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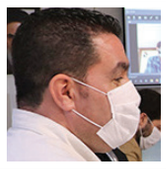
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Reciprocal response to intercept of Iran's airliner doesn't mean similar act



Tehran Times/ Shahab Ghayoumi

Hariri tribunal: Hezbollah, Syria had no link with 2005 blast

By staff & agencies

A UN-backed tribunal says it has not been able to establish any link between a 2005 blast in Beirut that killed Lebanon's former prime minister Rafiq Hariri and the Hezbollah resistance movement or the Syrian government.

The so-called Special Tribunal for Lebanon (SDL) read out a summary of the 2,600-page verdict at The Hague on Tuesday after trying for 15 years and spending some $1 billion to prove allegations of association between the explosion and the Lebanese resistance movement or Damascus.

"There is no evidence that the Hezbollah leadership had any involvement in Mr. Hariri's murder and there is no direct evidence of Syrian involvement," said Judge David Re. →10

Iran, Russia ink MOU on mining cooperation

TEHRAN — Iran Mining Engineering Organization (IMEO) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Russian Export Center (REC) for expanding cooperation in engineering and mining areas, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The MOU was signed by IMEO Head Taqi Nabaei and Head of the Russian Export Center Pavel Bukhanov in Tehran.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, which was attended by senior officials from both sides, Nabaei said: "According to this memorandum, the ground will be prepared for the development of cooperation between Iran and Russia, and the two countries have good capacities in the field of mining and mineral industries."

Referring to Russia's capabilities and advancements in the field of mining machinery, the official said: "the Russian Export Center can help Iran in importing the machinery required in the mining sector and mining industries." →4

Coronavirus costs Iran's tourism $2.8b so far, minister says

TEHRAN – Iran's travel sector has suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some $2.85 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said on Monday.

If the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic is contained, all the tourism businesses across the country will have the capacity to fully resume their activities both in domestic and foreign markets, Mounesan explained.

"Many tourism projects have been completed, or are being implemented, showing that a very good capacity has been created in the field of tourism in the country and [this trend] should not be stopped," he explained. →8

By Faranak Bakhtiari
Tehran Times journalist

World needs more real-life heroes

Although hero reminds us of mystical creatures in legends that did extraordinary things, in our world, the heroes are just as worthy of admiration because they're really showing an uncanny ability to persevere despite the most extreme circumstances, and to do so with humility and dedication.

Medical staff, environmental defenders, doctors without borders, and those delivering humanitarian aid to refugees are the real-life heroes that the world needs more of them.

This year is the eleventh year to celebrate World Humanitarian Day, paying special tribute to real-life heroes.

On World Humanitarian Day, August 19, the world commemorates humanitarian workers killed and injured in the course of their work, honoring all aid and health workers who continue, despite the odds, to provide life-saving support and protection to people most in need.

This year World Humanitarian Day comes as the world continues to fight the COVID-19 pandemic over recent months. Aid workers are overcoming unprecedented access hurdles to assist people in humanitarian crises in 54 countries, as well as in a further nine countries which have been catapulted into humanitarian need by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This day was designated in memory of the 19 August 2003 bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, killing 22 people, including the chief humanitarian in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. In 2009, the United Nations General Assembly formalized the day as World Humanitarian Day.

Therefore, the campaign presents the inspiring personal stories of humanitarians who are treating and preventing COVID-19, providing food to vulnerable people in need, providing safe spaces for women and girls in lockdown; delivering babies; fighting locusts, and running refugee camps, all amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dedicated medics fighting the invisible enemy

The Iranian medical community has repeatedly succeeded in surviving the people in the floods and earthquakes, and so on, but this time the test is bigger and broader. →9

How Iran will respond to snapback sanctions

TEHRAN— As the U.S. moves forward with its plan to snap back all UN sanctions on Iran, the world holds its breath to see how Iran would respond to a potential return of UN restrictions.

President Donald Trump has announced that the U.S. will be triggering the snapback of UN sanctions on Iran, a mechanism built into the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers to allow the deal's parties to reinstate the UN sanctions on Iran in case it didn't uphold its commitments under the deal, which is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"We'll be doing a snapback. You'll be watching it next week," Trump said on August 15, the day after the UN Security Council rejected a U.S.-drafted resolution to extend a UN arms embargo on Iran.

Under the JCPOA, the arms embargo is slated to expire on 18 October. However, the U.S. makes efforts to extend the embargo. In a bid to ensure that the embargo is not expired, the U.S. plans to resort to the highly controversial process of triggering the snapback, a move that is widely expected to face firm opposition from the JCPOA parties, including Washington's European allies.

Tehran and other remaining parties to the JCPOA have strongly questioned the U.S. legal authority to re-impose the UN sanctions on Iran because it unilaterally ceased its participation in the deal. However, the U.S. claims that its withdrawal from the JCPOA didn't deprive it of the right to use the snapback process. The U.S. is now making the case that it's still a "JCPOA participant state" as defined by the UN Security Council resolution 2231, which was unanimously adopted on July 20, 2015, to endorse the nuclear deal. →3

Crowd protests outside U.S. Postmaster's North Carolina home

By staff & agencies

More than 100 demonstrators converged outside the North Carolina mansion of the postmaster general, protesting the cutbacks, delays and other changes to the U.S. Postal Service that have created fears for mail-in voting ahead of the November presidential election.

Protesters gathered for about two hours Sunday along the streets below Louis DeJoy's gated property, which overlooks the Greensboro Country Club golf course. They chanted and held signs that read: "Sabotage of the USPS is un-American" and "Save USPS," among other messages, news outlets said.

DeJoy, a Republican fundraiser and major political donor named to lead the Postal Service in May, has sparked a nationwide outcry over postal delays and cutbacks just as millions of Americans prepare to vote by mail to avoid polling places during the coronavirus pandemic.

The protest follows President Donald Trump's acknowledgement in an interview on Fox Business Network that he has been starving the Postal Service of money in order to make it harder to process an expected surge of mail-in ballots, which he worries could cost him the election.

The Postal Service warned states last week that it could not guarantee all ballots cast by mail would arrive in time to be counted, even if mailed by deadlines.

Protestors also gathered outside DeJoy's apartment building in Washington early Saturday morning in a similar protest, The Washington Post reported.

It was unclear whether DeJoy was at either home during the demonstrations.

The Postal Service did not immediately respond to news outlets' requests for comment. →10

UK's lead role in 1953 Iran coup d'etat exposed

(Excerpt from Al Jazeera) – A recently discovered transcript of an interview with a British intelligence officer who played a leading role in the 1953 coup that restored powers to the shah of Iran claims that Britain was the driving force behind the overthrow of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh.

On the anniversary of the UK-U.S.-led coup d'etat that removed Iran's democratically elected leader, an interview with Norman Darbyshire - head of the MI6 spy agency's "Persia" station in Cyprus at the time - was published.

In his account, Darbyshire said Britain had convinced the U.S. to take part in the coup.

"Even though it has been an open secret for decades, the UK government has not officially admitted its fundamental role in the coup. Finding the Darbyshire transcript is like finding the smoking gun. It is a historic discovery," Taghi Amirani, the director of Coup 53, was quoted by the Guardian newspaper as saying.

The coup - known as Operation Ajax - eventually succeeded on August 19, 1953. Mossadegh was tried and kept under house arrest until his death 14 years later.

"The plan would have involved seizure of key points in the city by what units we thought were loyal to the shah ... seizure of the radio station etc ... The classical plan," Darbyshire said.

Mossadegh had nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and MI6 believed Soviet-backed communists would eventually take over the government, according to Darbyshire. →3



Ayatollah Taskhiri passes away

TEHRAN – Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri, 76, passed away on Tuesday.

He died of heart attack at Khatam al-Anbia hospital in Tehran.

The ayatollah was senior advisor to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, on Islamic world.

Taskhiri was a renowned religious figure in the Islamic world. He served as secretary general of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought. During his tenure in that position, he made great efforts for unity among Muslims.

He also acted as a member of the Assembly of Experts for two terms, first time representing the northern province of Gilan and then Tehran.

Fluent in Arabic language, he wrote and translated tens of books about Islam and the Islamic world.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif issued messages expressing condolences over the demise.

Race for Covid-19 vaccine

By Salman Parviz

TEHRAN — As the number of coronavirus cases around the world surpassed 20 million mark, scientists and pharmaceutical industries around the world are racing towards developing the vaccine for the infectious Covid-19 disease that has caused 772,000 deaths along with 13.5 million recoveries.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on August 11 the news of the first vaccine to treat Covid-19. World's first coronavirus vaccine was developed following trials conducted by the Gamaleya Institute for Epidemiology and Microbiology in Moscow in collaboration with the Defense Ministry.

Putin said one of his daughters has already received dose of the vaccine, which has been named Sputnik-V, referring to the satellite Russia launched into space during the Cold War, beating the U.S. to the punch.

Alexander Ginzburg, a microbiologist and director of the state-owned Gamaleya Institute of Moscow, injected himself along with one hundred institute employees with the vaccine he developed four months ago. Everyone is still healthy. The Russian government is hoping to approve Ginzburg's vaccine as rapidly as possible.

Worth mentioning is that Russia approved mass production of the vaccine without undergoing Phase III trials. According to historyofvaccines.org, vaccine development is a long, complex process, often lasting 10-15 years and involving a combination of public and private involvement.

The argument for Putin's decision could be that since Phase I and Phase II trials have undergone without any safety concerns, the longer-term Phase III trials can be held simultaneously along with general public vaccination. This way thousands of lives could be saved if Russia's Phase III trials finish without safety concerns. →7

Europe to keep nuclear deal on life support until November election: Foreign Policy

POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN – In a commentary on Tuesday, Foreign Policy said the Europeans remain committed to keeping the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, on life support at least until the United States' presidential election in November.

The magazine said the U.S. lost the showdown at the United Nations Security Council over extending the terms of the arms embargo against Iran and seeks to trigger the snapback mechanism.

The global magazine of news and ideas said the response from the remaining parties to the nuclear deal will be critical.

Following is an excerpt of the article:

The United States just lost the showdown at the United Nations Security Council over extending the terms of the arms embargo against Iran. The U.S. government was left embarrassingly isolated, winning just one other vote for its proposed resolution (from the Dominican Republic), while Russia and China voted against and 11 other nations abstained.

But the Trump administration is not deterred: In response to the vote, President Donald Trump threatened that "we'll be doing a snapback"—a reference to reimposing sanctions suspended under the 2015 nuclear deal from which the United States withdrew in 2018.

