, hydroelectricity and bioenergy - were found to have exceeded fossil fuel generation for the first time ever. They produced 40 percent of the EU's power from January to June with fossil fuels contributing 34 percent.

Although Europe had one of the largest contributions from wind and solar, globally



a tenth of all energy was generated by these sources during the first half of 2020. This is a rise of 14 percent compared to the same period last year.

"Countries across the world are now on the same path - building wind turbines and solar panels to replace electricity from coal

and gas-fired power plants," says Dave Jones, senior electricity analyst for Ember.

Last year saw the use of coal to generate electricity around the world fall by a record 3 percent. In part due to COVID-19, coal generation in the first half of 2020 again broke records with a drop of 8.3 percent. In the EU, the drop was higher, as coal energy generation fell by nearly a third.

Despite this, coal still produced a third of the year's electricity in the first six months of the year and experts warn that more dramatic cuts to fossil fuel use are needed to limit climate change.

"To keep a chance of limiting climate change to 1.5 degrees, coal generation needs to fall by 13 percent every year this decade," says Jones.

"The fact that, during a global pandemic,

coal generation has still only fallen by 8 percent show just how far off track we still are."

Most of the gains this year came from solar and wind projects built in 2019 and the report highlights that the impact of COVID-19 could see it fall again in the near future.

With many projects delayed by the pandemic, the global capacity to produce electricity from renewable sources is predicted to drop by up to 13 percent overall this year according to the International Energy Agency. This would be the lowest level since 2015.

Ember says that focusing on a clean energy transition can help that to bounce back but without investments in renewable energy as part of economic recovery, "wind and solar will struggle to achieve the levels of growth required this decade to limit warming to 1.5 degrees."

OPEC+ committee expected to take 'wait-and-see' approach on output

Prices for oil have stuck to a tight trading range since early July, with both U.S. and global benchmark crude futures holding ground above the \$40-a-barrel mark—a credit to cuts in crude output by major producers who are set to discuss the latest developments and challenges in the market next week.

According to Market Watch, the Joint OPEC-Non-OPEC Ministerial Monitoring Committee, or JMMC, which monitors compliance with production cuts among members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies, known collectively as OPEC+, is scheduled to hold a meeting via video conference on Tuesday. That will follow Monday's meeting of the Joint Technical Committee, which will provide the JMMC with a report on recent oil market developments.

The gatherings next week come as oil prices have managed to find some balance in the wake of the OPEC+ decision last month to allow production cuts to taper from a record level starting in August. Prices have had a tumultuous run this year, with benchmark West Texas Intermediate oil futures dropping in April into negative territory for the first time in history.

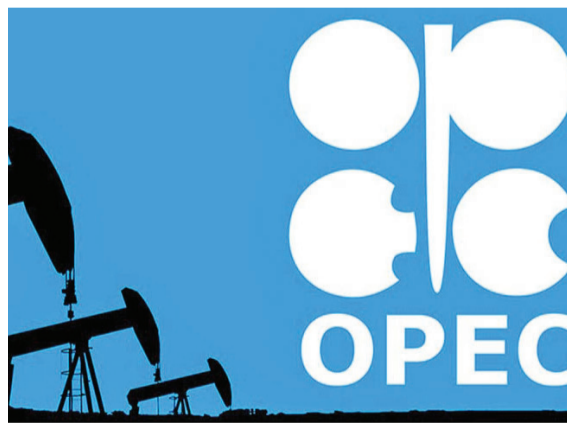
"The coordinated effort by OPEC+ and the market-driven curtailment in the U.S. have both played a big role in balancing the market," said Greg Liebl, senior investment strategist at Parametric Portfolio Associates. Also, "as many lockdowns have been eased or lifted and economies have restarted, oil demand has come in a bit better than expected," which he says may be a bigger story behind the oil-price move.

At the July JMMC meeting, OPEC+ said it would allow record production cuts of 9.7 million barrels per day to decrease to 7.7 million barrels per day starting in August. That was in line with a previous OPEC+ agreement to gradually taper the reductions. OPEC+ had previously extended the 9.7 million-barrel cut by a month through July.

The reductions weren't quite as large as they initially appeared. Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said actual cuts, including reductions from countries that agreed to compensate for producing oil above their quota limits, would be at roughly 8.1 million to 8.3 million barrels per day.

■ OPEC+, U.S. output cuts

Meanwhile, OPEC+ production quota compliance had already fallen to 96 percent in July, from 106 percent a month earlier, according to a survey from S&P Global Platts,



with collective production among OPEC+ up by 1.1 million barrels per day.

Oil prices have held ground close to where they stood on the day of the last JMMC meeting. Front-month WTI futures CLU20, -0.02 percent CL1, -0.02 percent settled at \$41.20 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange on July 15. They settled Thursday at \$42.24, not far from that mid-July level. Brent crude BRNV20, +0.33 percent BRN1, +0.33 percent, meanwhile, traded at above \$43 in mid-July, and finished Thursday at \$44.96 a barrel on ICE Futures Europe.

"We have now equalized in a 'new normal' range of \$40-\$45 per barrel," said Basil Karampelas, managing director at advisory firm SierraConstellation Partners, adding that the price range reflects overall decreased demand, as well as the curtailment in U.S. production.

The U.S. doesn't take part in the OPEC+ agreement, but low prices have contributed to expectations for a drop in U.S. crude-oil production to 11.26 million barrels per day this year, according to an August report from the Energy Information Administration. The agency's crude output forecast is down 3.2 percent from its previous forecast. For 2019, it estimated output at 12.25 million barrels per day.

U.S. production cuts have helped to buoy oil prices quarter to date, with WTI futures up nearly 8 percent, while Brent has gained around 9 percent.

"The improvement in oil prices have been driven by fun-

damentals and an improving balance between supply and demand," said Stacey Morris, director of research at Alerian.

OPEC+ record production cuts began in May and were "complemented by curtailments in the U.S., Canada, and other countries," she said. "Meanwhile, demand has steadily recovered," with U.S. gasoline demand "fairly stable" since mid-June at around 8.5 million to 9 million barrels per day

■ COVID-19 demand impact

Still, overall, oil demand has been hit hard by COVID-19's impact on the global economy.

In a monthly report released Wednesday, OPEC forecast total global oil demand at 90.6 million barrels a day this year, with demand growth down 9.1 million barrels a day from a year earlier and 100,000 barrels a day lower than last month's forecast. It cited mainly to lower economic activity levels in developing economies. Similarly, the International Energy Agency on Thursday said it expects 2020 global demand to contract by 8.1 million barrel a day year on year to 91.9 million barrels a day.

OPEC said its forecast "assumes that COVID-19 will largely be contained globally, with no further major disruptions to the global economy."

"OPEC has to convince its members to toe the line for the time being as any cheating by cartel members will send prices tumbling,"—Basil Karampelas, SierraConstellation Partners

In the near term, Karampelas said the virus is a "big downward influence on prices." The longer it exists as a problem, the more people will get used to working from home, traveling less and not going to things like conferences, he said. "This will have decades-long effects on demand for motor fuels, aviation fuels and natural gas that powers and provides air conditioning for office buildings."

With the latest OPEC report pointing to steep decline in world oil demand this year, the JMMC will likely take a "cautious wait and see approach, which means trying to adhere to current supply cuts with perhaps an easing of the existing cut by perhaps 500,000 to 1 million barrels per day," said Karampelas.

"There is clearly a concern over a second wave of infections and the fact that global stocks of crude and products are at high levels," he said. "The key issue is compliance," and "OPEC has to convince its members to toe the line for the time being as any cheating by cartel members will send prices tumbling."

Iran's 1st floating solar power plant launched

TEHRAN (Shana) — Mahabad Petrochemical Complex has successfully launched Iran's first floating solar power plant by relying on local capabilities and technical savvy.

According to the plant, the company spent six months conducting research on the project.

The capacity of this power plant is 200 kWh per day, which can reach 500 kWh if the project's second phase comes online. The power plant will be connected to the national power grid within the next few months.



Over 80 percent of the equipment used in this power plant have been localized and for the first time, installed on the surface of water storage pool of the facility. In addition to preventing water evaporation, the efficiency of the power plant has also been enhanced by 13 to 15 percent by cooling at the surface water level.

One of the major advantages of this plan is the prevention of water evaporation and the use of desalination plants for areas that are far from the national grid and have problems in terms of energy and power infrastructure. In addition to the construction benefits, this project is also economically viable for the investor.

The estimated cost for this project is IRR 8,500 million, whose return on investment is less than five years with the support of the government. Also, this solar power plant is supposed to provide the electricity needed by 400 rural households in the second phase.

U.S. oil rig count falls despite stabilizing crude prices

Baker Hughes reported on Friday that the number of combined oil and gas rig count in the US fell yet again this week by 3, to 244, as the pandemic continues to batter the oil and gas industry that is coming off a second-quarter financial season filled with billions in industry writedowns and projections of weaker-than-projected oil demand growth going forward.

Total oil and gas rigs in the United States are now down by 691 compared to this time last year.

The number of oil rigs slipped for the week by 4 rigs for the second week in a row, according to Baker Hughes data, bringing the total to 172, compared to the 770 active oil rigs this time last year. The Permian Basin alone lost five rigs this week, with Ardmore Woodford losing one, and Arkoma Woodford gaining one. The Permian now has just 117 rigs, compared to 441 a year ago.

The total number of active gas rigs in the United States increased by one, landing at 70 total rigs. This compares to 165 rigs a year ago.

To compare active rigs with supply figures, the EIA's estimate for oil production in the United States fell for the week ending August 7—the last week for which there is data, at 10.7 million barrels of oil per day. Oil production in the United States is 2.4 million bpd less than its all-time high reached earlier this year.

Canada's overall rig count rose this week by 7, reaching 54 active rigs. Oil and gas rigs in Canada are now down 88 year on year.

The Frac Spread Count in North America, provided by Primary Vision, fell last week, to 76 from 80. In terms of activity per basin, Primary Vision's Mark Rossano notes that "the demand for completion crews remains range bound with support in the Appalachia and Permian basins. Pricing headwinds and reduction in activity in other basins will keep the ceiling in place as the U.S. struggles to find a footing."

Oil prices were trading down on the day on Friday despite tensions between the United States and Iran, and reports of decreases to crude oil inventories in the U.S.

At 12:57 pm EDT, WTI was trading down 0.66 percent at \$41.95—roughly \$0.30 up on the week. Brent was trading down 0.58 percent on the day, at \$44.70, a lackluster \$0.20 per barrel higher than last Friday.

At 1:08 pm, WTI was trading at \$41.97 per barrel, with Brent changing hands at \$44.75 per barrel.

Asia LNG prices at over 6-month high on Gorgon concerns, cargo buying

Asian spot liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices rose to more than a six-month high this week on concerns over production from Australia's Gorgon plant and demand from some buyers in the region.

The average LNG price for September delivery into northeast Asia LNG-AS was estimated between \$3.60 and \$3.80 per million British thermal units (mmBtu), \$0.60 per mmBtu above last week's level. The price for October delivery was seen between \$3.80 and \$4.00 per mmBtu.

This is for the first time since end-January when prices increased to levels close to \$4.00 per mmBtu, Reuters data showed.

Gorgon Train 2 has been shut for maintenance since May, with its restart date delayed to September from July. Two other trains were also ordered to be inspected after safety concerns were raised.

Offtakers from the plant have likely bought several cargoes to replace Gorgon volumes in the past two weeks, traders said.

Some buyers in Japan, China and India have also been buying cargoes, but said overall demand was still subdued, they added.

"There is a slight uptick in demand, but not a huge amount and supply seems to be there," one of them said.