The dance around the arms embargo has always been a prelude to the bigger goal: burning down the remaining bridges that could lead back to the 2015 deal. The Trump administration now seeks to snap back international sanctions using a measure built into the very nuclear agreement the Trump White House withdrew from two years ago. This latest gambit by the Trump administration is unsurprisingly contested by other world powers.

On the one hand, Russia and China are making a technical, legal argument against the U.S. move.

Seizing on its failure to extend the arms embargo, the United States now claims it can start the clock on a 30-day notification period, after which UN sanctions removed against Iran by the nuclear deal are reinstated. This notification will be timed deliberately to end before October—when the arms embargo is set to expire, and also when Russia takes over presidency of the UN Security Council: a time when Washington could face more procedural hurdles.

The dance around the arms embargo has always been a prelude to the bigger goal: burning down the remaining bridges that could lead back to the 2015 deal.

What is likely to follow snapback is a messy scene at the UN in which council members will broadly fall into three groups.

First, the United States will seek to build support for its case—primarily through political and economic pressure—so that by the end of the 30-day notice period some UN member states agree to implement sanctions. The Trump administration will likely use the threat of U.S. secondary sanctions, as it has done successfully over the last 18 months, if governments don't move to enforce snapback sanctions.

Even if most governments around the world disagree that the United States has any authority to impose snapback sanctions, some countries may be forced to side with Washington given the threat that the United States could turn its economic pressure against them.

The second group will be led by China and Russia, both of which have already started to push back. Not only will this group refuse to implement the UN sanctions that the U.S. government claims should be reimposed, but they likely will throw obstacles into the mix, such as blocking the reinstitution of appropriate UN committees that will oversee the implementation of such sanctions. This group may also see it as advantageous to seek a determination by the International Court of Justice on the legal question over the U.S. claim.

The third grouping will be led by the France, Britain, and Germany, who remain united in the belief that the deal should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. In a statement in June, the three governments already emphasized that they would not support unilateral snapback by the United States. But it is unclear if this will translate into active opposition—and their approach will certainly not include the obstructionist moves that Russia and China may make.

This bloc will look to stall decisions to take the steps necessary to implement the UN sanctions. This is a delicate undertaking, as European countries are not in the habit of blatantly ignoring the binding framework of some of the UN's directives, and will want to balance their actions against the risk of eroding the Security Council's credibility further. But they will also take advantage of whatever procedural avenues are in place to delay full enforcement of the sanctions, buying time to urge Iranian restraint in response to the U.S. moves.

Until now, the remaining parties to the nuclear deal have managed to preserve the deal's architecture despite its hollowing out. The aim has been to stumble along until the U.S. election to see if a new opening is possible to resuscitate the agreement with a possible Biden administration in January.

Russia: Expiration of arms embargo on Iran means implementation of UN resolution

POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN — Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said that expiration of arms embargo on Iran simply means an implementation of one of the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231.

"Some people try to present the expiration of arms trade restrictions (de-jure and de-facto not what we used to call arms embargo) with regard to Iran on 18 October as somewhat as catastrophe. In fact it will simply mean an implementation of one of the provisions of 2231 UNSC res.," Ulyanov tweeted on Tuesday.

On Friday, the UN Security Council overwhelmingly rejected a U.S. draft resolution to extend arms embargo against Iran which ends on October 18 under Resolution 2231 that endorsed the 2015 nuclear agreement. Out of 15 countries on the council only the Dominican Republic voted in favor of the resolution. Russia and China voted against and the rest, including Washington's European allies, abstained.

Russian leader Vladimir Putin has proposed an online conference between leaders of the countries which are permanent members of the UN Security Council as well as Germany and Iran to discuss security in the Persian Gulf and the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

Zarif's assistant says UAE-Israel agreement not beneficial to the region

POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN — Ali-Asghar Khaji, the Iranian foreign minister's special assistant for political affairs, has said that an agreement between the United Arab Emirates and the Zionist regime to normalize ties will not be beneficial to the regional countries.

In an interview with Al-Ahed news website, Khaji said that Iran has announced its stance in opposing the move which is not beneficial to the regional and Islamic countries, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

It was announced on Thursday that the UAE and Israel plan to normalize ties and establish full diplomatic relationship.

President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday condemned the agreement, 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) helps find a place for the Zionist regime in the region... then it will be different and they (the Emiratis) will be treated differently," Rouhani said.

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.



Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Friday calling the agreement a "strategic stupidity" and "a dagger in the back of Muslims".

The statement said the move will definitely result in boosting the axis of resistance.

Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri on Sunday urged the United Arab Emirates to revise its decision to establish ties with the Zionist regime.

"In a situation in which all the freedom-seeking people in the world express disgust over relationship with the Zionist regime, it is regrettable that a neighbor of the Islamic Republic announces normalization of ties with this child-killing regime," Bagheri said.

He noted that as a Muslim country, such relationship is not acceptable for the UAE.

"We advise the United Arab Emirates to revise its decision before it is too late and avoid continuing a path which is harmful to regional security," the top general noted.

Also, Iranian Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi on Monday slammed the agreement, describing it as a treacherous move against Islam and the Palestinian cause.

Raisi warned the UAE rulers "who are in glass towers" about the consequences of the move, Mehr reported.

"The betrayal of the Emirates' rulers are not forgivable and it will not be wiped out by the passage of time," he said. "The Emirates' collaboration and cooperation with the child killer and aggressive regime of Israel will not be ignored by the freedom-seekers of the world and it will remain in the memory of nations."

Hillary Clinton says next U.S. administration should try to rejoin nuclear deal

Clinton doubts Iran would still be 'receptive' to limits under nuclear pact

By staff and agency

Former U.S. state secretary and former Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has said that the next administration of the United States should try to rejoin the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA - which the Trump administration quit in 2018.

"Clinton said the next U.S. administration should try to rejoin the Obama-era Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)," Atlantic Council reported on Monday.

During an Atlantic Council Front Page event broadcast on August 17, Clinton said she wasn't sure whether Iran's leaders would still be "receptive" to resuming the pact.

"One outgrowth of the Trump administration's withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, she argued, is that Iran and China have brokered a military and economic agreement. Clinton added, however, that Chinese economic support for Iran still isn't sufficient to counteract the pressure Tehran is under from international sanctions."

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.

The U.S. move was in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that endorsed the JCPOA.

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

In May 2019, exactly one year after the U.S. unilaterally quit the deal and imposed sanctions on Iran, Tehran began to gradually reduce its commitments under the JCPOA to both retaliate for Washington's departure and Europeans' failure to honor their commitments.

On January 5, 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.

"One outgrowth of the Trump administration's withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, she argued, is that Iran and China have brokered a military and economic agreement."



Iran's move is in line with paragraph 36 of the JCPOA.

President Hassan Rouhani said on May 6 that Iran will return to full implementation of the JCPOA if other signatories do the same.

Iraqi PM: We do not play the role of postman between Iran and U.S.

By staff and agency

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has said that Iraq does not play the role of postman between Iran and the United States.

He made the remarks when asked by the Associated Press about if he was bringing any messages from Tehran ahead of a trip to Washington.

Kadhimi visited Iran on July 21-22 in line with expanding foreign ties.

Kadhimi visited Tehran to discuss ties between Iran and Iraq. The Iraqi prime minister met with a number of high-ranking Iranian officials including President Hassan Rouhani, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

During a joint press conference with Rouhani on July 21, Kadhimi said that his visit to Iran was aimed at boosting ties.

Several senior Iraqi officials including Minister of Finance and Prime Minister Assistant for Economic and Energy Affairs



Ali Abdul Amir Allawi, Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, Petroleum Minister Ehsan Abdul Jabar, Health Minister Hassan Mohammad al-Tamimi, Minister of Planning Khaled Battal, Defense Minister Joma Enad, Electricity Minister Majed Hantoush, National Security Advisor Qassem al-Araji and Head of Trade Bank of Iraq Faisal al-Haimus accompanied the prime minister on his first visit to a foreign country since taking office.

Foreign Ministry rebuffs U.S. media reports on Taliban bounties

POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN — Spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry denied on Tuesday reports in U.S. media on the bounties Iran allegedly paid to the Taliban to kill American and coalition troops in Afghanistan.

"The U.S., which has no answer for the families of its killed soldiers in Afghanistan, seeks to cover up its miscalculations in Afghanistan through media propaganda," spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said, calling on the U.S. to act responsibly rather than blaming others.

He also called on the U.S. to "end its disastrous presence in Afghanistan as soon as possible."

The statement came after CNN reported that Iran offered bounties to Taliban fighters for targeting American and coalition troops in Afghanistan.

"U.S. intelligence agencies assessed that Iran offered bounties to Taliban fighters for targeting American and coalition



troops in Afghanistan, identifying payments linked to at least six attacks carried out by the militant group just last year alone, including a suicide bombing at a U.S. air base in December," CNN claimed.

However, Khatibzadeh called the claim "thoroughly untrue," adding that the U.S. has been mired in a "self-induced quagmire in Afghanistan," which led to the U.S. soldiers being killed thousands of miles away from their home.

UK should officially apologize to Iranians for 1953 coup: diplomat

POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN – Iran's Ambassador to London has said that the United Kingdom should offer a formal apology to the Iranian people for 1953 coup that overthrew the government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq.

"The UK's role-along with US-in the coup d'etat overthrowing Iran's elected government 67 years ago today, is indisputable," Hamid Baeedinejad tweeted on Tuesday.

Baeedinejad added, "UK has never offered a formal apology to the people of Iran for its act of violent infringement against Iranian national sovereignty. Why? It's high time."

In the coup d'état (known in Iran as the 28 Mordad coup), the democratically elected government of Iran led by Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq was overthrown



on August 19, 1953. The coup was orchestrated jointly by the United States, under the name "Pejak Project", and the United Kingdom, under the name of "Operation Boot".

The coup saw the formation of a military government under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who progressed from a constitutional monarch to an authoritarian one who relied heavily on United States' support to hold on to power until his own overthrow in February 1979.

In 1989, the U.S. State Department first released coup-related documents, but edited out any reference to American or British involvement. Since then, the omission of CIA's role has been widely criticized by historians.

Finally, in 2013, the CIA publicly admitted for the first time that it was behind the coup. It also released documents that showed how the British government tried to block the release of information about its own involvement in overthrow of Mosaddegh.

Russia rejected U.S. anti-Iran text after 19 months of negotiation: State Department

(Press TV) — Russia "refused to negotiate" an anti-Iran text proposed by the U.S. ahead of Washington's embarrassment at the UN Security Council over extension of an arms embargo on Tehran, says a State Department official.

"The United States has for the last 19 months sought to foster dialogue and discussion with Russia and other Security Council members on extending the UN arms embargo," the State Department spokesperson told U.S. News on Monday. "Russia has repeatedly, and puzzlingly, claimed there is no legitimate basis to discuss extending the UN arms embargo at the UN Security Council, and has refused to negotiate on any of the texts we proposed."

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, the official further claimed that Washington has rejected Russian President Vladimir Putin's call for a global summit on Iran because it finds the Security Council "the best place to have discussions" on the issue.

"The United States believes strongly that the Security Council is the best place to have discussions related to extending the UN arms embargo, and we have the benefit of 13 years of Security Council precedent on our side," the spokesperson said in an email.

This is while U.S. President Donald Trump has reportedly told aides he would like to meet with his Russian counterpart in person before the 2020 presidential election in November.

The U.S. faced an embarrassment at the Security Council Friday after even its allies — Germany, France, and Britain — refused to throw their support behind Trump in extending the arms embargo on Iran, set to be lifted in October under the Iran nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Iranians view 1953 coup as symbol of U.S. wickedness: Vaezi

POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN — Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi says the 1953 coup is regarded by the Iranian people as the symbol of the United States' wickedness and its irresponsible interference in Iran's affairs.

In an Instagram post on Tuesday, Vaezi wrote that sixty-seven years ago on this day, the Americans overthrew the elected government of the Iranian people by participating in a disgraceful coup.

The coup was neither the first nor the last American intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, he said, adding, "Twenty-five years after that coup, Iranians organized a revolution that ended any foreign interference in the affairs of the country and the fate of its people."

Vaezi also noted that the Iranian nation are still united in rejecting foreign intervention and safeguarding the country's independence.

"This is a reality that the greedy will have to sooner or later accept it," he added.

The foreign-backed coup d'état, known in Iran as the 28 Mordad coup, saw the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh on 19 August 1953 in favor of strengthening the monarchical rule of



Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Known as Operation Ajax, the coup was carried out after an earlier coup attempt failed to overthrow Mosaddegh and install General Fazlollah Zahedi, the shah's reliable ally, as prime minister. As a result, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the shah of Iran, had fled to Baghdad.

With the success of the second coup, Zahedi was installed as prime minister, and the shah returned to Iran and continued to rule more firmly as monarch.

Mosaddegh was then arrested, tried and convicted of treason by the shah's military court. He was sentenced to death, but on the shah's personal orders, his sentence was commuted to three years in solitary confinement in a military prison, followed by house arrest until his death.

Mosaddegh had also played a key role in the country's 1951 movement that resulted in the nationalization of oil industry, which had been mainly controlled by the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), also known as BP.

Experts say the 1953 coup was aimed at securing the West's oil interests in the country by restoring power to the Shah.

For years, the United States and Britain were blamed for the coup but both governments tried their best to sweep the story under the rug.

In 1989, the U.S. State Department first released coup-related documents, but edited out any reference to American or British involvement. Since then, the omission of CIA's role has been widely criticized by historians.

Finally, in 2013, the CIA publicly admitted for the first time that it was behind the coup. It also released documents that showed how the British government tried to block the release of information about its own involvement in overthrow of Mosaddegh.

Trump daydreaming of bringing Iran to negotiating table, says Zarif

POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump is lost in a daydream when he says Iran will soon come to the negotiating table, says Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

"After exiting Barjam (nuclear deal), Trump told some Western countries to give him a few months' time and 'I bring Iran to the negotiating table'," Zarif said in a televised interview on Monday night, according to Mehr.

"He has not yet backed down and says 'if I'm (re) elected, I will bring the Iranians to the negotiating table'," Zarif remarked, adding that the U.S. president must be daydreaming to make such remarks.

On Friday, the United States' efforts to extend an arms embargo on Iran ended in a humiliating defeat at the UN Security Council. Only the Dominican Republic backed the U.S.-anti-Iran resolution. The vote highlighted the division between Washington and its European allies since Trump withdrew from the nuclear accord in May 2018.

Russia and China voted against the resolution. The other members, including France and Britain as permanent members of the council, and Germany refused to vote in favor of the U.S. resolution.

Following Washington's failure at the UN Security Council, Trump announced that he intends to trigger the snapback mechanism, which would reimpose international sanctions against Iran at the United Nations.

In response, Zarif said in a tweet on Sunday that United States' recourse to the snapback mechanism under resolution 2231 has "no leg to stand on," as Trump has withdrawn the U.S. from the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Zarif: Even JCPOA's corpse defeats Washington



In his Monday night interview, the foreign minister said the U.S. is not a dominant power in the world anymore, hinting at its failure with the UNSC vote on Friday as a sign of the decline of Washington's power.

The U.S. "killed" the JCPOA, "buried" it and held a "funeral" for it, but even the corpse of the nuclear pact defeated the United States, he stated.

Pointing to the UN Security Council's rejection of the U.S.-drafted resolution against Iran, Zarif said the U.S. has made miscalculations in major international issues.

The chief Iranian diplomat argued that the Americans thought they could secure 9 votes, which would prompt Russia and China to veto the resolution, but it didn't even needed those countries using their veto power.

"The United States' resolution received two in favor votes, meaning [the U.S.] was able to convince or coerce or encourage or bribe only one country to vote in favor of its resolution," he asserted.

According to Zarif, the fact that Russia and China voted against the resolution demonstrated the two countries' insistence on their stance.

In a statement on Friday, Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed an online summit with the U.S., Britain, France, China, Germany and Iran in a bid to avoid "confrontation and escalation" at the UN.

"The issue is urgent," the Russian president said, adding that the alternative was "only further escalation of tensions, increasing risk of conflict - such a scenario must be avoided."

The call was welcomed by some countries, including China and France, but Trump dismissed it.

Also, on Monday, Beijing called on Washington to abandon its "unilateralism", put an end to its sanctions on Iran, and adopt a correct path towards respecting the multilaterally-achieved nuclear agreement.

The U.S. needed to abandon unilateralism as well as unilateral sanctions, adopt a reasonable and realistic attitude, and return to the "right track" of observing the nuclear agreement and the United Nations Security Council decisions, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said during a regular press conference on Monday.

"The voting result once again shows that unilateralism receives no support and bullying will fail. Any attempt to place one's own interest above the common interest of the international community is a dead end," he added.

Ghalibaf calls on parliaments in Muslim states to hinder UAE-Israel deal

POLITICAL desk

TEHRAN — Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf has condemned a normalization of ties between the UAE and Israel, calling on the parliaments of Islamic countries to make use of their capacities to oppose and hamper the "disgraceful" agreement.

In a message to parliament speakers of all Islamic countries, Ghalibaf said the normalization plan would undermine all efforts by Islamic countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Islamic Inter-Parliamentary Union to realize the inalienable rights of the oppressed people of Palestine, Mehr reported.

"Undoubtedly, it is merely the resolve of the Palestinian people and the Resistance that can lead to the liberation of the main and historical land of Palestine," he wrote.



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

The deal was announced on Thursday 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 Aljazeera.

President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday warned Abu Dhabi that the agreement must never prepare the ground for the presence of the Zionist regime in the Persian Gulf.

According to Ghalibaf, the agreement will encourage the Zionist regime to occupy the remaining Palestinian lands and deny the rights of the Palestinian people.

The "provocative act" and the "strategic mistake" of Abu Dhabi would encourage the continuation of crimes by the Zionist regime, and as a result, it would threaten peace and security in the region, the parliament speaker warned.

Therefore, he continued, it is necessary for the parliaments of Islamic countries, as the representatives of the Muslim nations, to strongly denounce this act and to use all parliamentary measures and initiatives to oppose and hamper this "disgraceful" agreement, he concluded.

On Friday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif deplored the deal, saying such a "treacherous" move would by no means affect the Palestinian resistance.

Zarif made the remarks in a phone conversation with secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement, Ziad al-Nakhala.

"This behavior will increase the hatred of the people of the region and Palestine against these policies," said Zarif.

"We are confident that this treacherous move will not affect the resistance of the Palestinian people and the resistance movement, and will certainly increase the hatred of the people of the region and Palestine for these policies against the Palestinian cause," he added, according to Iran Press.

DM asks parliament to ratify extra budget for research

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami asked the legislature to ratify an extra independent budget to boost research at his ministry, and stressed domestic capabilities to produce different strategic weapons to defend the country against any possible threat.

"Given the existence of different infrastructures, we do not have any problem with the production of strategic weapons and other products," General Hatami said in a meeting with a number of lawmakers at an exhibition held by the defense ministry in Tehran on Tuesday.

He further asked the parliamentarians to approve an independent budget for defense research, saying that it will certainly help achievement of novel technologies and strengthening Iran's power to respond to enemies' threats.

Referring to the vital role of the Defense Ministry in ensuring peace and security against foreign threats, the minister said, "The Parliament's support can hugely contribute to the realization of this goal."

He also pointed to the potentials of the ministry in other sectors, and said, "The Defense Ministry, with Parliament's cooperation, is also ready to contribute to efforts in non-military economic sectors as well."

Last Sunday, Iranian legislators in a statement stressed support for strengthening the country's defense industry and missile and arms power.

The statement issued on the occasion of the Defense Industry Day in Iran underscored the need for using elites and specialists active in the defense industry and knowledge-based companies to further develop the country's defense industry.

"Enhancement of self-sufficiency in production of weapons and defense equipment prevents the cruel sanctions from leaving any impact (on the country) and it has and will defeat the U.S. and the Zionist regime repeatedly and in a disgraceful way," it added.

The statement also condemned cooperation with the U.S. and Israel in putting restrictions on Iran's defense and missile power by any government and official and unofficial entities, describing it as "unforgivable".

Earlier this month, General Hatami said that development and updating of the country's defense capability is the top priority of his ministry, adding that despite U.S. sanctions, prominent progresses have been made in the field of defense know-how and technology.

Hatami said that the Defense Ministry has put atop its agenda to improve missile capability and produce the most advanced and sophisticated equipment in the field of naval warfare.

Elaborating on Iran's defense power in the region and world, he added, "Today, we are proud that, despite the U.S. cruel sanctions, we have attained outstanding achievements in the defense field."

As it has been said repeatedly, the Defense Ministry can meet the needs of the Armed Forces in all areas of ground, air, naval, electronic, missile, etc. through paying due attention to the domestic capabilities under the wise leadership of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the Defense Minister reiterated.