China's Shenzhen Energy has bought a September delivery cargo at \$3.40-\$3.50 per mmBtu, two industry sources said.

Indian Oil Corp has purchased a late September cargo at around \$3.40 per mmBtu, two other trade sources said.

India's Reliance Industries has bought an October delivery cargo at around a \$0.15 discount to S&P Global Platts Japan Korea Marker (JKM) price and a November cargo at a \$0.45 discount to JKM, the two trade sources said.

Bangladesh state-run Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company plans to issue a tender for country's first spot cargo to be delivered next month.

Second Announcement

In the name of God
Shahid Tondgooyan petrochemical company

Call for Tender Tender No: 99/473

Shahid Tondgooyan Petrochemical Company (STPC) intends to purchase of 28MT Diphyl oil as follows according to specifications described in tender documents through qualified manufacturers.

Subject:

It is the purchase of 28MT Diphyl oil required by the tendering body based on Indent: Wts-9830643

Location of delivery:

Phase #1, site #4, Petrochemical Economic Special Zone(PESZ), Bandar Imam Khomeini, Khuzestan province, Iran. Tel: 065226-52479

Duration of the project:

1. Partial shipment is **not allowed**.
2. The maximum delivery time is 2 months after purchase order.

Guaranty price for participate in tender is 1,059,000,000 Rials.

Applicants for participation in tender must pay the amount of equivalent 1,059,000,000 Rials to the account no 1495230562 at Mellat bank in the name of tendering body (STPC) or submit bid bond.

Place & deadline of receive tender document:

Legal & contracts affair, Phase #1, (STPC), site #4, Petrochemical Economic Special Zone(PESZ), Bandar Imam Khomeini, Khuzestan province, Iran.

It shall be given latest by 16:00 pm on **22/Aug/2020**

Place & deadline of submission of price envelopes & evaluation forms:

Commission, Phase #1, (STPC), site #4, Petrochemical Economic Special Zone(PESZ), Bandar Imam Khomeini, Khuzestan province, Iran.

It should be submitted latest by 16:00 pm on **23/Sep/2020**

Place & date of opening of A&B envelopes:

Mention address: Conference room of main office—**11:00** on **04/Oct/2020**

All the bidders will be invited to attend in the meeting of opening the price envelopes.

Advertisement is visible in mention address by tender ID 98/448 & www.stpc.ir

Note: all the details of mentioned tender are in the tender documents.

Contacts:

You can contact any of the addresses below:

Email: Moradpour.a@stpc.ir

Tel: 061521-72045

Fax: 06152172043

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

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

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UAE and S. Arabia are part of the Zionist project in West Asia: Saudi analyst

➔ "Bin Zayed knows well that if Trump loses in November's presidential election, the new American administration will work to exclude him and Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, as all candidates competing with Trump consider bin Zayed and bin Salman accountable for their crimes in Yemen and in several Arab countries," he maintains.

Pointing to the case of the Emirati girl who was killed in prison in the UAE while she was tied to a torture bed, and Jamal Khashoggi, who was dismembered with a chainsaw in the Saudi consulate in Turkey, Hashim says, "We should not be surprised by the normalization of (ties between) the Emirates and Saudi Arabia with Israel."

"They are basically part of the Zionist project in the Middle East (West Asia), and it can help to show their true faces to all Arabs and Muslims," the Saudi analyst says.

Asked about Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah's speech on Friday night, Hashim notes that the normalization of ties between Arab states and Israel cannot undermine the region's resistance movement.

"The Axis of Resistance has a strong base not only in Lebanon but among all Arab and Islamic peoples around the world," the Saudi writer emphasizes.

"The word of secretary-general of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement was a strong statement, including a warning to the enemies and their allies, as it hinted that Israel might have a role in the massive Beirut blast.

Sayed Hassan Nasrallah warned in his speech if Israeli involvement is proven, the



Zionist regime would receive a response as big as the explosion that could have occurred if the entire amount of ammonium had exploded.

Hashim maintains that Nasrallah's word brings peace and tranquility into the region and lifts fear in everyone's hearts and gives them confidence, especially when he spoke about ships and soldiers in Beirut port and said, "Do not be afraid. The resistance is present, and we are stronger."

Hashim points to the victory of Hez-

lah in the 33-Day War as a great achievement for every Arab and Muslim that no one can deny it throughout history.

"The Zionist army, which calls itself invincible army that has defeated all Arab armies, was defeated in Lebanon by Islamic resistance movement Hezbollah which expelled Israeli forces from Lebanon and humiliated it," the Saudi analyst recalls.

"All the Arabs and Muslims will protect this victory and celebrate it every year to declare their support for the Islamic

Resistance Hezbollah in confronting the American-Zionist plans in the Middle East (West Asia)."

Hashim also says the U.S. is not able to defeat Hezbollah militarily, either through the Zionist regime's army or through terrorist organizations in Syria and northern Lebanon.

"Therefore, it sought to destabilize Lebanon, hoping to create an atmosphere that would turn against Hezbollah at home," he explains. "It failed and worked through its agents inside Lebanon to set off a revolution inside Lebanon to disarm Hezbollah, but it has also failed, and any attempt to disarm Hezbollah will be fruitless."

Regarding the American reaction to the Beirut explosion, Hashim says the U.S. administration that does not care about the lives of the Lebanese or anyone else tried to exploit the disaster in Lebanon, which caused great damages to parts of the Lebanese capital and led to the death of more than 200 people and injured 5,000.

"From the moment of the explosion, the U.S. has been working to politically exploit this tragedy against Hezbollah and its allies in Lebanon and against the Lebanese state, neglecting the disaster," Hashim stresses.

"America just wants to incite the Lebanese people in the streets against Hezbollah through its allies and agents in the Persian Gulf states and media outlets," the Saudi analyst says. "But as Secretary-General of Hezbollah Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said they have failed, and they will be disappointed."

Britain was once one of the world's major beneficiaries of slavery

Britain was once one of the world's best-established nations of slavery, with the likes of London, Liverpool, Glasgow and Bristol, all benefiting from the profits of the trade. Unfortunately, the ugly face of slavery has not gone away from the UK. From its horrendous past of running the slave trade to the toppling of the Robert Colston statue in Bristol, to the reality of the modern-day slave trade in Britain.

The UK is still home to forced labor, entrapment, and exploitation, taking advantage of those who are less fortunate than others or are at the height of their vulnerability.

The whole issue of domestic servitude is very much a live issue within this country, and the British government itself estimates that there is a minimum of 3000 people at any one time in forced labor and slavery across the UK.

Aidan McQuade, Director, Anti-Slavery UK
Why is such a form of trade still so prominent in Britain?

The answer is simple; in fact, it is in line with one of the principles of economics, namely supply and demand. For as long as people want to buy the services and products produced and delivered by forced labor, forced labor shall prevail.

Whereas there are many charities in Britain providing support to the victims of trafficking and forced labor, the convictions against those running the operations are clearly not enough to put a stop to the crime, or of sufficient deterrence value.

With the law unable to fully prevent the exploitation taking place, when arrests do come, they hit the headlines, but one can only imagine just how many cases go undetected, leaving those trapped in modern-day slavery, lost in the shadows.

How widespread is it?

Britain is home to at least 100,000 modern-day slaves. According to a survey, that is ten times more than the official government figures, with estimates that 90% of those caught in the slavery matrix remain undetected.

According to the National Office of Statistics, reports of modern-day slavery to the police have risen from 909 in 2016 to 5,144 cases in 2019, meaning the 500% increase clearly shows signs of the UK's situation is getting worse.

With the potential number of victims being in excess of 100,000 people a mere 340 flagged cases resulted in a Crown Prosecution Service, or CPS charging decision, with 273 of these only resulting in a final indictable decision, showing that there is still not enough being done in Britain to end the practice.

Post Brexit dilemma

Having voted to leave the European Union, Britain has found itself in a quandary. The mainstay of food sold in Britain comes from the EU and further afield. Most of the food grown in the UK is either planted, raised, grown, picked, or packed by low-skilled Eastern European workers.

Hence, this market is at most risks from the use and exploitation of people trafficked into the position and forced to complete long working hours, living in poor conditions, and being paid a pittance for their efforts.



Hope to despair

For many in Eastern Europe, the prospect of living and working in the UK was an ideal opportunity to escape the lack of jobs and difficult conditions that they lived in back home, riding the wave of a promise that would not materialize.

But upon arrival, the reality soon sets in, as many of the now clearly trafficked people, wake up to the notion of worse quality of life and living conditions than they had before.

With passports taken, money owed, and finally succumbing to the fact that the job they were promised did not exist, the ability to break free from the controlling prison-like conditions set by the traffickers, became impossible.

The story described is all too common in the UK, with many people coming to Britain under similar circumstances, being forced to abide by traffickers rules, and then exploited.

The UK government is no angel either when it realized that Brexit had seen multiple Europeans leave Britain, and the British themselves unwilling to work in the fields, Boris was forced to ship in 100's of Romanian fruit pickers to stop the food rotting, and the nation going hungry, no doubt, the Romanians were paid a pittance.

The sex industry

The 'World's Oldest Profession,' Prostitution, is no doubt one of the most exploitable and controlling businesses in the world.

The UK is no exception when it comes to the rule, with many brothels and sex workers in the UK are caught in very much the same trap as the fruit pickers, factory workers, and construction workers in forced labor in the UK only difference... the sheer numbers, with more sex workers in forced labor than any other industry.

Much like elsewhere in the world, many people are brought into the UK from abroad, with the UK seeing many from countries such as Albania, Romania, Hungary, and China.

However, many sex workers in the UK are not from abroad and are exploited from an early age in the UK, with gangs and peers often taking advantage of vulnerable girls, and boys, to achieve their aim.

Targets for exploitation

The United Kingdom is a destination for men, women, and children from impoverished countries who are subjected to human trafficking for the purpose of sexual

slavery.

Upon arrival in the UK, their passport might be taken away, and they may be told they need to pay off the trafficking fee debt before they can leave. Violence and threats are commonplace.

Vulnerable British people are also targeted, especially children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In general, economic migrants, refugees, vulnerable children, and teenagers are the prime targets of sex traffickers.

Because of its secretive nature, producing an accurate estimate of how many people have been subject to sex slavery in the UK is difficult.

But in 2019, it was estimated that 13 thousand people were living in such circumstances. It is believed the actual figure is likely to be double the projected estimate.

What we can say with certainty is that the numbers keep rising each year.

Sadly, this is a multinational, multi-billion-dollar industry that thrives on control and fear.

And, to make matters worse, the system in the UK is not currently set up to support people who become entangled in exploitation. Only charities provide some help, which, in most instances, is not even close to enough.

Promises and lies

Much like those who control the factory workers and fruit pickers, sexual exploitation in Britain is no different, with victims being promised perks and benefits, not knowing what they were getting themselves into.

On a wider scale, many places that offer sex, populated mainly by trafficked and exploited women, are to be found across the UK, with London's Soho being one of the most infamous of such districts, hidden behind the false facades of legitimate massage parlors, but in truth, just another den of forced labor, with vulnerable and exploited victims at the forefront.

Contributory factors

So how do people end up caught in the trap of being a modern-day slave? There are unlimited reasons why people become vulnerable, be this through poverty, conflict, lack of opportunity, or many others.

Poverty is no doubt one of the main factors that drive people to desperate situations, with many of the modern-day slaves in the UK believing that by coming to Britain to work, they can send money back home to their own countries and pay off the traffickers, as well as leaving money to their families, to bring them out of poverty.

Others are simply after work as they do not have the opportunities back in their home countries. But even if they do find normal jobs, the trafficking and exploitation continue.