How Iran will respond to snapback sanctions

1→ There are two schools of thought concerning the U.S. position on the snapback; some believe that the U.S. has no legal authority to initiate the snapback process because it is no longer a JCPOA participant state from a legal point of view, while others believe that the U.S. as a hegemonic state with veto power could succeed in triggering the snapback by exploiting its leverages at the UN Security Council, according to Hassan Beheshtipour, a West Asia expert.

"The U.S. can't snap back the UN sanctions on Iran by using the legal authority stipulated in the JCPOA and the UN Security Council resolution 2231 because it has withdrawn from the JCPOA according to a directive issued by President Trump. Furthermore, the snapback mechanism is a part of the JCPOA, and resolution 2231 endorsed the nuclear deal. So the U.S. has no right to initiate the snapback mechanism," Beheshtipour told the Tehran Times

He added even if the U.S. triggers the snapback sanctions, other countries on the Security Council won't implement the sanctions since the implementation of these sanctions is contingent on cooperation with the other countries.

He also said that the European signatories to the JCPOA can save the deal by not implementing the UN sanctions if they are reinstated.

Iran has previously said that any extension of the UN arms embargo would lead to the death of the JCPOA. Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand warned late July that the U.S. efforts to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran would spell the end of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Similarly, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani has warned about the death of the JCPOA.

In a tweet on May 3, Shamkhani wrote: "JCPOA will die forever by circumventing 2231 Resolution & continuing Iran's illegal weapons sanctions. Sanctions' virus is the U.S. tool for survival of its declining hegemony. What will EU do: Save dignity & support multilateralism or Accept humiliation & help unilateralism?"

In a message to the leaders of the JCPOA parties in May 2019, President Hassan Rouhani warned against extending the UN arms embargo, saying that the extension of the arms embargo would have "dire consequences."

It's not clear yet what Rouhani meant in his warning. But Beheshtipour said that the Iranian president has warned that Iran will stop implementing the Additional Protocol to the NPT.

"On the first anniversary of the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, President Rouhani sent a message to all JCPOA parties in May 2019, declaring that under the supervision of the IAEA, Iran will gradually reduce its commitments under the JCPOA. Iran also warned that it will not be committed to the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol if the snapback mechanism triggered," Beheshtipour noted, underlining that the Rouhani message was confidential and its details have never been disclosed.

The expert went further to say, "The message was very important and strategic because Iran outlined its response to the potential triggering of the snapback. In this message Iran told the JCPOA parties what it will do if they trigger the snapback."

Beheshtipour said he didn't see the message but it was clear for him that Rouhani warned of stopping the implementation of the Additional Protocol.

According to Beheshtipour, Iran is cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at the highest level, despite all diplomatic tensions between Iran and the U.S. The IAEA has the most robust verification system in Iran, pointed out the expert. But, he added, this system will be dismantled if the U.S. triggers the snapback.

The analyst said Iran has many options to respond to the snapback including stopping the implementation of the Additional Protocol, increasing the uranium enrichment level, and ending cooperation with the IAEA, which will make the West regret the triggering of the snapback.

There are speculations that Iran could wait until the U.S. presidential election to respond even if the U.S. initiates the snapback. However, Beheshtipour believes that regardless of who may win the U.S. election, Iran will respond to the U.S. move since the snapback process could totally dismantle the JCPOA.

UK's lead role in 1953 Iran coup d'etat exposed

1→ "I really do believe it, because Mossadegh was a fairly weak character," the spy said. "[O]nce you get highly trained members of the communist party in, it doesn't take long. We didn't share the American view that he was acting as a bulwark against communism ... We thought he would be pushed by the communists in the long run," said Darbyshire.

The U.S. was initially uninterested, and Britain did not want to move without Washington.



"In the early months of [19]53 ..] we thought we had enough military units to mount something, but London started getting cold feet," he said in the interview.

"Unfortunately, the head of SIS [MI6] at the time, General [John] Sinclair knew about as much of the Middle East as a 10-year-old," Darbyshire added.

Darbyshire said Mossadegh's removal was inevitable.

"They would have wanted to oust Mossadegh regardless of whether he would have signed an agreement favorable to the British," he said. "Eventually they would have been forced to have considered getting rid of him to prevent a Russian takeover. I am convinced that was on the cards."

"The coup cost 700,000 pounds. I know because I spent it," Darbyshire said.

Exports of medical herbs up 120% in 4 months yr/yr

ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN** – The value of the Iranian exports of medical plants in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21) increased by 120 percent compared to the same period last year, a senior official at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said.

According to Mahmoud Bazari, director-general of TPO's Export Coordination Office for agro crops and processing industry products, the exports of the mentioned products also increased by 46 percent in terms of weight in the said four months, ILNA reported.



Among the exported items that have witnessed growth in the mentioned period Asafoetida, fennel seeds, coriander seeds and other extracts can be mentioned, which have been exported to various countries like Turkey, India, Pakistan, Iraq and Germany, the official said.

Pakistan, Turkey and Iraq have been the main buyers of Iranian medicinal plants in the mentioned period, Bazari added.

The official noted that the exports of the medical herbs and plants have increased by over 160 percent in the past nine years.

Based on the Iranian Vice Presidency for Science and Technology data, Iran earns some $500 million annually by exporting medicinal herbs, of which about $350 million is related to saffron and the rest is the share of other medicinal herbs.

Steel products output up 5% in 4 months yr/yr

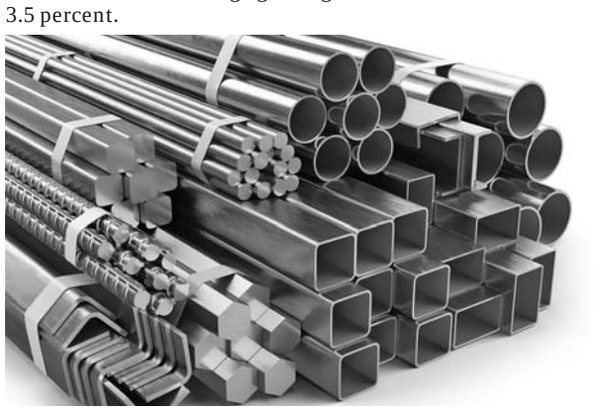
ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN** — Production of steel products in Iran increased five percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21) from the figure of the same period of time in the past year, IRIB reported.

As reported, 7.257 million tons of steel products have been produced during the four-month period of this year, while the figure was 6.93 million tons in the first four months of the previous year.

As previously reported, production of crude steel in the country has also increased in the first four months of this year.

Iranian steel producers produced 9.483 million tons of crude steel during the four-month period of this year, which was nine percent more than 8.683 million tons of the product produced in the same time span of the previous year.

According to a report released by the World Steel Association (WSA), Iran's crude steel production increased by 30 percent in 2019 while the average global growth in this sector stood at 3.5 percent.



Based on the WSA's report, Iran produced 31.9 million tons of the mentioned commodity during 2019, while the figure was 24 million tons in 2018.

According to the World Steel Association, Iran became the world's tenth-largest steel producer in 2018.

Iran which stood at the 13th place in 2017 could lag behind three major steel producers in the world, namely Italy, Taiwan, and Ukraine to stand at the 10th place in 2018, despite the re-imposition of sanctions by the U.S.

Last month, a board member of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) told IRNA that Iran has the capacity to export 15 million tons of steel per annum.

Saying that the country's annual steel production has reached 30 million tons, Reza Shahrestani stated that of this figure 15 million tons can be exported and bring $7 billion of revenue for the country.

"Iran is now among the world's top ten steel producers and in order to prove our capabilities in this due, we should have a strong presence in the international markets", he stressed.

Iran's export of steel products in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) rose 27 percent compared to its preceding year.

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

According to the data released by the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry, in the mentioned period over 20.226 million tons of steel ingots were produced by the country's 10 major companies to register a five-percent rise year on year.

The mentioned companies also produced nearly 13.38 million tons of other steel products last year, six percent more than the preceding year.

In a bid to prevent the exports of unprocessed minerals, creating more value-added and meeting the requirements of domestic producers for the raw materials, Iran has levied a 25-percent duty on the exports of raw minerals (especially iron ore) since September 23, 2019.

Industry 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.

As Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has announced, Iran's annual steel ingot production is planned to increase 3.2 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 2021).

The country has defined 16 development projects in the steel sector to boost the output of steel products by 17.3 million tons in five years.

Iran, Russia ink MOU on mining cooperation



1 → He also expressed the Iranian mining sectors' readiness for establishing connections with their Russian counterparts for the expansion of future cooperation.

According to the Russian Federal Customs Service, the trade between Iran and Russia stood at $1.74 billion in 2018, of which $1.207 billion was for exports to Iran and $533 million was the share of Iran's exports to Russia.

Russia has been one of the major trade partners of Iran over the past few years and the trade turnover between the two countries has been following an upward trend.

In late May, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and his Russian counterpart Alexander Novak, who are the chairs of the two countries' joint economic committee, discussed trade ties and investment cooperation in a phone conversation.

The two ministers discussed cooperation in the energy, mining, agricultural and transport sectors.

Iran considers establishing another oceanic port in Gulf of Oman

ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN** – Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad has said the country is seriously considering the establishment of another oceanic port on the Makran coastal strip (in the Gulf of Oman).

Currently, Chabahar which is located in Sistan-Balouchestan Province, in southeastern Iran, is the country's only oceanic port.

Speaking to the national TV on Monday evening, Rastad noted that Makran coasts can play a significant role in Iran's future maritime trade exchanges, the PMO news portal reported.

Emphasizing that currently, the main port of the country on the Makran coasts is Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti Port, the official said: "Very good capacities have been created in this port and the capacity of the port has increased up to four times, from two million to 8.8 million."

According to Rastad, the second phase of the Shahid Beheshti port development project will increase the capacity of this port to 33 million tons per year.

Regarding the latest situation of loading and unloading of goods in the country's ports, the official said:



"Since the beginning of the [current Iranian calendar] year (March 20), about 47 million tons of goods have been loaded and unloaded in the country's ports."

He also mentioned the domestic capacity for production of marine and port equipment and noted that most of the equipment and vessels used by the PMO in various operations like marine search and rescue, as well as dealing with marine pollution, can be manufactured inside the country and the MPO has shifted its focus for supplying its needs to the use of domestic products.

"One of the great steps taken by the Ports and Maritime Organization in this field is that 83 vessels required by the organization will be built by domestic contractors and the amount of credit provided in this project is 240 million Euros, which is considered a very large project. It can and will boost the country's maritime industry and create good employment," he added.

Rastad further mentioned the indigenization of the knowledge for producing maritime equipment and vessel parts and said: "so far, we have managed to manufacture 768 items using the capabilities of the domestic companies..., the production of these parts by domestic producers is over 70 percent more cost-efficient."

Located in the southern part of the Sistan-Balouchestan province, Makran is a semi-desert coastal strip along the coast of the Gulf of Oman.

Knowledge-based companies to implement $952m of automotive projects

ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN** – Iranian deputy industry, mining, and trade minister for industry affairs says the ministry has defined 40 trillion rials (about $952 million) worth of projects to be awarded to the knowledge-based companies for indigenization of auto industry equipment and machinery.

According to Mehdi Sadeghi Niaraki, aimed at boosting the domestic production of auto parts and equipment, these projects are defined to be implemented by companies and institutes that are on the cutting edge of knowledge and technology.

The mentioned companies and institutes are active in various fields including indigenization of high-tech auto parts and systems, especially turbocharging systems, auto electronic control units (ECU), some special sensors, etc., Niaraki told IRNA on Tuesday.



"In line with the "surge in the production" movement, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade is trying to use all the existing capacities in the country."

In this regard, the industry ministry has been cooperating with parts manufacturing community and organizations, leading production units, knowledge-based companies, the Ministry of Defense, and its subsidiaries, as well as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Command, the official stressed.

According to the deputy minister, in the previous Iranian calendar year, €300 million worth of projects were defined for indigenization of auto industry parts and equipment, of which so far €60 million have been completed and the output products have reached mass production and are being distributed in the market.

The implementation of the remaining of these projects takes time and they must go through the stages of design, development, prototype production, initial product testing, and finally mass production, he added.

Back in July, Niaraki had announced that deals worth €277 million were signed between auto part manufacturers and carmakers in the previous year (ended on March 19) through three domestic production promotion desks.

In early April, Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry outlined its programs for supporting the domestic production in the current Iranian year.

The seven main axes of the ministry's plan for the surge in production are going to be pursued under 40 major programs.

Developing technology and promoting knowledge-based industries, development of domestic production in line with the Leader's stresses on surge in production, managing imports and development of non-oil exports, improving the business environment, development of financing and investment and finally development of logistics were reported to be the seven major axes of the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's works in the current year.

Private sector offers suggestions for capital market's better performance

ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN**—The representatives of private sector discussed the issues related to the current status of the country's stock market with the head of Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) during a meeting at the place of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) on Tuesday.

As published on the website of TCCIMA, the private sector mentioned their viewpoints on the advantages and weaknesses of the capital market and offered their suggestions for the better performance of this market to the SEO Head Hasan Qalibaf-Asl during the meeting.

Offering oil at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) via salaf bonds was one of the major issues mentioned by the TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari, as he said that the final decision should be made about this issue and the government should announce that if such sales will be finally one or not.

"We expected that before announcing this issue suddenly, it would have been examined exactly and its different aspects would have been studies", the official lamented.

Last week, during a meeting of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination, attended by President Hassan Rouhani, Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi, the administration's top economic figures including Central Bank of Iran (CBI)'s Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati, Head of Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Mohammad-Bagher Nobakht,



TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari (3rd L) and SEO Head Hasan Qalibaf-Asl (2nd R) in a meeting at the place of TCCIMA on Tuesday

Vice-President for Economic Affairs Mohammad Nahavandian, and Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, it had been decided to draw up plans to counter oil embargo and redirect the high liquidity, which is partly blamed for the high inflation rate.

After the meeting, it was reported that the heads of three branches had made an agreement on the plan for the pre-selling of oil.

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

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

While the details of the mentioned plan have not been still announced, it has drawn many criticisms.

The TCCIMA head further referred to the plan for reforming the banking system, which is currently under investigation by the related committee in the parliament, and said, "TCCIMA had some negotiations with Farhad Nili, Iran's former representative in the World Bank, two weeks ago, so that the necessary investigations would be made and we could offer the private sector's viewpoints to the parliament within three months."

SEO Head Hasan Qalibaf-Asl, for his part, referred to the current status of the capital market and said that now this market is close to its real status in the national economy.

The official announced that 4.5 million new trading accounts have been opened in the stock market since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), while the figure was just 820,000 in the whole past year.

He further announced the capital market's readiness for financing the projects conducted by the private enterprises.

Domestic production of 19,000 parts in steel sector saves Iran €1.5b

ECONOMY desk **TEHRAN** — Domestic production of 19,000 parts in the steel sector has saved the country €1.5 billion in 12 years, a director in Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced.

Making the remarks in an IMIDRO's meeting of training, research, and technology on Monday, Amir Khorramishad, the deputy director of the organization for planning affairs, said that while the sanctions have reduced the country's foreign currency revenues, indigenizing the production of some products has increased, which means saving the foreign currency, ISNA reported.

While the U.S. unilateral sanctions on Iran in recent years have upset the Iranian industry in some sectors, the statistics indicate that the minerals sector has not been affected by the sanctions, while it's been also improved.

The improvement is more noticeable in the steel sector, as according to the World Steel Association (WSA), Iran became the world's tenth-largest steel producer in 2018.

Such progress in this sector is mainly the result of "indigenizing" approach, which is seriously followed up in all industrial sectors of the country.

In fact, indigenizing the technology of manufacturing required products, equipment, and machinery to attain self-reliance is the major economic approach of the country during the sanctions.

And in terms of steel, Industry, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has announced that the country has achieved proper self-reliance in this sector.

Indigenizing technology in the steel sector today shields this sector from the sanctions, so it is atop agenda for the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade and its subsidiaries.

As IMIDRO head has said, "Today, we are witnessing a national will and determination for self-reliance and promotion of production and indigenizing should be in fact considered as a necessity in this regard".



Iran's gas industry moving toward development

By Ebrahim Fallahi



TEHRAN — Iran is one of the most hydrocarbon-rich countries in the world. According to the Iranian Oil Ministry data, nearly 300 oil and gas fields have been explored in the country of which over 40 are gas fields.

Although until recently the Oil Ministry (as the name suggests) was mostly focused on the development of the oil reserves, considering the global shift toward natural gas and the significant rise in the domestic demand, the government started following a new strategy to develop both sectors alongside each other.

As the crown jewel of Iran's gas industry, the giant South Pars gas field (which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf) was the focal point of the Oil Ministry's gas industry development programs and over two decades after the beginning of the field's development, it has nearly reached its full potential and Iran's gas production from the field is said to have surpassed that of rival Qatar.

Of course, the development of the gas industry's upstream sector entailed significant advances in the downstream sector as well, so currently only 14 refineries exclusively process the gas recovered from the South Pars phases.

The development of the refining sector in line with the realization of the production goals in the South Pars has today led to great achievements in this area and the production of sweet gas by the country's refineries is constantly increasing.

On Tuesday (August 18), the Spokesman of the Natural Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Mohammad Asgari announced that the average daily sweet gas output of the country's refineries has currently reached 703 million cubic meters (mcm), 69 mcm more than the figure for the same month in the previous year.

According to Asgari, the average daily production of natural gas by the country's refineries stood at 633 mcm in the previous year's same month.

Implementation of annual overhaul operations in the country's refineries and the outbreak of the coronavirus did not halt the increase of natural gas production and this growing trend continues, the official said.

Earlier, Masoud Zoroudian, NIGC's director for coordination and production supervision had told Shana that the refining capacity of the country's gas refineries increased significantly over the past few years, saying: "Gas processing capacity in the country's refineries is about 1.03 billion cubic meters per day and gas production in the first three months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 20-June 20) recorded a jump of 2.2 percent."

The increase in the processing capacity of the country's refineries means the increase in the gas supply to the national network, to the industry sectors, and also to the country's power plants, all of which can lead to economic and industrial development.

The increase in production and the development of the gas industry also means more exports and more revenues for the country in a time when oil exports have been slashed significantly due to the fall in global demand and the U.S. sanctions on the industry.

Now that the South Pars gas field has almost reached its full capacity and the goals of the Oil Ministry in this regard have been realized, the next step would be moving toward the development of the country's Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) industry.

Considering the fact that many of the gas-rich countries around the world like Australia, the U.S., and the rival Qatar, with which Iran shares the South Pars field, are currently considerably advanced in the LNG industry and are earning billions every year from this sector, Iran, too, needs to take necessary measures in this regard.

Qatar heavily relies on its LNG exports and a big chunk of the country's budget is supplied by its LNG exports, while Iran is only exporting a very small portion of its gas through pipeline to Turkey and Iraq.

Exporting natural gas through the pipeline has severely limited Iran's export destinations and has also reduced the country's bargaining power.

Although establishing LNG plants required advanced technologies, but capable Iranian oil and gas engineers and experts have constantly proven that 'when there is a will, there is a way', so the government needs to invest more in this area and shift its focus from exploring more fields to developing the downstream sector such as the LNG industry which has been already neglected too much.

Zanganeh stresses capacity building in oil industry

TEHRAN (Shana) – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said power in the oil market is not based on the reserves of a country but production capacity, stressing the need for building oil production capacity under the sanctions.

Addressing the signing ceremony of 13 contracts to maintain and enhance oil production on Monday, August 17, he said: "In the global oil industry there is a consensus that the main pillar of all technical upstream activities is to increase the recovery or extraction coefficient of oil fields in accordance with the nature and conditions of each reservoir."

He added: "Maximizing oil recovery coefficient from a reservoir is the most important mission of engineers in the upstream sector of oil industry, which improves over time and is a gradual, continuous and dynamic matter that requires systematic technological work at the highest technical levels."

The Oil Minister pointed out that enhancing oil recovery, if not more important than the issue of joint fields, is significant, adding that with a one-percent increase in the recovery rate, more than 7 billion barrels of oil will be added to the country's production capacity without new exploration which is $300 billion in wealth for the country.

Signing new research contracts with universities, soon

He announced the signing of new contracts with universities to continue research in on Iran's new oil fields in the coming weeks, and said: "Of course, this is not enough and oil service companies and domestic exploration and production (E&P) companies should be strengthened."

The minister stated: "If we did not have these plans, work in the field of maintenance and enhancement of production in the exploited fields would almost stop by now, but despite this proposal and having the approval of the Economic Council, we can continue our work and our rigs are active."

According to him, about 130 to 140 wells will be drilled in these projects, and another 60 to 70 wells would be repaired, which means operation of dozens of rigs, with 300 to 400 people working on each one.