The reality is that exploitation takes many forms and shapes, be it through debt bonding, forced labor, sexual exploitation or many others, but the notion of being stuck in a terrifying feeling for those caught, stuck in a foreign country, ruled by an organized gang, and essentially, being exploited in a way no different from the terrible slave trade era that saw Africans shipped around the world as slaves, with the alarming fact, that Britain, is still involved in modern slavery today.

(Source: Press TV)

The UAE makes peace with Israel's war on the Palestinians

By Marwan Bishara

After years of informal normalization, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has finally reached a formal "peace agreement" with Israel that paves the way for a strategic relationship between the two countries under the auspices of the Trump Administration.

The agreement rewards Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu for their protracted assault on the Palestinians over the past four years. Once signed and implemented, it is likely to embolden Netanyahu's coalition, deepen Israel's occupation and strengthen Israel's alliance with Arab autocrats.

But Western media outlets welcomed the "peace agreement" as a "historic" breakthrough.

And UAE leaders have justified their rapprochement with Israel under the pretext of halting Israeli annexation of Arab territories, helping the Palestinians achieve their goals of independence, and promoting peace in West Asia.

Killing with kindness

The UAE may hope to take credit for "stopping further annexation of Palestinian territories," but Netanyahu's plans to illegally annex a third of the occupied West Bank was derailed long before the de facto leader of the UAE, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, stepped into the fray.

Overwhelming Arab and international opposition have discouraged the Trump administration from giving Netanyahu the green light to annex, when even Netanyahu's own coalition partner, Benny Gantz, is opposed to it.

In fact, the Emiratis have merely provided Trump and Netanyahu with a ladder to climb down their reckless proposal.

Moreover, annexation, which is halted only temporarily, is merely a byproduct of the real problem; Israel's occupation and illegal settlements, which are likely to worsen thanks to the UAE's appeasement.

Still, the UAE insists that it is driven by solidarity with the Palestinian people and that it will continue to "forcefully advocate for ... their dignity, their rights, and their own sovereign state."

This is "chutzpah", Emirati style.

The Emiratis have long kept the Palestinians in the dark about their covert security cooperation with Israel. They have not consulted or coordinated with the Palestinian leadership when normalizing their relations with Israel or announcing their intent to sign a peace agreement. In fact, they've long turned their backs on the Palestinian plight, and continue to undermine Palestinian unity by hosting and supporting a renegade "Palestinian leader," Mohammad Dahlan.

In short, Palestine is not much of serious consideration for the UAE. If anything, the announcement's timing was meant to help Trump and Netanyahu, who is struggling politically and legally.

So, it is no surprise that the Palestinians of all walks of society and polity have unequivocally denounced the Emirati move, calling it "betrayal", "aggression," and a sell-out of the Palestinian struggle for freedom.

After all, how on earth could the appeasement of a regime that occupies and oppresses Palestine be good for the Palestinians?

If anything, Israel will exploit the UAE and potentially other Arab attempts at rapprochement in order to expand its annexation and pressure the Palestinian people into submission.

Despite its denials, the UAE has violated the Arab "land for peace" consensus, which commits Arab states to pursue peace and normalize relations, but only after Israel withdraws from occupied Palestinian and Arab lands.

It sacrificed one of the very few consensual issues between Arab leaders and their people who overwhelmingly oppose the normalization of relations with Israel before Palestinian rights are fully restored.

The Emiratis try to justify their move on precedence; if Egypt and Jordan can have normal relations with Israel, why not the UAE?

Egypt fought four major wars against Israel and signed to a peace deal only after Israel agreed to withdraw from all Egyptian lands. Jordan has also fought three wars against Israel and signed its peace agreement only after the Palestinians signed theirs.

But since then, Israel has walked away from its commitments to the Palestinians and deepened its occupation of Palestine.

On the other hand, the UAE does not share borders with and has never fought a war against Israel. It has not been threatened or occupied by Israeli forces either. Why is Abu Dhabi rushing to appease Israel when Netanyahu is tightening his grip on Palestine and rejecting the "Two States" solution?

UAE leaders claim the Arabs could achieve more through diplomacy and peace than posturing and war.

But this is a false dichotomy. Needless to say, peace is preferable to war. But false peace that's based on cynical strategic calculus and ignores justice and human rights is destined to lead to more not less conflict.

Throughout its history, Israel consistently used diplomatic openings from Arab states to deepen its occupation, and made concessions only under pressure. Not only has the UAE received nothing in return for its "historic rapprochement," but Israel will also gain unfettered access to one of the richest Arab markets.

Towards another regional war

The Emirati regime is the most pro-war in the region, rivaled only by Israel. Its destructive war in Yemen, its proxy war in Libya, its destabilizing policies towards Tunisia, Turkey, and Qatar, and its support for regional dictators like Syria's Bashar al-Assad and Egypt's Abdel Fattah el-Sisi all testify to Abu Dhabi's disregard for peace and drive for war.

To say Abu Dhabi punches above its weight when it comes to stoking the flames of conflict in West Asia is an understatement. The divisive, destabilizing, and anti-democratic policies it pursues in conjunction with Saudi Arabia are paralyzing the region and bankrupting its states.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia's opposition to the Arab Spring and to any form of democracy in the region, and their deep hostility towards all popular, progressive, liberal or Islamist movements, put them at the helm of counter-revolutionary forces throughout West Asia and North Africa. They may not be winning anywhere, but they are also ensuring that everybody else loses in the process.

In sum, the UAE is "bandwagon" with Israel and the United States, in the hope of establishing a trilateral U.S.-Israeli-Arab strategic alliance to contain Turkey's influence and tame or destroy the Iranian regime.

In other words, the UAE is seeking a cynical alliance, not benevolent peace, with Israel.

If Trump is reelected President, this is sure to produce, not regional peace and prosperity, but more instability and conflict throughout the region.

Those celebrating the "historical peace agreement" may soon discover it is nothing more than a drive towards another regional conflict or, worse, war.

Real peace will come after Israel agrees to withdraw from all Arab lands, gives up its hegemonic ambitions and its nuclear weapons, and allows for full Palestinian freedom and self-determination in the Palestinian homeland, paving the way for normalization of relations with much if not all of the Arab and Muslim world.

Now that's what you call a historic breakthrough worth celebrating.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Iran preparing to file a legal complaint against South Korea: report

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) is preparing to lodge an official complaint against South Korea, says a report, as Seoul refuses to return Iranian funds blocked in the country allegedly to comply with U.S. sanctions on Tehran.

The semi-official ILNA news agency cited backchannel information in a Saturday report saying that the CBI has already kicked off the process to

launch an official complaint against two South Korean banks that have frozen nearly \$8.5 billion of Iranian funds under pressure from the United States. It insisted, however, that Iranian government authorities view a legal action against South Korea as a last resort, meaning that an actual complaint by the CBI may take months to come.

A senior businessman involved in

trade relations between Iran and South Korea also said that such ties had reduced to almost zero in light of Seoul's growing conformity to U.S. sanctions.

"Under these conditions, it's natural and logical that we pursue the case of a complaint," Hossein Tanhayi told ILNA, adding that major South Korean companies, once major investors in Iran, have left the country under

U.S. pressure.

Reports show that Iran has not been pleased with South Korea's proposals to reimburse a small portion of the funds through sending medicine and food shipments to Iran.

The ILNA report said that Tehran has refused to process a \$0.5-million cargo of medicine that South Korea has prepared to send to Iran.

Tehran to host online meeting on agritourism

TOURISM TEHRAN — Tehran province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department General will be hosting an online meeting on agritourism on Wednesday, ISNA reported.

Agritourism is a relatively new branch of the travel industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas. Farm/ranch recreation refers to activities conducted on private agricultural lands, which might include fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays, educational activities, etc.



The meeting aims at promoting this new branch of tourism as well as discussing its capacities in Tehran province, provincial tourism chief Ali Rafiei said on Saturday.

Geographical diversity in Tehran province has caused agriculture and horticulture to have a high variety, therefore, the development of agricultural tourism can be very successful in this province, the official added.

He also noted that paying attention to agricultural tourism, while preserving gardens and agricultural lands in Tehran province, can provide better situation for the farmers and gardeners and can boost tourism in the region.

Back in June, deputy tourism chief Vali Teymouri announced that permits would be granted to eligible tour operators to launch their agritourism businesses, aiming to set certain standards in a move to ensure the quality of such services in the country.

"In order to develop employment-related areas of tourism, the Tourism Ministry has prepared several guidelines and technical criteria concerning nomadic tourism camps, licenses related to maritime tourism, natural parks, etc., which will create good employment in the future...", he added.

Some experts believe that in addition to the customer services jobs, agritourism pays special attention to the production sector, saying "For this reason, agricultural tourism is much more important and practical than other branches of tourism because it creates a new chain and diversity in the field of production and services."

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

Agritourism is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets, non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside.

Rural tourism, however, differs from agritourism in two ways. First, rural tourism enterprises do not necessarily occur on a farm or ranch, or at an agricultural plant, they do not generate supplemental income for the agricultural enterprise.

To cite an example, we could refer to saffron farms in northeast Iran that are going to fame as a new destination for agritourism. Iranian Saffron is known as the "red gold", saffron is a magical ingredient in Persian culture, from aromatic foods and colorful desserts to the physical and spiritual medicine.

Safavid-era fortress in central Iran undergoes restoration

TOURISM TEHRAN — Rostam historical fortress in the city of Bafran, Na'in county, central Isfahan province, has undergone some rehabilitation works, a provincial tourism chief has said.

Due to severe erosion and the collapse of parts of the Safavid-era (1501-1736) fortress, it was in serious danger of destruction and damage, Mahmud Madanian said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

A budget of 2 billion rials (about \$50,000) has been allocated to the restoration project, which aims to repair and strengthen the fortress, the official added.



Located seven kilometers east of the city of Na'in, the historical fortress was inscribed on the National Heritage List in 2018.

From ancient to modern times, defensive walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Fortresses were designed primarily to defend territories in warfare and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt for today's archaeologists.

Well regarded for its hospitable people, handicrafts, and ancient qanats (manmade subterranean aqueducts that bring water from the mountains), Na'in dates back to nearly 2,000 years, which makes it one of the oldest continuously settled towns in the Iranian plateau.

Na'in is home to one of the oldest mosques in the country. Originally constructed in c. 10th century, Jameh Mosque of Na'in is one of the first mosques built in Iran and is unusual in that it doesn't conform to the usual four-iwan pattern of its time (for instance Jameh Mosque of Isfahan).

Na'in lies 170 km north of Yazd and 140 km east of Isfahan. Like much of the Iranian plateau, it has a desert climate, with a maximum temperature of 41 °C in summer, and a minimum of -9 °C in winter.

During ancient times, the city was at the junction of a desert road that connected Tabas and Mashhad, it used to be an important crossroad on converging trade routes since Sassanid times.

Na'in was known for its ceramics and textiles; today it's primarily known for fine hand-knotted carpets and for hand-loomed camel-wool cloaks, which are produced in the neighboring villages.

Archaeological survey sheds new light on ancient societies in southeast Iran

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Archaeologists have discovered new evidence of prehistorical architecture and pottery belonged to societies once lived across Sefidkuh in Makran region, southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province.

The survey, which was the second one conducted across Sefidkuh, yielded new archaeological and anthropological evidence from lesser-known Sefidkuh communities, with the invention of circular architecture as the most notable aspect which is still practiced in the region, IRNA reported.

Fragments of a particular type of pottery often called "Londo", were also discovered in Sefidkuh region, and the pottery pieces may be date from the Copper Age, Stone Age, or Bronze Age, which their chronology will be determined and announced following subsequent investigations, IRNA quoted Hossein Vahedi, who led the 2nd season as saying on Tuesday.