He said Iran must have a surplus production capacity of one to two million barrels per day.

Zanganeh said that the signing of 13 contracts to maintain and increase production in the current situation is the continuation of the activity and survival of the oil industry in the face of sanctions, adding: "Sanctions and their custodians are to go, but Iran and the Iranian nation will remain. We definitely need to work on capacity building. A country has power in the oil market when its production capacity is high."

"Production capacity is the national power of a country in the oil sector, and if we want to have a say, it is with our production capacity, not with our reservoirs," he said. "We may not be able to produce at some point, but it will be short. Our nation has gone through even worse conditions and has remained alive and mighty, so the first thing is for us to increase our production capacity in the face of the sanctions."

Zanganeh reminded that if one day the sanctions are lifted, "and then we start repairing our wells, it will take two to three years and all our shares would be lost over those years. After the previous lifting of sanctions, within a short period of time (a maximum of three months), we



reached maximum production and were able to return to the oil market."

"I believe that Iran should have one to two million barrels of excess oil production capacity for special conditions other than what it always produces," he said. "Capacity is different from production."

He further reiterated his previous stance on working with foreign companies, saying he would welcome cooperation, investment and partnership from any country and company, excluding those in the Zionist regime, in Iran. "However, we would never be kept waiting for foreigners."

He also said that Iran's production was more than its neighbors in all the country's joint oil and gas fields.

Oil companies wonder if it's worth looking for oil anymore

By Laura Hurst

More European producers are saying energy resources worth billions of dollars now might never be pumped out of the ground.

A few dots near the bottom corner of the world map in the southern Atlantic, the Falkland Islands were once at the forefront of a new era for the oil industry as companies scoured the planet for resources.

Yet a decade after the discovery of as much as 1.7 billion barrels of crude in surrounding waters, the British overseas territory known for sheep rearing and tension with Argentina looks as remote as ever. Rather than the next frontier, the project to extract energy risks being added to a list of what companies call "stranded assets" that could cost them huge sums to mothball.

As the coronavirus ravages economies and cripples demand, European oil majors have made some uncomfortable admissions in recent months: oil and gas worth billions of dollars might never be pumped out of the ground.

With the crisis also hastening a global shift to cleaner energy, fossil fuels will likely be cheaper than expected in the coming decades, while emitting the carbon they contain will get more expensive. These two simple assumptions mean that tapping some fields no longer makes economic sense. BP Plc said on Aug. 4 that it would no longer do any exploration in new countries.

The oil industry was already grappling with the energy transition, copious supply and signs of peak demand as Covid-19 began to spread. The pandemic will likely bring forward that peak and discourage exploration, according to Rystad Energy AS. The consultant expects about 10% of the world's recoverable oil resources—some 125 billion barrels—to become obsolete.

"There will be stranded assets," said Muqsit Ashraf, senior managing director responsible for the global energy industry at Accenture Plc. "Companies are going to have to accept the fact."



The Sea Lion project in the Falklands promised to be a world-class resource when Rockhopper Exploration Plc found the field in 2010. Hundreds of millions of dollars later and after enduring a flare up between Argentina and Britain over the legality of the project, the first phase still hasn't brought any oil to market.

Premier Oil Plc, Rockhopper's partner, suspended work on Sea Lion earlier this year, and on July 15 wrote off $200 million of investment because later phases looked unlikely to happen.

Larger companies have also begun voicing that realization for other projects. BP said in June it would evaluate its portfolio of discoveries and leave some undeveloped. Chief of Staff Dominic Emery already hinted last year at what kind of resources might never "see the light of day." Complicated projects could be shelved in favor of fields that are quicker to develop, such as U.S. shale, he said.

The pressure to curb emissions may also prompt companies to leave the most carbon-intensive reserves in the ground, as France's Total SE acknowledged last month when it took an $8 billion writedown on carbon-heavy assets.

The list of projects most at risk includes deepwater discoveries off Brazil, Angola and in the Gulf of Mexico, said Parul Chopra, vice president for upstream research at Rystad. Canadian oil-sands projects such as the expansion of the Sunrise development in Alberta are also in doubt, he said.

The Sunrise deposit, a joint venture between BP and Husky Energy Inc., has an abundant supply of bitumen—potentially as much as 3.7 billion barrels. Extraction, though, is complicated. Most oil-sands projects resemble mining operations. The bitumen is dug out of the ground and processed into heavy crude, which must then be diluted with lighter hydrocarbons before it can be refined into fuel.

Sunrise is more complex and more costly. The deposit is too deep to be dug up, so instead it's injected with steam to get the bitumen flowing into a well, from where it can be pumped to the surface.

Sunrise was meant to be built in three phases, ultimately producing more than 200,000 barrels of bitumen a day over 40 years. The first 60,000-barrel-a-day stage started in 2015, just as crude prices were slumping amid the first U.S. shale boom. Since March this year, output has shrunk to around 10,000 a day, net to Husky, amid plunging prices and restrictions on pipeline capacity.

Neither Husky, which runs the project, nor BP have disclosed a timeframe for the next stages of development. They'll require crude prices well above current levels, suggesting an expansion isn't imminent, said Mike Coffin, an analyst at research group Carbon Tracker Initiative. (The think tank has received support from the charitable foundation of Michael Bloomberg, the majority owner of Bloomberg LP, the parent of Bloomberg News.)

Beyond their economic viability, carbon-intensive oil sands also sit uncomfortably with BP's ambition to become a "net-zero" company by 2050. No new oil-sands projects fit in a world compliant with the Paris climate accord, according to Carbon Tracker.

Husky has said its long-term plans include the potential to expand Sunrise, but declined to estimate timing or the oil price required. A BP spokesman said the company is reviewing oil-sands projects.

In the Falklands, there's still hope the outlook will improve. Rockhopper has said the challenges aren't insurmountable, despite the remoteness of the islands and the hostility of Argentina, which fought a war with Britain in the 1980s and still claims sovereignty over the territory.

It pointed to the involvement of other companies—Premier joined the project in 2012 and Navitas Petroleum LP is in talks to take a stake—to suggest there's little risk Sea Lion will become a stranded asset.

But a final decision on whether to proceed won't come until next year at the earliest, according to Premier Chief Executive Officer Tony Durrant. Previous deadlines for final investment decisions have come and gone. The company declined to comment on whether Sea Lion was at risk of turning into a "stranded asset."

Sea Lion only needs oil prices in the low- to mid-$40s to break even, but probably requires at least $50 a barrel to secure debt, Rockhopper said. Benchmark Brent crude is currently trading around $45, having slumped by a third this year.

Ultimately, with oil in abundance, doubts about the strength of long-term demand and pressure to eliminate the most carbon-intensive production, it's a calculation that may become increasingly stacked against projects like Sunrise and Sea Lion.

"Many assets are already stranded from an oil-price cycle perspective," said Christyan Malek, head of EMEA oil and gas research at JPMorgan Chase & Co. "But when you then add the carbon curve, that takes a bigger chunk out."

OPEC performed well in oil market, Iran says

TEHRAN (Shana) – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had performed well in the oil market given the increase and stabilization of oil price in the market.

Speaking on Monday, August 17, on the sidelines of the signing ceremony of 13 contracts to maintain and increase oil production in Iranian fields, Zanganeh told reporters: "The price of Brent crude oil has risen from about $16 per barrel in May to $45 and it is almost stabilized; this shows that OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) has performed well in this regard."



He added: "What will come next depends on market reactions. The outbreak of the coronavirus has affected the market. If the world economy recovers and production restarts, the imbalance between supply and demand will decrease and this will have a positive impact on prices."

Regarding gasoline exports to Venezuela, he said: "This is a business trade; let's not turn it into a political war. The recent shipments were sold and delivered to Venezuela free on board (FOB), and the cash has been settled."

"The cargoes U.S. seized were without any flag or vessel and did not belong to Iran. The cargoes had already been sold free on board. However, the U.S. still wishes to declare victory."

Renewables 'could trim Asia-Pacific LNG emissions'

Using renewable energy to power liquefied natural gas (LNG) plants in the Asia Pacific could reduce emissions by about 8 percent, according to analysis by Wood Mackenzie.

According to Renews.com, the region produces over a third of the world's LNG, generating over 50 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO2e) of emissions during liquefaction.

Australian LNG projects account for over half, or 29 MtCO2e, of liquefaction emissions from LNG projects in the Asia Pacific.

Many of the region's LNG facilities are located in remote areas, far from the power grid, so feedgas is used to generate electricity to run the plant and fuel the liquefaction process.

Typically, 8 percent to 12 percent of feedgas is consumed at the plant to run these processes.

Wood Mackenzie senior specialist Jamie Taylor said: "Three main decarburization levers could help reduce emissions at LNG plants, namely operational efficiency, design changes, and the use of renewable energy, which could be sourced from the grid or generated onsite."

Feedgas is used to fuel gas turbines to generate electricity to power the plant. Replacing these gas turbines with electricity could greatly reduce emissions, assuming the grid power is less carbon intensive. The other option is to install on-site renewable power.

"Our analysis shows that installing renewable energy generation could reduce emissions at Asia Pacific's LNG plants by 8 percent in 2020 alone," Taylor added.

Taylor said: "A carbon tax is likely to be the biggest driver for LNG projects to switch to renewable energy at the plant or deploy carbon capture and storage to reduce emissions from upstream gas, or both.

"Using less feedgas as a fuel would result in more gas being available to supply either the domestic market or be converted into LNG for exports.

"In APLNG for example, installing 60MW of solar in 2020 at a cost of $60m increases the remaining value of the project by $62m.

"This is due to the additional revenues generated from selling the 'saved' feedgas. The relative benefits of installing solar are increased further when a carbon tax is considered."

Hedge funds focus on relative value as oil prices stall

Hedge funds' oil trading remained very light last week as the normal summer holiday slowdown was compounded by the lack of clear signals about the future direction of the market, Reuters reported.

In the absence of strong signals about the overall direction of prices, some hedge funds and other money managers are turning their attention to relative value plays, betting that oil products will outperform crude.

Funds purchased the equivalent of 10 million barrels in the six most important petroleum futures and options contracts in the week to Aug. 11.

Portfolio managers were small buyers of Brent (+17 million barrels), U.S. gasoline (+5 million) and U.S. diesel (+2 million), while selling small volumes of NYMEX and ICE (-13 million) and European gasoil (-1 million).

Total positions have remained broadly unchanged since the end of June, cycling in a narrow range centered on 640-650 million barrels, putting them in the 60-62nd percentile for all trading days since 2013.

Last week's position of 652 million barrels puts them towards the top of the recent range, but any upward trend is barely perceptible, with average purchases of less than 3 million barrels per week over the last four weeks.

The most significant trend is the continued shift towards bullish positioning in refined fuels rather than crude oil contracts.

Net positions in the three fuels contracts hit 91 million barrels last week, up from a low of just 31 million in early June, and the highest since the middle of February.

Positions in the two middle distillates contracts, in particular, have increased sharply, reaching 48 million barrels last week, up from zero at the end of May.

Middle distillates have been the most oversupplied part of the market following the coronavirus epidemic and lockdowns.

Distillate margins have fallen close to multi-year lows and are probably not sustainable at current levels in the medium term.

Distillate contracts are therefore attracting attention from portfolio managers who think prices have been so beaten down that they now offer the best relative prospects for a cyclical recovery.

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Two-Stages (semi compressed) tender
Subject of Tender: WIRE ROPE

National Iranian Drilling Company

Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial)
National Iranian Drilling Company	14,322,121	Tender No.:FP/11-99/022-4 Indent No.: 01-22-9746028	6,453,850,000

• Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	☑ Based on minimum scoring (50) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.

• Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof.	
	Distribution Place	Hall No.:113, 1st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 06134148601
	Submitting Method	•□Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491(Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. •□Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
Documents Receiving Method	Closing date	•□ 14Days after the last time of Purchasing.
	Address	Hall No. 107, 1st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

• Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	Rial 323,000,000 / Euro 2,591
Type of guarantee	✓·Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓·Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

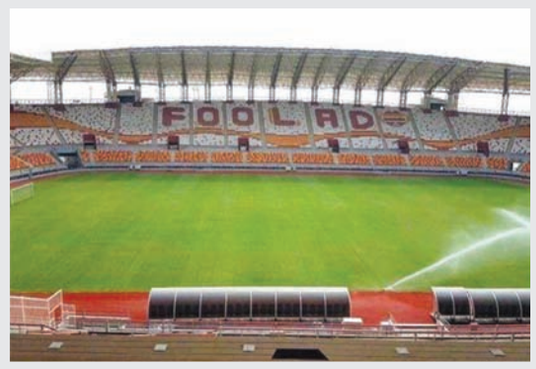
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Race for Covid-19 vaccine

Putin announces world's first Covid-19 vaccine

1 → For many this is a big 'if' in the sentence and Putin has been criticized for side-stepping Phase III and approving mass manufacture of the vaccine. As the Persian saying goes: "They sowed the seed of 'if' and nothing grew".

Vaccine development

According to The New York Times, researchers around the world are developing more than 165 vaccines against the coronavirus, and 31 vaccines are in human trials. The report adds that typically vaccines require years of research and testing before reaching the clinic, but scientists are racing to produce safe and effective vaccine by next year.

Hundreds of millions of eggs – the traditional medium for incubating the viruses before they are inactivated and made into vaccines – are delivered to laboratories, and production continues throughout the spring until the syringes are filled in the summer.

The procedure of vaccine testing before final approval is divided into five steps: Stage 1, Phase I, II & III, and Stage 2. The first clinical trials started in March, and now there are some 30 underway.

Before human trials testing the coronavirus, vaccine began with injection into mice or monkey to see how they respond. After animal tests turned out well, researchers enlisted volunteers for a Phase I trial.

Scientists give the vaccine to a small number of people to test safety and dosage as well as to confirm that it stimulates the immune system.

In this phase the volunteers are kept under observation to watch for negative reactions, and to see whether they make antibodies against a pathogen. If Phase I trials go without serious safety problems, a larger group of hundreds of people are registered for Phase II testing.

Scientists give the vaccine to hundreds of people split into two groups, such as children and the elderly, to see if the vaccine acts differently in them.

The goals of Phase II tests are to study the candidate vaccine's safety, immunology, proposed doses, schedule of immunization, and method of delivery.

Successful Phase II candidate vaccines move to larger and longer trials in Phase III, involving thousands of people. Phase III goal is to assess vaccine safety in a large group as certain side effects might not surface in smaller groups tested in earlier phases. To detect a significant difference for a low-frequency event related to candidate, the trial would have to include 60,000 subjects.



Researchers are developing more than 165 vaccines against the coronavirus, and 31 vaccines are in human trials. (Photo: Imperial College London, Thomas Agnus)

Vaccine efficacy is tested as well as other factors include: 1) Does the candidate vaccine prevent disease? 2) Does it prevent infection with the pathogen? 3) Does it lead to production of antibodies or other types of immune responses related to the pathogen?

After successful Phase III trials the vaccine developer will submit an application for license for mass production. Then the regulating body will inspect the facilities to review the manufacturer's tests of lots of vaccine for potency.

All participants in the trials must be voluntary and normally receive monetary compensation, but it tends not to be particularly generous. All data from the testing must be made public so government agencies and other scientists can evaluate it.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), laboratories in 12 countries have developed 27 vaccine candidates, which are now undergoing clinical testing. India and Russia have begun the process of clinical evaluation the purpose of which is to evaluate the clinical handleability, acceptability and delivery.

The Euronews reports of record flu vaccine doses produced by global manufacturers for the upcoming flu season, as authorities hope to avert a crisis in hospitals by a winter rebound of Covid-19.

There are also hopes that measures such as wearing masks and maintaining social distancing will reduce the spread of flu.

With 5.37 million cases and 169,000 deaths, the U.S. has the highest number of infections in any country. Americans are already among the world's most vaccinated against the flu: vaccination is recommended from the age of six months, while other countries, including France, recommend it for people at risk of complications including those over 65.

In the Persian Gulf region testing for phase III have already begun in UAE and Saudi Arabia in conjunction with Chinese pharmaceutical companies, Sinopharm GNBG and CanSino Biologics respectively.

Circling back to Iran, Mohammad Mokhber, director of the Headquarters for the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order, told reporters on August 9 that the first phase of Covid-19 vaccine's clinical trials is set to begin within the next two weeks.

Minister of Health and Medical Education Saeed Namaki said in June that Iran has taken effective steps towards manufacturing vaccine and human trials will start soon. After successful animal tests human trials were to start soon and Iran could meet the country's needs for equipment within two months adding that the country has now become exporter of that equipment for countering Covid-19.

More recently, Namaki said that 98 percent of medical needs are being met indigenously as 200 pharmaceutical companies are active in this area. Iranian officials have announced that the country has exported cargoes of serology test kits, used to identify the presence of antibodies, to Germany and Turkey.

Meanwhile, Hossein Modarres-Khiabani, the caretaker of Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade has said that the country has now become an exporter of facial mask-producing machinery, underlining the importance of the issue after the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has named this Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 21, 2020-March 21, 2021) as the year of "Surge in Production." Iran has the production capacity of 11 million masks per day.

In a press conference held on Sunday Iran's Health Ministry spokeswoman said that 147 more patients have died of the novel coronavirus in the past 24 hours, increasing the overall death toll to 19,639, reports Tasnim news agency.

In the press briefing, Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 2,133 new cases of Covid-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 343,203. She added that 297,486 patients have so far recovered, but 3,881 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

Lari added that so far 2,861,825 Covid-19 tests have been conducted across the country.

She said the high-risk "red" zones include Tehran, Qom, Mazandaran, West Azerbaijan, Qazvin, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Kohgiluyeh and Voyer-Ahmad, and Zanjan provinces.

Returning back to the topic of vaccine development, if a Covid-19 vaccine is developed what is next? Everyone in the world will need to be vaccinated and there will be a question of distribution. Will there be enough vials to contain the vaccine and enough administering tools? Developing people's trust on the remedy will be another issue.

Reciprocal response to U.S. intercept of Iranian aircraft doesn't mean similar act: Kadkhodaei

Guardian Council spokesman says U.S. intercept of Mahan airliner over Syria is aerial terrorism

By Ali Jenab Zadeh and Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — After the U.S. fighter jets intercepted a Mahan Air flight over Syria on July 23, Abbasali Kadkhodaei, the spokesman for the Guardian Council, published a post on his Twitter account saying that "Iran should legally pursue the U.S. for the harassment."

Kadkhodaei added, "However, it takes time, and Iran should take some reciprocal action against U.S. aerial violations."

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Kadkhodaei elaborates on his view about reciprocal action, saying, "It does not mean the same or similar action. It is the proportional action."

In the interview, the Guardian Council official describes harassment of the civil aircraft by U.S. fighter jets as "aerial terrorism".

Following is the text of the interview:

Would you please explain what you mean by "reciprocal action" and how it is defined in international, right?

A: From the international law perspective, the governments are rulers, and they are independent. However, there are few international references to resolve international conflicts; The International Court of Justice is the only main reference that we know. This court has its judicial procedures and measures. In the past, there was a reference that was named "Permanent Court of International Justice," which was turned into the International Court of Justice after World War II (1939-1945). During the past two decades, the International Criminal Court is also added to the United Nations and some special courts like Special Tribunal for Lebanon, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and in the past the International Military Tribunal for the Far East or Tokyo Trial are other juridical references worked under auspicious of the Charter of the United Nations.

Filing a complaint in an international body, especially at the International Court of Justice, needs difficult preliminaries. Firstly, the governments should agree on bringing the issue to the court. However, there are some international organizations for professional issues like the International Telecommunication Union and the International Civil Aviation Organization. These organizations sometimes solve problems between governments in some special cases.

Generally solving a case in international bodies takes a lot of time. For example, the filing of Iran in the Registry of the Court proceedings against the U.S. concerning the destruction of Iranian oil platforms (before the end of Iran-Iraq war) took 12 years and did not end in the desired result; however, it is still considered as its fair votes. The governments, mostly in the past and rarely today, use reciprocal action against other governments or file the case at the International Court of Justice, which takes time, and there is no guarantee for the desired result.

In international law, reciprocal action does not mean the same or similar action. It is the Proportional Action. The proportion is the main principle, which should be observed in these issues. Maybe a government violates the sovereignty of another country in which its government retaliates it in another situation. So it is not a similar action. I always announce, and people expect that [the government] takes proportional action in different cases like the detention of Iranian Oil tanker in October 2019. However, the proportional action is not against the legal lawsuit.