"In the mentioned area, a total of 9 archaeological sites were studied, including cemeteries and settlements from prehistoric, historical, and Islamic times. It is hoped that information from this season of archaeological studies will soon lead to the registration of the three unique villages [on the national cultural heritage list]," Vahedi said.

"The outcomes of absolutely the chronology assessments will quickly open a brand new window in our discipline", Vahedi mentioned according to the Archaeology News.

"Londo pottery is one of Baluchestan's



native potteries and may be discovered within the early layers of the Tepe Yahya of Kerman, the Kaftari site in Fars, and throughout western Pakistan together with the world of Jahawalan, Budi Buti and Las Bella, Domb Kouh website, Hezar Mardi in Bampur and the Give Citadel space in South Khorasan."

"This [kind of ancient] pottery is the second-largest pottery group [so far been

founded] within the Persian Gulf, the Oman Sea and the Makran area, which testifies to the commerce between the folks of the area."

"Because of the discovery of glass bracelets, pottery fragments and anthropological proof alongside the recognized round grave specimen, examples of that are present in neighboring areas equivalent to Pakistan and Oman (areas equivalent to Haif, Umm al-Anar, and Jalan) within the prehistoric

time interval, it's possible that the Makran area, and particularly Sefidkuh, was dominated by semi-nomadic communities and was one of many essential areas of commerce between the southern marginal communities of the Persian Gulf and the communities of Sistan-Baluchestan, and neighboring areas."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the senior archaeologist pointed to areas yielded proofs of prehistoric settlements, saying:

"We recognized twelve areas with proof of prehistoric (Epipaleolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic) settlement, that are nonetheless inhabited at this time. These twelve settlements are positioned within the mountainous space of Sefidkuh. The names of the villages are Baragdan, Kuchkodam, Koddap, Tangsam, Kopidap, Javanja, Torkeguash, Dangar, Kupchu, Sorkhkalut Patgan, and Siyahdan."

"On this survey proof of historic and Islamic cemeteries was additionally discovered, in all probability as a result of this area is strategically essential. This space has long been the house of the semi-sedentary nomadic peoples, and these communities nonetheless reside there."

"We're nonetheless unable to precisely establish the traditional communities dwelling within the Sefidkuh heights and it's essential to conduct focused long-term research, in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology, the Institute of Anthropology and interdisciplinary specialists, alongside the research of up to date fashionable societies dwelling within the area," he explained.

Iran exempts cheap hotels from VAT

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran has approved a plan to exempt cheap and small hotels from value-added tax (VAT) in a bid to compensate for the losses caused by the coronavirus outbreak, IRIB reported.

The exemption will be implemented for 1-3 star hotels from the beginning of the next Iranian calendar year 1400 (starts on March 21, 2021), and it is also to be considered for four- and five-star hotels, the head of Iran Hotels Association Jamshid Hamzadeh announced on Saturday.

From about 2200 hotels and apartment hotels in the country, less than 200 ones are four- and five-star hotels and the rest are 1-3 star hotels, he added.

He also noted that most of the four- and five-star hotels are situated in Tehran and Khorasan Razavi provinces, and also Kish Island, which are all among the top tourist destinations in Iran.

Back in April, Hamzadeh called for a tax exemption for tourism-related businesses at least by the end of the current Iranian calendar year 1399, which ends on March 20, 2021. Talking about the impacts of coronavirus pandemic to the hospitality industry of the country, he noted "The industry has lost 53 trillion rials (about \$1.2 billion) just over the past two months...

the travel industry has led to direct employment of 240,000 people as well as indirect employment of 550,000 people, who are at risk of losing their jobs."

Earlier this year, the Iranian government announced it will bail out those which are grappling with fiscal problems by offering loans with a 12-percent interest rate. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts also suggested a rescue package for tourism businesses. The government has also allocated a 750-trillion-rial (about \$18 billion) package to help low-income households and small- and medium-sized enterprises suffered by the coronavirus concerns.

"Such amount of bailouts will not compensate for much of the losses as the virus pandemic has brought tourism to a standstill for two months," Amir-Pouya Rafiei-Shad who presides over Tehran province's Tour and Travel Agencies Association said in April.

"Last [Iranian calendar] year was a bumpy ride for Iran's tourism as it suffered from flooding in the spring, protests [over petrol prices] in November, and the fatal Ukraine International Airlines plane crash in January," Rafiei-Shad explained.

Optimistic forecasts, however, expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a



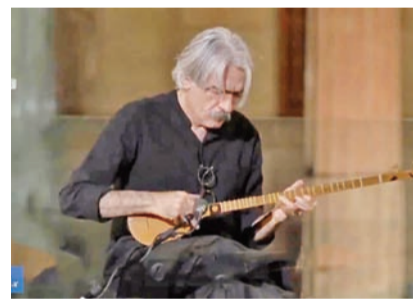
country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

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

Coronavirus: Isfahan historical sites to keep hosting online concerts if health rules observed

→ 1 "Prohibition of the use of percussion instruments, adjusting the sound of instruments and acoustic devices so that they vibrate less than 40 decibels, minimal movement of concert staff, setting the stage and decorations in accordance with the architecture of the [historical] building(s) and performing the concert for only one hour are other standards [that should be met]."

Soaked in a rich history, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade



and diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. It is filled with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayan-

deh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. It has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million. Modern Isfahan is now home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts, however, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

Restoration of Nezamieh minarets complete by 75 percent

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Restoration of Nezamieh minarets, which are striking specimens of the indigenous Islamic architecture of the time, is complete by 75 percent after less than two months of work.

Nezamieh minarets date from 8th century AH (1299 CE - 1397 CE) and they stand tall in the ancient town of Abarkuh, Yazd province, central Iran.

"An urgent restoration plan was commenced on Nezamieh minarets in Tir (the Iranian month started on June 21) and it is now complete by 75 percent," Abarkuh tourism chief Hamid Moshtaqian announced on Saturday, CHTN reported.

The most important steps have so far been taken in this project to stabilize the brick facade of the minarets, removing worn-out joints, laying and fixing bricks, he explained.

The minarets are located in a historical neighborhood of Abarkuh and they were inscribed on the national cultural



heritage list in the year 1312 (1933) under the number 196, the official added.

Illegal diggers arrested in Mazandaran province

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iranian police have arrested 10 unauthorized diggers in Savadkuh county, the northern province of Mazandaran.

The suspects were detained in Veresk region, said Mohammadreza Kordan, a senior police official in charge of protecting cultural heritage, CHTN reported on Saturday.

The culprits were handed over to the judicial system for further investigation,

he added.

An early civilization flourished at the beginning of the first millennium BC in Mazandaran (Tabarestan).

Its insecure eastern and southeastern borders were crossed by Mongol invaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked the region in 1668 but were repulsed. It was ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never

secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar dynasty.

The northern section of the region consists of lowland alongside the Caspian and upland along the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains. Marshy backlands dominate the coastal plain, and extensive gravel fans fringe the mountains. The climate is permanently subtropical and humid, with very hot summers.



Iran eyes regional market for homegrown remdesivir

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The anti-corona drug, remdesivir, produced by an Iranian knowledge-based company has the capacity to be exported to the neighboring countries, director of health technology development office of the Ministry of Health said, referring to the high quality of the drug.

The Iranian remdesivir medicine has been formulated and produced to cure COVID-19 patients and is currently undergoing legal registration with the Food and Drug Administration to enter the market by the next two weeks, IRNA quoted Hossein Vatanpour as saying on Saturday.

This knowledge-based company is ready for mass production of medicine, and the medicine will be provided to the country's hospitals after mass production, he noted.

By producing the raw material of this medicine in the country, while providing the required amount, it will also lead to a considerable amount of currency savings, he highlighted.

So far, no effective and reliable medicine has been identified for the treatment of



coronavirus in the world, but remdesivir is prescribed for patients with this virus in Europe and the United States.

The broad-spectrum antiviral agent

remdesivir is a nucleotide analog drug. On May 1, The U.S. FDA issued EUA of remdesivir to allow emergency use of the agent for severe COVID-19 (confirmed

or suspected) in hospitalized adults and children. A phase 1b trial of an inhaled nebulized version was initiated in late June to determine if remdesivir can be used on an outpatient basis and at earlier stages of the disease.

Remdesivir was studied in clinical trials for Ebola virus infections but showed limited benefit. Remdesivir has been shown to inhibit replication of other human coronaviruses associated with high morbidity in tissue cultures, including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) in 2003 and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in 2012.

The number of people diagnosed with coronavirus in Iran reached 341,070 on Saturday, of whom 19,492 have died and 295,630 recovered so far. Over the past 24 hours, 2,245 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, and 161 died, Sima Sadat Lari ministry of health's spokesman said.

Currently, 3,911 patients with coronavirus are in critical condition, she added.

Third group of Iranians living in Tajikistan return home amid COVID-19

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Some 70 Iranians living in Tajikistan returned to the country due to the global outbreak of coronavirus. This is the third group of people that came back from Tajikistan since the onset of the pandemic.

Mohammad Taghi Saberi, ambassador of Iran to Tajikistan, announced in a Twitter message that this is the third flight to transport Iranian citizens from Tajikistan to Tehran, following the suspension of normal flights between the two countries due to the global outbreak of COVID-19, IRNA reported.

With the preparations and follow-ups, the third group (70 people) of Iranian citizens who requested to return, brought back to the country on Thursday evening, August 13, he added.



He concluded that with three extraordinary flights, so far more than 300 Iranians who have applied to return to Iran from Tajikistan have returned to the country, and the third group entered Tehran from the city Dushanbe on Thursday.

Several special flights have been taken by Iran to bring back people living in the neighboring countries as well as China, and Austria.

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Currently, 3,911 patients with coronavirus are in critical condition, she added.

Iran delivers second shipment of anti-corona aid to Kyrgyzstan

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iran has sent the second consignment of humanitarian aid to Kyrgyzstan to counter COVID-19, Kyrgyzstan's foreign ministry announced on Friday.

The shipment includes medical equipment including ventilators, thermometers, pulse oximeters, PCR tests, and kits for EIA testing, IRNA reported.

Iran's humanitarian aid confirms the warm fraternal relations between the two countries based on mutual support. Iran delivered its first shipment of humanitarian aid to the Kyrgyz authorities in May, according to Kyrgyzstan's foreign ministry announcement.

The first consignment of Iranian medical aid consisted of 357 cartons weighing more than three tons and included medical items, medicines, and personal protective equipment to fight coronavirus.

Humanitarian aid was provided by Iran at the request of the Kyrgyz side in an official ceremony with both countries officials in attendance.

Iran had previously assisted other countries in the fight against the global pandemic.

In late May, a plane carrying medical aid provided by Iranian people and the private sector landed at Kabul airport, which consisted of masks, disinfectants, medical gloves,



and hospital supplies and 2,000 coronavirus test kits.

In July, Iran has delivered a consignment of medical equipment weighing one ton to

Iraq to help the neighboring country in the coronavirus battle.

Moreover, Iran has sent three million face masks to China and has expressed readiness for providing more medical aid earlier in February.

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Iran ranks first for top universities among Islamic countries

the number of Highly Cited Researchers and articles indexed in Science Citation Index - Expanded and Social Sciences Citation Index based on data in the Web of Science, and per capita performance. More than 2000 universities are ranked by ARWU every year and the best 1000 universities are published.

Shanghai Ranking is a fully independent organization dedicating to research on higher education intelligence and consultation, which has been the official publisher of the Academic Ranking of World Universities since 2009.

The Shanghai rankings 2020 shows the top 1,000 universities in the world, with Harvard and Stanford universities in the United States and Cambridge University in the United Kingdom ranking first to third, respectively.

In the meantime, 12 universities from Iran have been listed; it should be noted that the presence of Iranian universities in this ranking system was the first time with a university (University of Tehran) in 2014, Mohammad Javad Dehghani, head of Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) said.

The University of Gilan has been ranked in this ranking

for the first time and also the universities of Shiraz and Tabriz have improved their rankings compared to 2019, he added.

In the 2020 ranking, the University of Tehran, similar to the 2019 ranking, was ranked among the top 400 universities in the world by gaining the rank of 301-400 and became the first university in Iran.

He went on to say that Amirkabir University of Technology, Sharif University of Technology, Tarbiat Modares University of Medical Sciences, and Tehran University of Medical Sciences are in the range of 501-600 and have jointly ranked 2 to 5 among the universities of the country.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Shiraz University are in the range of 70-800 and have ranked 6-7 in Iran, respectively. In fact, Shiraz University has been promoted by 200 steps compared to the previous year, he stated.

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad and the University of Tabriz are in the range of 900-801 and have ranked 8-9, while Iran University of Science and Technology, Isfahan University of Technology, and Gilan University are in the range of 1000-901 and came 10-12, respectively, he highlighted.



The ranking shows that in 2020, Iranian universities have improved their quality.

In the 2020 Shanghai Rankings, Iran with 12 universities, Turkey with 11 universities, Malaysia, and Egypt with 5 universities, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan with four universities and Tunisia, Lebanon, Qatar with one university were among the top 1000 universities in the world, he explained.

According to the number of attendees, Iran ranks first among Islamic countries, he concluded.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Clean air bill projected to create 10,000 green jobs

The clean air bill, proposed by the Department of Environment to curb air pollution, is projected to generate some 10,000 green jobs over the course of the sixth five-year national development plan (2016-2021), an environmental official said.

In line with the one of the articles of clean air bill units of Health, Safety, and the Environment (HSE), with regard to health and safety of the employees, customers, and contractors as well as the protection of the environment are bound to be established in all industrial and manufacturing enterprises, Shina Ansari told ISNA news agency. "Accordingly, those graduates in the field of environment can apply for job opportunities in HSE units," Ansari added.

ایجاد ۱۰ هزار فرصت شغلی نتیجه اجرای لایحه هوای پاک

مدیرکل دفتر پایش فراگیر سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست ضمن اشاره به مواد قانون هوای پاک - که به پیشنهاد سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست اخیرا به تصویب مجلس شورای اسلامی رسید- از ایجاد ۱۰ هزار فرصت شغلی طی برنامه ششم توسعه از طریق اجرای مواد این قانون خبر داد.

شینا انصاری در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا افزود: در ماده ۱۶ لایحه هوای پاک، کلیه مراکز واحدهای صنعتی و تولیدی، برای انجام امور مربوط به سلامت و ایمنی مشتریان و کارمندان و کارفرمایان مکلف به ایجاد واحدهای سلامت، بهداشت و محیط زیست (HSE) و به کارگیری نیروهای متخصص این حوزه هستند بنابراین تعداد زیادی از فارغ التحصیلان محیط زیست می‌توانند جذب هسته‌ها و بخش‌های زیست محیطی صنایع متوسط و بزرگ کشور به منظور پایش صنایع شوند.

Marine food webs could be radically altered by heating of oceans, scientists warn

Heating of the world's oceans could radically reorganise marine food webs across the globe causing the numbers of some species to collapse while promoting the growth of algae, new research has warned.

Healthy marine food webs that look like a pyramid, with smaller numbers of larger predatory species at the top and more abundant smaller organisms at the bottom, could become "bottom heavy".

The types of species that could become less abundant in the oceans are the same ones targeted by commercial fishing and also are socially and culturally important to many communities around the globe, the Guardian reported.

In the research, published in the journal Science, researchers at the University of Adelaide recreated a marine habitat in a series of 1,800-litre tanks and then subjected some to temperature and CO2 changes.

Prof Ivan Nagelkerken, of the University of Adelaide's Environment Institute and who led the research, said gazing into the tanks after six months when the study period ended had not been a pretty sight.

"It looked bad," he said. After being subjected to higher temperatures and higher CO2 the rocks, he said, were overgrown with turf algae and the sandy bottom had a lot more slimy algae that is toxic to some species.

The tanks recreated a habitat off the coast of Adelaide in Gulf St Vincent that was about six metres deep.

Many of the species placed into the tanks - including kelp, crustaceans and the multitude of different bacteria on rocks, sand and in sediment - were gathered from the gulf. Native fish and crabs were also added.

Some 12 tanks of ocean water - known as mesocosms - were split into four groups. Temperature and CO2 levels were not adjusted in one group. In another three tanks, the water temperature was raised over the course of six weeks until they were 2.8C higher than today.

Another group of tanks had their CO2 levels adjusted to the equivalent of 910 parts per million in the atmosphere, causing the water to become less alkaline. The habitat in the fourth group of tanks was treated to both higher temperatures and higher levels of CO2.

Both the CO2 conditions and the temperatures reflect conditions expected towards the end of this century in a world where little is done to curb fossil fuel burning.

Nagelkerken said the results of the experiment remained relevant even if the world did act to slow down the rising levels of CO2 in the atmosphere.

In 2011 a marine heatwave in Western Australia raised ocean temperatures more than 2C for about 10 weeks. A study five years later found no recovery of the kelp - a vital component shaping the marine ecosystem there.

Nagelkerken said: "That marine heatwave showed that even over just a few weeks, that caused the kelp to disappear."

He said the research showed that ocean heating "reshuffles species communities" with weedy plants and algae thriving but the "abundance of other species, especially invertebrates, collapses".

He said the changed pyramid that was fatter at the bottom and thinner in the middle, could eventually see larger predators also losing out.

In the study, the researchers write: "The top of food webs may eventually become depleted under future climate conditions or additional human disturbances."

The small fish that were the predators in the tank resisted the impacts of warming, but the experiment showed the food they ate was becoming impoverished - an imbalance that could see the top predators struggling.

An ecological tipping point could be reached where the "the top of the food web can no longer be supported," the study says.

Nagelkerken told the Guardian that in the real world, the impacts would vary depending on whether species could move to different areas. Some species would not be able to.

He said there was already evidence species were extending their ranges away from the equator as oceans got warmer and this, together with changes to the food webs, could also see traditional fishing grounds move, creating knock-on effects for communities that had been built around fishing.

He added: "It's not just climate change, but also our removal of predatory fish [through overfishing] and the addition of nutrients into the ocean. We have to consider all of that too."

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 2)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

Letter /alef/ has the four sounds /a, a, e, o/



Alef is a vowel. With the sign [~], called /mad/, it is written as **آ**,

always pronounced /ā/, like a in father. **آ** /ā/ is an initial letter which never joins the preceding or following letters.

Medial and final alef is written as **ا**, still with the sound /ā/. It only joins the preceding letters.

Letter /be/ has the sound /b/, like b in boy:



water /ab/ آب **آ** **ب**

Short and Full Forms - Short forms are initial parts of the full forms and each letter has the first sound of its name:

short form: **ب** full form: **ب**
sound: /b/ name: /be/

In general, short letters take the initial and medial positions of a syllable; full letters come only at the end:

water /āb/ آب **آ** **ب** **ا** **ب** **ا** **ب** **ا** **ب**
dad /bābā/ بابا **ب** **ا** **ب** **ا** **ب** **ا** **ب**

Nine of the letters are written in one way only.

Exercise 1. Practise the words:

آب آب آب آب آب آب آب آب آب آب آب

Nasrallah: Israel shivering with fear for its existence

Israel suffers from the military and psychological defeat of the 33-day war of 2006, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah says, drawing attention to the occupying regime's fear for its existence.

The secretary general of Lebanon's resistance movement made the remarks during a televised speech broadcast by the Arabic-language al-Manar satellite television station in the Lebanese capital of Beirut on Friday, marking the 14th anniversary of the end of Israel's 33-day war on Lebanon.



He congratulated the Lebanese on the "divine victory" in the July War, which is also known as 2006 Lebanon War, paying tribute to those Lebanese who either lost their lives or sustained injuries during the imposed war. The war resulted in the demolition of thousands of homes and the deaths of over 1,000 Lebanese civilians.

Some 162 Israelis, including 119 soldiers, were also killed during the fighting. As Tel Aviv realized that it could not bomb the resistance movement into submission, it desperately accepted UN Resolution 1701 to end the aggression.

Nasrallah also thanked all who had a role in achieving the victory against the Israeli regime in the war. He also particularly hailed the Syrian people who hosted thousands of displaced Lebanese during the Israeli aggression.

The Hezbollah chief stressed that one of the strategic outcomes of The July War was foiling the new West Asia (Middle East) scheme which was the main goal of the war on the Arab country.

Nasrallah said that the so-called New West Asia scheme started with the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq by the US-led military coalition and it was meant to continue but was foiled in Lebanon.

"The Israelis now are having existential fears. They fear the entity's existence and continuation," the Hezbollah chief said, stressing that the military and psychological defeat the Zionists received 14 years ago still exists.

He also said that Israel "acknowledges" failure in preventing the resistance movement's strengthening in Lebanon.

"Lebanon is strong with its resistance equation. That's why they want to get rid of it. Their offer for us to abandon it is still valid till these days," Nasrallah added, stressing that the doctrine of deterrence keeps growing in Hezbollah's favor every day.

He also pointed out that after the war on Lebanon failed to defeat Hezbollah, the enemy is "resorting to every other method, and all we are witnessing now in Lebanon is a result of that."

Beirut blast

According to Press TV, elsewhere in his remarks, he touched on the catastrophic explosion in the Lebanese capital of Beirut.

On August 4, a colossal explosion, the biggest ever to hit the West Asia (Middle East), killed at least 172 people. Some 6,000 were injured.

Dozens of people are still missing, and at least 300,000 people have been displaced as a result of the huge blast, which leveled the whole port of Beirut and a large section of central capital and turned successive apartment blocks into masses of debris and twisted metal.

Nasrallah noted that Hezbollah does not have any narrative on the Beirut port explosion, saying, "We're not investigating, the Lebanese state is doing the job."

However, he put forward two possibilities, at least theoretically, regarding the deadly blast, saying it occurred either out of negligence or sabotage.

"If investigations proved that the explosion occurred out of negligence, those responsible must be held accountable and punished," the Hezbollah chief said, stressing that if it turned out that Israel was behind the blast, it would pay the price.

Resistance News

Palestinians slam 'traitor' UAE for normalizing ties with Israel

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) decision to normalize ties with Israel did not surprise Saeed Ibrahim, an 83-year-old Palestinian living in East Jerusalem. For Ibrahim, it was just the latest betrayal of the Palestinian cause by Arab states.

"It all began with Anwar Sadat's visit to al-Quds. It is Egypt who opened the door," he said, referring to the former Egyptian president's visit to Israel in 1977.

"Before that, no one dared to say peace with Israel." According to al Jazeera, Sadat's visit, the first by an Arab leader to Israel, resulted in normalizing of ties between Cairo and Israel. Jordan followed decades later, signing a peace treaty and establishing diplomatic relations in 1994.

The rest of the Arab states held out. That is, until now. For years, Palestinians have known about the existence of relations, albeit discreet, between the UAE and Israel. Still, they did not see an announcement of formal ties between the two countries coming this soon.

The move is just the latest blow to the Palestinian cause by the United States since Donald Trump took office in 2016. It comes on the back of a US decision in 2017 to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and the unveiling of this year's so-called "Middle East (West Asia) Peace Plan" that resulted in Israel declaring plans to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank.

That the UAE-Israel agreement temporarily holds Israel off from declaring sovereignty over its illegal settlements in the West Bank - from a Palestinian perspective - is little justification for the rapprochement.

The UAE decision "was coming" regardless of Israel's annexation plans, according to Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator. This "decision is at the expense of the legitimate Palestinian national rights," he told the Palestinian news agency Wafa on Friday.

Belarus' Lukashenko says he is being targeted by 'color revolution'

By Staff & agencies

Mass anti-government protests in Belarus are actually a "color revolution" in action, and Russia may be the next target if the country fails to halt its progress, President Alexander Lukashenko has claimed.

According to RT, Lukashenko, whose reelection for a sixth term last Sunday sparked mass protests over an alleged rigging of the vote, believes his detractors are unwitting agents of foreign puppeteers and need to be stopped.

"Don't you lull us with [talk about] peaceful action and demonstrations. We can see what is happening deep down," the Belarus leader said on Saturday at a government meeting, as cited by local media.

The president added that he should talk to Russian President Vladimir Putin, because "this threat is not against Belarus alone."

The proposed conversation with Putin reportedly materialized later in the day, but neither side would immediately offer details of the phone call.

Lukashenko is facing increasing pressure from the public after his government launched a police crackdown on the opposition in the wake of last week's vote. The approach backfired after evidence of police brutality fueled



discontent and prompted thousands more people to take the streets and demand the president's resignation.

Appeals to Russia

Lukashenko on Saturday issued an appeal to long-term ally Russia as he faced growing pressure to step down following a disputed election that has triggered protests at home and condemnation abroad.

Lukashenko is grappling with the big-

gest challenge to his 26-year rule as tens of thousands of people have taken to the streets accusing him of rigging last Sunday's presidential election, and calling for him to step down.

According to Reuters, the European Union is gearing up to impose new sanctions on Belarus in response to a bloody crackdown in which at least two protesters have been killed and thousands detained, while the

leaders of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania called on Belarus to conduct new "free and fair" elections.

Opposition presidential candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who fled to neighbouring Lithuania on Tuesday, has called for more protests and an election recount.

Crowds gathered in Minsk again on Saturday to lay flowers where one of the protesters was killed this week.

Russia sees Belarus as a strategic buffer against NATO and the EU, but ties between the two countries had been under strain before the election.

Moscow scaled back financial support to Minsk and Lukashenko rejected Russian calls for closer political and economic union.

Lukashenko has accused the protesters of being in league with foreign backers, and warned Belarusians to stay at home to avoid becoming "cannon fodder".

Moscow this week also accused unnamed countries of "outside meddling" in Belarus.

Russia has been wary of unrest on its borders since governments fell in Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution, Ukraine's 2003-04 Orange Revolution and Kyiv's 2014 Maidan protests - events in which it says the West backed the protesters.

Thousands rally against S. Korea leader despite virus warning

Thousands of anti-government protesters, armed with umbrellas and raincoats, marched through the soggy streets of South Korea's capital Saturday, ignoring official pleas to stay home amid a surge in coronavirus infections.

It appeared that at least several were detained after scuffles with police, which deployed about 6,000 officers to closely follow the protesters in streets near Seoul's presidential palace, Daily Star reported.

There were no immediate reports of major clashes or injuries. Officials from the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency did not immediately say how many protesters were taken into custody.

The protests came as the government moved to impose stronger social distancing restrictions in the city and nearby towns following a spike in coronavirus infections.

Municipal officials in Seoul had sought to forbid the slew of rallies planned by conservative activists and Christian groups for a holiday celebrating the 75th anniversary of the nation's liberation from Japanese colonial rule at the end of World War II.



But a court allowed some of them to go on, citing civil liberties after protesters challenged the city's administrative order banning the gatherings.

The demonstrators, many of them wearing masks and carrying the South Korean flag, paraded through rain near Seoul's presidential palace, calling for liberal President Moon Jae-in to step down over what they see as kowtowing to North Korea, policy failures, corruption and election fraud.

UN launches \$565M appeal for Lebanon recovery

The United Nations launched an appeal to raise \$565 million (RM2.3 billion) to help Lebanon recover from this month's devastating port blast that killed 171 people.

The UN said in a statement that the funds would be used to support Lebanon as it moves from immediate life-saving humanitarian relief towards rebuilding its shattered economy, AFP reported.

"The task of rebuilding people's lives and recovering from the devastation is only just beginning," said Najat Rochdi, a UN humanitarian coordinator for Lebanon.

"I urge the international community to demonstrate their steadfast commitment to the people of Lebanon and repay in turn Lebanon's incredible generosity to Syrian and Palestine refugees with full financial support for this appeal," she added.

The August 4 explosion flattened surrounding neighborhoods, leaving thousands homeless, damaged dozens of hospitals and clinics and destroyed more than 100 schools. It also wounded at least 6,500 residents.

The explosion was caused by a huge stock of hazardous materials stored in a



warehouse, and was widely blamed on state corruption.

It came as Lebanon reels from an economic crisis, with runaway inflation and bank capital controls fueling poverty, despair and angry street protests.

The cabinet resigned this week amid fury over the devastating blast.

Western powers have pressed Lebanon's leaders for deep changes and a government that reflects the will of the people, and also insisted reforms be implemented to unlock billions of dollars in international aid.

U.S. Protests: Portland police declare unlawful Assembly amid protests

→ 1 All told, the unruly demonstrations following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery could make it one of the costliest displays of civil disorder in U.S. history. In many places, the financial fallout comes as cities and states have drained their coffers trying to fight COVID-19. The end result for these cash-strapped cities could put them millions of dollars in the red and struggling for years to get out.

In Minneapolis, costs related to the protests could hit higher than \$500 million. In Portland, Ore., nearly 80 nights of destruction have caused the liberal locale \$23 million and counting. In Chicago, a city that's seen soaring crime rates and corruption at the highest levels, the damage done from the protests has not only hit high-end retailers but crippled

hundreds of mom-and-pop stores trying to eke out a living.

Although the total financial fallout from the protests is still unknown, it will likely eclipse the Los Angeles riots in 1992, until this year was the most expensive, costing the city \$1.4 billion (adjusted for inflation), according to PCS, the insurance industry's primary source for reporting insured losses. Two days of riots following Freddie Gray's funeral in 2015 caused Baltimore \$26 million in losses.

While it's true that thousands of people have peacefully protested across the United States following Floyd's death in May, there have been several demonstrations that have gotten out of hand, escalating into violence and vandalism.

Here's a look at the financial impact of demonstrations across five U.S. cities.

Minneapolis

The first Peaceful protests broke out in Minneapolis following Floyd's death but then turned violent. Costs related to the protests could balloon to more than \$500 million on top of \$12.7 million for the National Guard deployment.

The city's Third Police Precinct, which was abandoned at the direction of Mayor Jacob Frey on May 28, was torched and will cost at least \$10 million to rebuild, Hennepin County officials said. It will cost another \$289,000 to replace the 911 equipment inside the station, \$225,000 for cleanup operations and \$5,000 for paper-shredding services, the Star Tribune reported. Another \$1 million will be used to cover overtime for police, fire and public employees.

Russia has started production of Sputnik V – world's FIRST registered Covid-19 vaccine

The Russian Health Ministry announced on Saturday that production of the world's first registered coronavirus vaccine has begun. It's been named 'Sputnik V' after the famed space satellite, launched by Moscow in 1957.

The formula, officially known as 'Gam-COVID-Vak,' was developed by the Gamaleya National Research Center in the Russian capital. It has two components that need to be injected three weeks apart to trigger an immune response to Covid-19. RT reported.

The director of Russia's sovereign wealth fund, which bankrolled the project, Kirill Dmitriev pointed out that Moscow had received applications for more than one billion doses of the vaccine from 20 countries.

Russia's health regulator registered the vaccine after it passed Phase II trials in June and July. It was decided that completing a Phase III trial was not necessary for the initial roll-out because it is based on an already proven platform. However, it's important to note that

Sputnik V won't go into general circulation until January 2021, allowing another four to five months in which to further observe its effectiveness.

The decision was criticized by some Western governments and health professionals, who consider it rushed and potentially dangerous. That said, some of them seemed to be under the impression that the vaccine was going into immediate mass circulation. In reality, it will initially only be available to vulnerable work-

ers in important frontline roles. Even then, participation is voluntary, with nobody forced to take part.

Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said, earlier this week, during a meeting with President Vladimir Putin that medical workers and teachers would be the first to get the vaccine. The Health Ministry added that the data from the trials will soon be published and this will hopefully alleviate some of the concerns surrounding it.

Visual point of view



Ansarullah slams UAE-Israel deal as 'great betrayal' of Palestinians

Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement has decried the deal reached between the United Arab Emirates and Israel to fully normalize relations as a "great betrayal" of the Palestinian cause.

In a statement issued on Friday, Ansarullah's political bureau said the exposure of the UAE-Israel agreement proved the emptiness of all the pan-Arabist slogans raised by the Saudi-led coalition in waging war on Yemen.

The statement added that the UAE was continuing to move forward on the wrong path of serving American and Israeli interests against the Muslim Ummah, referring to the Emirates' participation in the Saudi-led war on Yemen, which began in March 2015 and has left tens of thousands of people killed.

Ansarullah dismissed assertions that normalization with the Israeli regime would lead to the establishment of peace and stability in the region as "mere delusions."

It also called for isolating any regime that announces normalization with Israel and boycotting it economically and commercially, stressing that Arab and Muslim peoples were able to do a lot to help Palestine.

The deal between the UAE and Israel was announced on Thursday. US President Donald Trump, who apparently helped broker the deal, has attempted to paint it as a big breakthrough, Press TV reported.

But the Palestinians have utterly rejected the deal.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas referred to the deal as an "aggression" against the Palestinian people and a "betrayal" of their cause. The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas described it as "a stab in the back of the Palestinian cause." And Palestinian people staged protests against the deal in the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip on Friday.

Iran's Kohansal featured in Malala Fund's initiative

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Eight female Para athletes are featured in Malala Fund's 'Game Changers' series which tells their stories and accomplishments in sport, and their work to make our world a more equal place.

Archer Mohadeseh Kohansal (Iran); Wheelchair fencer Bebe Vio (Italy); swimmers Camila Haase (Costa Rica), Sara Vargas (Colombia), Aya Ayman (Egypt) and (Uganda); ice sledge speed racer Miki Matheson (Japan); and wheelchair racer Lucia Montenegro (Argentina) are the shortlisted athletes.

Representing 24 countries in total, the 22 Game Changers are a testament to the incredible potential of girls and women when given the opportunity to learn and lead, Paralympic.org wrote.

They are challenging discrimination and lack of diversity in their sports, changing perceptions of people with disabilities, paving the way for other young women and speaking out to help every girl learn.

Matheson, Kohansal have been playing a pivotal role in the development of ImPOSSIBLE, the official global education program of the International Paralympic Committee



(IPC) which equips educators with resources to teach their students inclusion through the Paralympic values and highlight the accomplishments of Para athletes around the world.

"The sport gave me the confidence and I'm looking to impart the same values to other young women through the ImPOSSIBLE program. Those with sport experience know what I mean when I say sport constantly boosts self-confidence and fills people with happiness and satisfaction," said Kohansal.

Kohansal represented Iran in the Rio 2016 Paralympics at age 17.

"I've been chosen in the Malala Fund's 'Game Changers' series since I think I can inspire my country's girls. I was the youngest para athlete in Iran's delegation in 2016 Paralympics and it could be heartwarming and inspirational," Kohansal said in an interview with Tehran Times.

"As a disabled athlete, I want to show the girls the disability cannot prevent them from the sport. I am happy for being shortlisted among the athletes in Malala Fund's 'Game Changers' series. The sport can help the humans show their incredible potential," she stated.

Esfandiar joins Greenyard Maaseik's camp

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran international wing spiker Amirhossein Esfandiar arrived in Maaseik on Saturday to join Belgian volleyball club Greenyard Maaseik.

The 21-year-old, who was a member of Iranian club Kalleh Mazandaran over the past five years, penned a contract with Greenyard Maaseik in May but he could not join the team due to the flight restriction caused by coronavirus pandemic.

His countryman Javad Karimi, who has also joined Greenyard Maaseik, has not yet traveled to Belgium due to visa issues.

Greenyard Maaseik will play at the CEV Champions League next season. Karimi and Esfandiar will be the first Iranian players to play



in Liga Heren (men's volleyball in Belgium). Greenyard Maaseik are a volleyball club from Maaseik, Belgium founded in 1960, volleyball.ir reported. They play their home games in the Lotto Dôme Maaseik.

Iran to partake at Women Futsal World Tournament

S P O R T S TEHRAN — The Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) has accepted to send Iran's women futsal team to the Women Futsal World Tournament.

The competition is scheduled to be held in Brazil in December but will likely postpone due to coronavirus.

Iranian women, two-time Asian champions, have participated in the prestigious tournament three times so far.

Iran and Japan will be Asian's representatives in the tournament.

The Women's Futsal World Tournament is an international women's futsal competition for national teams, organized by national associations and the World



Futsal Association. The first edition took place in 2010 in Spain and was won by Brazil. The tournament has known no other winners besides Brazil, after the country's victories in the first six editions.

Barcelona have Mauricio Pochettino and four other managers on shortlist after Bayern loss

Barcelona have Mauricio Pochettino and four other managers in their sights following their 8-2 Champions League defeat to Bayern Munich on Friday, according to reports. Quique Setien is primed to lose his job at the Nou Camp in the aftermath of the chastening defeat. And Barcelona will now end the season without a trophy for the first time since the 2013/2014 season.

Barcelona went into the Champions League clash against Bayern Munich as underdogs, having struggled under both Setien and Ernesto Valverde throughout the course of the season.

But nobody could have foreseen the blitzing that happened in Portugal on Friday night.

Barcelona were ruthlessly dispatched by Bayern, with Thomas Muller (2), Philippe Coutinho (2), Serge Gnabry, Robert Lewandowski, Ivan Perisic and Joshua Kimmich all on target for the Bundesliga giants.

Now, Setien is set to lose his job. And Sport say that Pochettino is one of five names on Barcelona's radar as they look to rebuild in the wake of their humiliating European exit.

The former Tottenham boss supposedly has the backing of Lionel Messi to take charge - though has some doubts about the job due to the presidential elections, which are due to be held next season.

And it seems Barcelona are also planning with alternatives in mind.



Xavi is one of them, with the Barca legend currently coaching Al Sadd over in Qatar.

He was actually Barcelona's first choice to replace Valverde when the Spaniard was sacked in January but Setien, due to the fact he was willing to take over immediately, got the job instead.

Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman, who had a successful spell at the Nou Camp during his playing days, is another candidate for the job.

Former Juventus boss Massimiliano Allegri has also been earmarked, with the Italian out of work since leaving

the Old Lady 12 months ago.

And Arsenal legend Thierry Henry is a surprise contender for the Barcelona job, with the Frenchman currently coaching Montreal Impact over in the MLS.

Setien appeared a man resigned to his fate on Friday night, saying after the Bayern mauling: "It's a tremendously painful defeat. They scored more goals that they merited."

"We started pretty well but the power of the opponents, in many phases of the play, overran us."

"I'm not going to talk about what is needed at the club. I've been here for just a few months."

"If Gerard Pique says that it's time for big changes there's going to be importance to his words."

"It's time for us to review and take the decisions which are needed for the future."

"I think that right now it's too soon to be talking about whether I stay at the club or not."

"The reality is that it doesn't depend on me. It's worth all of us working out what's important and considering a wide range of things which correspond to a defeat of this importance and which is so painful."

For Barcelona, they've now gone without the Champions League for five years.

And, unless they get the appointment of their next manager right, then the Catalan giants risk further setbacks down the road.

(Source: express.co.uk)

Klopp named Premier League manager of the season

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp has been named the Premier League manager of the season.

The 53-year-old German led the Reds to their first top-flight title for 30 years.

They amassed 99 points, winning 32 of their 38 league games, to finish 18 points

clear of Manchester City. Klopp beat Chelsea boss Frank Lampard, Leicester's Brendan Rodgers and Sheffield United's Chris Wilder to the award.

Last month, he was named League Managers' Association manager of the year.

Liverpool defender Trent Alexander-Ar-

nold, 21, won the Premier League's young player award on Friday.

The winners of the Premier League awards were decided after votes from the public were combined with those of a panel of football experts.

(Source: BBC)



Cheptegei smashes 5,000 metres world record at Monaco Diamond League



MONACO (Reuters) — Uganda's Joshua Cheptegei produced a brilliant display of solo running to break Kenenisa Bekele's 16-year-old 5,000 meters world record by almost two seconds as athletics returned with a bang at the Monaco Diamond League meeting on Friday.

Cheptegei, 23, had predicted a world record run in the big event of the season and duly delivered as he clocked 12 minutes, 35.36 seconds, destroying the 12:37.35 that Bekele set in the Netherlands in 2004.

Athletics fans had waited a long time for the first Dia-

mond League meeting and the 5,000 spectators allowed in the stadium and millions watching on TV were not to be disappointed on a night of impressive performances as athletes of every discipline showed that they had clearly found ways to keep in shape during their various lockdown restrictions.

Leading the way was Cheptegei. The 2019 world champion over 10,000 meters was in hot form before lockdown, setting world records over 10km and 5km on the road - the shorter of those also coming in Monaco in February - his last race before Friday's meet.

He took up the running at halfway, churning out 61-second laps and delivered a 2:30 split for the final kilometer, remembering to stop his own watch as he crossed the line.

"It took a lot of mind setting to keep being motivated this year because so many people are staying at home but you have to stay motivated," he said.

"I pushed myself, I had the right staff with me, the right coach. I'm also usually based in Europe, but being based in Uganda with my family was actually great. I will for sure celebrate the world record when I get home."

In the women's 5,000, world champion Hellen Obiri surged clear of Letesenbet Gidey to win in 14:18.37 after

Sifan Hassan dropped out with three laps to go.

Timothy Cheruiyot was another world champion who showed no signs of suffering from disrupted training as he overcame a potentially reckless fast first lap to win the men's 1,500m in 3:28.45.

Just behind him was Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen, whose 3:28.68 was a European record, while third-placed Jake Wightman became the second-fastest Briton of all time. His 3:29.47 took two seconds off his personal best. While he remains behind Mo Farah, he surged past the timings recorded by celebrated trio Steve Cram, Seb Coe and Steve Ovett.

It was a family double in the 200m as Noah Lyles won in 19.76 seconds, with his younger brother Josephus second in 20.30.

Karsten Warholm finished strongly to win the 400m hurdles in 47.10 seconds, beating American Kevin Young's 28-year-old meeting record, while Kenya's Faith Kipyegon ran the second-fastest ever 1,000m, clocking 2:29.15.

Ajla del Ponte of Switzerland looked as surprised as everyone else in the stadium when she took the women's 100m in 11.16 seconds, with favorite Marie-Josée Ta Lou a sluggish fourth in 11.39.

Iran's women's football team 70th in FIFA rankings

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran national women's football team are 70th in the latest FIFA world rankings, which was released on Friday.

The Iranian team remained unchanged in the ranking with 1358 points. Australia remain Asia's top-ranked women's national team after a successful Olympic qualifying campaign, while three successive losses saw Japan drop out of the global top 10 in the latest FIFA World Ranking update.

The two-time defending world champions Americans, who won the recent SheBelieves Cup, accrued 2,181 points. Second-ranked Germany was next at 2,090, with France (2,036), the Netherlands (2,032) and Sweden (2,007) rounding out the top five.

Asia's Top 10 (global rankings in brackets)

Australia (7th)
DPR Korea (10th)
Japan (11th)
China PR (15th)
Korea Republic (18th)
Vietnam (35th)
Thailand (39th)
Chinese Taipei (40th)
Uzbekistan (42nd)
Myanmar (45th)

Son beats Jahanbakhsh to win EPL Goal of the Season award

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Son Heung-min's amazing effort against Burnley has been voted as the 2019-20 Premier League Goal of the Season.

The Tottenham Hotsputr striker showed amazing awareness and poise to score against Burnley in December, which the London side won 5-0.



Collecting the ball just outside the Spurs penalty area, Son embarked on an 80-metre solo run on 32 minutes which included beating several opposing players before slotting home.

The Korea Republic star beat eight other candidates, including Brighton & Hove Albion's Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

Islamic Republic of Iran's Jahanbakhsh scored an acrobatic goal to salvage a point for Brighton in a 1-1 draw with Chelsea in January, the-afc.com reported.

"As soon as I got the ball, I tried to find a pass and I was a bit lucky. I dribbled into the space where no one was," Son said of his goal in December.

"I tried to finish it well because the action before was really quick. I was really focused on my finishing. It was an amazing feeling."

Mehdi Taremi opts to join FC Porto

Portuguese newspaper A Bola has reported that Mehdi Taremi has opted to join Porto.

Porto will play in the next season's UEFA Champions League and Taremi has been seduced by this to join the team.

The 28-year-old forward has been already linked with a move to Benfica but according to the Portuguese newspaper he will prefer to play in Primeira Liga's champions for the next season.

The Rio Ave striker scored 18 goals in the 2019-20 season and helped the team book a place at the 2020-21 Europa League play-off round.

(Source: A Bola)

Sardar Azmoun to leave Zenit: report

A Russian website has reported that Iranian forward Sardar Azmoun will leave Zenit St Petersburg.

Azmoun capped another brilliant season for Zenit by finishing as the 2019-20 Russian Premier League (RPL) top scorer with 17 goals.

Sport-express.ru has reported that the Russian team is going to sell its striker in the summer transfer window.

Italian club Napoli has already shown interest in signing the Persian star.

The site has also reported that Iranian midfielder Saeid Ezatollahi has returned to Rostov.

(Source: Sport-express.ru)

Esteghlal to extend Rouzbeh Cheshmi's contract

Tasnim — Esteghlal football team will extend Rouzbeh Cheshmi's contract by two years.

With two matches remaining, Cheshmi and Esteghlal have reached an initial agreement to extend the contract for two more years.

Esteghlal and Cheshmi will finalize the deal after the match against Paykan in Iran Professional League (IPL).

The 27-year-old defender joined Esteghlal from Saba in 2015. Cheshmi was a member of Iran national football team in the 2018 FIFA World Cup and 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Turning away from knowledge is the excuse of the negligent.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iranian composer Loris Tjeknavorian wins Books for Peace Awards 2020

→1 The Art for Peace Festival, which is held every year in Tehran, is concerned with world peace and environmental issues such as the water crisis in the country.

The festival showcases a variety of artworks by Iranian and international artists in the media of painting, photo, sculpture, graphic design, installation, video art, cinema and theater to promote the culture of peace and a world without violence.

Every year the organizers also honor an individual who has made a significant contribution to peace with a medal.



Composer Loris Tjeknavorian in an undated photo. (IRNA/Asghar Khamseh)

Tjeknavorian has created one of the most memorable pieces of his life during the home quarantine.

He said that he has worked on a special piece over the past four months for which he has not selected a name as yet.

"It is the outcome of contemplation and meditation during the home quarantine. I believe it will be one of the most memorable works of my professional life," he had said.

"The pandemic has caused great losses for musicians, however, it has also provided great opportunities for them to create new and innovative works in their solitude during the home quarantine," he noted.

Earlier in April Tjeknavorian released a 12-minute composition named "Corona". The piece was composed in three movements named "Assault", "Death" and "Life".

"The first step to fight the coronavirus is to observe all the health tips to get rid of this new disease soon, but as long as this situation continues we should try to do our best. If we are artists or musicians we need to work harder, and if not, we need to increase our personal knowledge," he said at that time.

"Ghosts of Belle Isle" comes to Iranian bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of "Ghosts of Belle Isle" by Steven K. Smith has recently been published by Hirmand Publications in Tehran.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Samira Qasemzadeh. "Ghosts of Belle Isle" is the third book in "The Virginia Mysteries" series, but it can easily be read as a standalone.

This exciting middle-grade book is about brothers Sam and Derek who can't wait to explore historic Belle Isle during the 150th anniversary of the Fall of Richmond the end of the U.S. Civil War.

But that's before they learn how the wooded park along the James River once held Union soldiers in a terrible prisoner-of-war camp.

Legend says that the haunting lights over the rapids at night are the ghosts of long-dead soldiers still fighting the Civil War.

The discovery of a haunting mural in the island's crumbling ruins leads the boys and their friend Caitlin into danger. To find the truth, they must brave menacing bullies and an encounter with a Confederate biker gang led by the notorious Mad Dog DeWitt. But some ghosts may be more alive than they ever expected in this book.

The readers join the kids as they face their fears across suspended bridges, secret hideouts and graveyard ceremonies, while discovering names and places from the country's tumultuous past like Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, Hollywood Cemetery and Tredegar Iron Works.

K. Smith writes "The Virginia Mysteries", a middle grade adventure series with a twist of history.

His stories are modern-day fictional mysteries with twists of real locations and events from Virginia history. His books are popular with both boys and girls ages 7-12, appealing to even reluctant readers.

Born and raised in rural northwestern New Jersey, he moved to Virginia in 2011 and quickly fell in love with its history and charm. Steven lives in Richmond, Virginia with his family.

Some of his favorite children's books include "Where the Red Fern Grows", "Rascal", "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer", "Bridge to Terabithia" and the "Chronicles of Narnia" series.

IRIB prepares new religious TV series for Muharram, Safar

ART TEHRAN — Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has prepared three new religious TV series to entertain people during the lunar months of Muharram and Safar, which are observed every year with rituals for the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions.

"Warm Earth" by Saeid Nematollah will be aired on Channel 3 and the team is working hard to complete the project in the hard days of battling with coronavirus.

This is the first time Nematollah is directing a TV series. He is mostly famous for his specific style of writing for several TV series aired previously such as "Dear Brother", "Motherly," "Wound" and "Mania" on different occasions like Muharram and Ramadan.

He is now the writer and director of the "Warm Earth".

Alireza Khamseh, Marjan Shirmohammadi, Asghar Hemmat, Kamran Tafti, Maral Farjad and Shiva Ebrahimi are among the main members of the cast.

The series narrates the story of two brothers who have not heard news of one another for years, however, the elder brother who is in his last hours of life decides to meet his younger brother to make his will,



This combination photo shows the TV series to be aired on IRIB TV channels during the months of Muharram and Safar.

which will put a big challenge into the younger brother's life.

"Najla" is the second series by Sima Films, a film production studio affiliated with IRIB.

It will also be aired on channel 3. The series currently under production is about a love story related to Ashura and Imam Hussein (AS).

Ashura is the 10th day of Muharram, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala in 680 CE as a result of their valiant stand against the Umayyad dynasty.

Azita Hajian, Hessam Manzur, Hedayat Hashemi, Sirus Hemmati and Sogol Tahmasbi are starring in this series.

"Land and Lady" by Saeid Soltani, famous for directing the TV series "After the Rain", will narrate a historical love story dating back to the Pahlavi period.

The main cast of the series are Behnam Tashakkor, Fariba Motakshasses, Masud Rayegan, Mehdi Ahmadi and Diba Zahedi.

"Intrusive", a miniseries previously aired on Channel 1 in Ramadan, will be aired again in Muharram. The story centers on two friends, Aslan and Reza, who used to be rivals in wrestling, but several events have changed their paths.

Behrang Alavi, Ali Ansarian, Nassim Adabi, Rambod Shekarabi and Rahim Noruzi have acted in the series. Several other channels also have plans to air some of their previous productions during Muharram.

Paula Bronstein's photos of Rohingya refugee crisis on display in Kashan

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — Hasht Cheshmeh Gallery in the central Iranian city of Kashan is playing host to an exhibition displaying photos of the 2015 Rohingya refugee crisis by American photojournalist Paula Bronstein.

A selection of 28 photos by Bronstein have been selected to be showcased at the exhibit, Hassan Roshanbakht, the director of the gallery, said on Saturday in a press release.

The collection features the hard life and the sad conditions facing the Muslims of Rohingya over the past few years, and the photographer intends to draw the attention of the world to their pain and sorrow, he added.

The exhibit will be running until September 3 at the gallery located at 44, Fifth Mofasser Alley, Molla Fatollah St.

"Since 2012 I have witnessed the discrimination and persecution of the Rohingya community, documenting their situation in Myanmar and Bangladesh," Paula once said.

"The Buddhist majority in Myanmar struggles to deal with a deeply rooted hatred towards the Muslim ethnic minority, a hatred that has been simmering for years," she added.

"They consider them to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and deny them the right to citizenship," she said.

"In western Rakhine State, the government went further, severely restricting their freedom of movement, creating an apartheid system with no access to education, civil service positions or even basic health care," she noted.

Bronstein's many nominations and awards span decades and represent only a small space in what is simply a lifetime of phenomenal frontline news and documentary photography across the globe.

She sits alongside the most important female photographers of our time, as a multiple nominee and award winner.

Winner of contests, including the Pulitzer, Pictures of the Year International, the National Press Photographer's Association, she has judged for the World Press Photo Award, exhibited extensively, and given interviews herself for the media in the U.S., Australia and across Asia.

Bronstein worked as a staff member for major U.S. newspapers including the Hartford Courant and the Chicago Tribune before moving overseas to Bangkok. She then went on to work for Getty Images as a staff photographer for over a decade.

Her images have been published in almost every globally recognized publication. Her work reflects a dedicated humanitarian and visual war correspondent finding moments



Photo: A photo by American photojournalist Paula Bronstein on the Rohingya Muslim refugees.

nobody else would dare look for.

She continues to photograph presidents and kings, natural disasters, political turmoil and conflict, and always the most impoverished and vulnerable people on this earth, from Mongolia to Afghanistan and Africa. Bronstein currently works freelance.

She has displayed her photo collections in several exhibits across the world.

Audiobook classics of Persian literature released for Azerbaijani listeners

ART TEHRAN — Audio versions of Yusof and Zolaykha and Leyli and Majnun, two love stories from the classic Persian literature, have been released for Azerbaijani listeners.

Both of the audiobooks released by Avaye Chirok, a major Iranian institute that produces audiobooks, have been narrated by Bahmand Vakhshur based on the Azerbaijani translation of the books by Sirus Qamari.

Vakhshur has earlier narrated "The Collection of Azerbaijani Poems of Shahriar", "Qachaq Nabi" ("Qaqaq Nebi"), and "Koroglu" ("Koroglu") for Azerbaijani audiences in three audiobooks released by Avaye Chirok in January.

Leyli and Majnun is a narrative poem of approximately 4,600 lines composed in 1188 by poet Nezami of Ganja, also known as Nezami Ganjavi. It is the third of his five long narrative poems known collectively as the Khamseh (the Quintet).

There are various versions of the Khamseh in Iranian



Cover of the audiobooks the Yusof and Zolaykha and Leyli and Majnun released by Avaye Chirok.

libraries, but the two versions kept at the Central Library of the University of Tehran and the library of the Shahid Motahhari School and Mosque in Tehran were inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register list in 2011.

Yusof and Zolaykha, as a love story with religious overtones, has always been among the most favorite themes of Persian poets who, with direct or oblique references to its various episodes, created a desired imagery, expanded on a particular point in the poem, conveyed a poetic message or reinforced it.

The most celebrated versified rendering of this romance is the Yusof and Zolaykha by Nur ad-Din Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492), who composed it in 1483. It follows the meter of Nezami Ganjavi's Khosrow and Shirin love story and forms the fifth poem in the poet's collection of seven masnavis known as Haft Owrang "Seven Thrones".

The Yusof and Zolaykha story ends in the union and the eventual death of both protagonists.

Flying Turtle Awards held as no winner of grand prize announced



This combination photo shows the front covers of the winning books at the 8th edition of the Flying Turtle Awards.

CULTURE TEHRAN — The 8th edition of the Flying Turtle Awards, which are presented annually to top children's writers in Iran, was organized online Friday evening without the jury's announcement

of a winner for the golden prize.

The jury honored only three books with silver prizes, one of which went to "The Strange Hunting Ground" co-written by Samira Arami and Masumeh Sobhati.

The book tells the story of a king who is interested in hunting, and commissions painters to draw him in the hunting ground after every hunt.

"Vertical Cemetery" by Hamidreza Shahabadi was another winner of a silver prize.

It is about Reza, a little boy who unexpectedly finds himself in a mysterious house, which has remains of people inside its walls. In the house, there are also some children weaving carpets. One day, one of the children drowns in the pool of the house and the story goes on around this issue.

Another silver prize went to "A Dialogue between the Grand Sorcerer and the Queen of the Colors' Island" by Jamshid Khanian.

In this book, Rahi heads toward Treasure Island to do an important job, however, he doesn't know what it is. But he knows well that he will earn a large amount of money and

at last will be able to buy the bicycle he wants.

The Book City Institute and the Children's Literature Studies Periodical are the organizers of the Flying Turtle Awards.

This year, Shahla Tahmasbi, translator of numerous books by children's writers from around the world, and illustrator Karim Nasr were also honored for their lifetime achievements.

Earlier in 2017, French writer Jean-Claude Mourlevat won the golden prize at the Flying Turtle Awards for his "La Rivière à l'envers".

Two Persian translations of "La Rivière à l'envers" by Navid Atar-Sharqi and Zohreh Nateqi have been published in Iran.

The story is set in a time when there were no telephones in a village. It is about Tomek, a 13-year-old orphan who runs the small grocery store in his village. One evening a young girl enters his shop and asks if he sells sugar made from barley. A sequence of events causes Tomek to begin an incredible journey that will lead him to an uncharted island where an amazing river flows upside down.

"Horn", "Song Sparrow" picked for Navarra Intl. Film Festival

ART TEHRAN — Iranian short movies "Horn" and "Song Sparrow" will be competing in the Navarra International Film Festival, which will take place in the northern Spanish city of Pamplona from September 3 to 5.

"Horn" directed by Ghasideh Golmakani is about an Iranian woman who tries to find a place to park her car in Tehran to on time

for a business appointment. Men on the streets disturb her concentration while driving.

Golmakani has also made several other shorts, including "Limbo" and "Online Shopping", which have been screened in several international events.

Farzaneh Omidvarnia is the director of "Song Sparrow", a co-production between Iran and Denmark.

It tells the story of a group of refugees who tries to reach a safe country in search of a better life. They pay a smuggler to transport them across borders in a refrigerated truck. However, the freezing temperature in the truck turns their hopes for a better future into a fierce struggle for survival.

The film has been screened in several international festivals across the world.



This combination photo shows posters for the Iranian short movies "Horn" and "Song Sparrow".