Fortunately, Iran takes action against the issues, and it was obvious that we take actions. It was a positive step despite previous cases that the government does not define its stance. It was aerial banditry and aerial terrorism in which innocent people traveling with a passenger airplane, noticed with their own eyes, that they were being threatened. Disturbing passenger airplane is against civil right, international laws and violate the sovereignty of a government. Above all, there is a more important issue in aerial terrorism, and that was how does the U.S. justify establishing an airbase beyond its border and harass other passenger airplanes under the pretext of protecting its base? Does the U.S. have the permission to have an airbase in Syria? This is aerial banditry in the territory of another country by U.S. fighters.

Governments have the right to preventive self-defense. That means that if a violation happens and the government cannot ask help from any international organization at the moment, it should take appropriate action and defend. It is also accepted in customary international law, although one should observe the action should be proportionate in all cases.

You said the previous cases proposed by Iran in the international court, saying that it takes a lot of time. For example, the case of Iran's oil platforms was not concluded after more than a decade. In general, has Iran had any achievement by submitting files in international judicial systems?

A: One cannot deny the profits of Iran's presence in international courts. Its presence is good and should be done on time. Iran should not avoid submitting complaint in these bodies; however, it is not wise only to submit the lawsuit in these places. Immediate action should be taken when the Iranians and their civil right are threatened in the form of proportional action or preventive self-defense. In this case, the violator stops the repetition of the action.

One of the problems that governments face is that there is no guarantee for enforcing the court's rulings. In current geography, only agreements between governments can execute such a verdict. Considering the power-sharing between world countries, some of them influence the decisions of the United Nations. Can anyone trust the fairness of the verdict issued by the international court and their execution?

A: International law should be defined in the framework of international system. The current international law system is based on great powers' hegemony. For instance, when you look at the civil rights issued after World War II, there is a veto right for five countries. In the current international law, one superpower has special privileges and has a great share from international law.

The influence of such governments in international courts can violate the rights of weaker governments and those who have not a vast international relationship. The United Nations Security Council has issued several resolutions against the Zionist regime. None of these resolutions is implemented since there is no guarantee for it. In books and articles, the violation of Palestinians is condemned, but nothing has been done. So international law has some weak points. We should assess international law in its framework. International resolutions may go into effect in one place and time, but most of the time international decisions go without guarantee.

The 25-Year Iran-China Comprehensive Partnership as well as the Iran-Russia agreement have triggered controversy at home and abroad and also in media. What is the role of the Guardian Council in the implementation of the agreements?

A: Some challenges about these agreements come from the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran who make accusations against Iranian officials. This shows that Iran is on the right way and inks agreements with countries that are truly in line with its will. The U.S. has economic interaction with China and Russia as well as Europe. Hence, this turmoil against the Iran-China agreement is an intervention in Iran's domestic affairs, which is condemned.

Iran is an independent country, and its government signs agreement with countries that meet their benefits.

From the aspect of legal duties, for the Guardian Council these agreements are like other agreements between countries. International contracts and agreements are based on the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. After negotiations in the government, Majlis approves it, and then the Guardian Council decides about its contradiction with Islam and the constitution.

As the newly assigned head of the Guardian Council's research center, we want to know your approach towards your new mission. In recent years, the duties of the council are known to some extent. In some political events like elections, people become curious about the council's role. Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, one of the main concerns of the Islamic Revolution's theorists is to "export the revolution." When we talk about the exporting of revolution, we cannot disregard the Islamic government, its executive structure, and its intellectual background. However, it seems that there is not much effort to introduce the Guardian Council as one of Iran's supervisory bodies. This is not only about the Middle West and Far West countries but also in the Islamic world, which support the resistance movement. Do you believe in any international audience for the Guardian Council? Does the research center have any plan for this issue?

A: The Guardian Council has such a view for sure. Since we believe that we wrote the first Islamic constitution, we think that our country's structure and political issues can be applicable in other Islamic countries and the world. Some actions were taken during the past years. We have some deals with other countries like Pakistan, India, and Turkey. Some delegations exchange ideas with each other. Even we help another country to hold an election. We educate their staff, and we teach them about our election system.

Although we have a great capacity not mentioned as a model right now, this is because of some domestic issues and some international problems. For example, maybe an Islamic country does not yearn to apply our system. We always cooperate with countries that asked us. We cooperate in writing and compiling the constitution in some countries and provide some advice for them.

Some people interested in Iran's affairs make mistakes and compare the Guardian Council with the Constitutional Council in France. What is your comment?

A: The constitutions are different from each other. None of the enactments turns into law unless the Guardian Council approves it. In many countries, supervisory institutions comment on an enactment after it becomes a law. In the U.S., one can complain after an enactment becomes a law.

During our dealings with some European countries, including Romania, we realized that they are interested in the Guardian Council's structure and tasks. They think this is in line with their duties, and they don't have such a system in their constitution.

In Pakistan, the Council of Islamic Ideology is supervised by the president and is composed of religious consultants. Whenever parliament recognizes that an issue needs a religious consulting issue, the president orders the council to comment. However, the parliament can accept or refuse the comment.

Some Pakistani friends who came to Iran and got introduced to the Guardian Council praise the council's structure and status. One of the main strategies of the research center is to introduce the Guardian Council at the international level.

Turkey won't back down against sanctions, threats amid Mediterranean standoff: Erdogan

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says Ankara will never cave into international threats and sanctions over its energy exploration in the waters of the eastern Mediterranean, which have been the subject of a territorial row between Turkey and Greece.

In a televised speech on Saturday, Erdogan defended Turkey's exploration of oil and gas in the eastern Mediterranean, saying the measures are justified under both international maritime law and established conventions.

Vowing to continue its energy exploration as planned, Erdogan warned that he would not tolerate "banditry" close to the Turkish mainland.

"Our country is entirely in the right, and we will continue to defend our rights, using all the means at our disposal," the Turkish president said in his televised address.



The search for oil and gas in the contested eastern Mediterranean has pitted Turkey against its NATO ally, Greece, and, subsequently, the entire European Union bloc.

The standoff deepened on Monday after Turkey launched naval drills off two Greek islands and announced the resumption of its energy exploration activity in the disputed area.

Turkey has dispatched the seismic research vessel, Oruc Reis, accompanied by naval vessels, off the Greek island of Kastellorizo, where Turkey disputes Greek maritime rights. Greece has responded by sending its own military vessels to monitor the situation.

Erdogan's comments followed a meeting of European Union foreign ministers of Friday, in which the top diplomats joined voices to defend Greece and slammed Ankara's actions in the disputed sea as dangerous and antagonist.

A day earlier, France had announced it was "temporarily reinforcing" its presence in the eastern Mediterranean in support of Greece.

Athens and Paris have also called for sanctions against Turkey.

Turkey had paused the research activities after a request from Germany but restarted them after an agreement signed between Greece and Egypt that designated an exclusive economic zone for oil and gas drilling rights in the eastern Mediterranean between the two countries.

Ankara rejected the agreement as "null and void," describing as an attempt to keep it out of the region.

However, the Turkish government has said it is interested in resolving the dispute with Greece through dialog.

(Source: Press TV)

Jordan using sweeping gag order to limit coverage of crackdown on opposition teachers' union: HRW

Human Rights Watch (HRW) says Jordanian authorities have resorted to an extensive gag order, harassment, and arrests to limit media coverage of ongoing protests demanding the release of leading members of the opposition-run teachers' union.

The New York-based body said in a report on Tuesday that it had interviewed eight local and foreign journalists operating in the deeply indebted kingdom earlier this year.



he rights body further noted that Jordanian officials had arrested at least two journalists in relation to their coverage of ongoing teachers' protests, and two were beaten by security forces while attempting to cover the rallies.

Two other journalists told HRW they are now required to obtain second permission in addition to their accreditation to be able to cover protests. One journalist said that even though they fulfilled all the requirements for such permission, it was withheld.

Journalist and women's rights activist Rana al-Husseini said she found herself self-censoring repeatedly to avoid falling foul of the crackdown.

Michael Page, deputy director in West Asia and North Africa division at Human Rights Watch, said Jordan's arbitrary measures such as gag orders and journalists' arrests were "only the latest in a series of restrictions on press freedoms in the country."

"Jordan's shrinking space for journalists to operate reflects the country's slide into repression," he pointed out.

On July 25, the Jordanian government arrested leaders of the 100,000-strong union, raided its offices, and suspended its activity for two years, in what was considered a major crackdown on a group that has become a leading source of dissent.

Prosecutors charged Nasser Nawasreh, the acting head of the syndicate, with incitement as well as financial and administrative wrongdoing.

The Jordanian Teachers Syndicate went on strike last year and closed its offices across the country for a month.

In recent weeks, its leaders have criticized the government for failing to stand committed to a deal struck last October that ended the strike.

The agreement included a 50 percent pay rise this year, which authorities now say cannot afford due to the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.

Opposition activists say the government has been exercising stringent emergency laws since March, when the coronavirus lockdown was enacted, in order to curtail civil and political rights.

Protests have grown in recent years in Jordan over degrading living standards, corruption, and the slow pace of political reforms.

Muharram mourning: A glimpse of indigenous rituals across Iran

(Part 1/8)

HERITAGE desk **TEHRAN —** Every year, people in different parts of Iran hold rituals to commemorate Muharram mourning season gloriously in public. The commemoration of the battle of Karbala on the day of Ashura (10th day of Muharram) and the epic passion and courage of Imam Hussein (AS) and his 72 loyal companions who were all martyred (in 680 CE) is annually honored by Iranians.



During centuries, the mourning rituals for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions, have been held differently in every part of the country regarding local rituals and values. However, the common aspect of the rituals is the gathering of people for the mourning ceremony, which reminds Muslim unity. Besides, these gatherings survive the narrations of the event and help to transmit them into the next generation. Traveling to different cities of Iran during the month of Muharram, one can witness different types of mourning rituals:

Nakhl Gardani, Yazd

One of the Muharram mourning rituals, which is held in Yazd annually is named Nakhl Gardani. Yazdi people prepare the renowned ancient Nakhl, a wooden structure resembling a bridal pavilion and decorated with colorful silk shawls, precious fabric, mirrors, lanterns, and lift it and carry across the city.

While carrying in different parts of the city, the eulogists narrate the Ashura event and the life story of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions. All attendees wear black dresses.

Yazd is considered as one of the most crowded cities of Iran in Ashura. Hence, it is known as Iran's Hussainiya (a congregation hall for Shia Muslim commemoration ceremonies, especially those associated with the Mourning of Muharram). Hence, it would be a great experience to be there on Ashura!

Origin of Nakhl

Although nakhl means palm tree in Persian language, it is not to do with the palm tree in Nakhl Gardani. It is a symbol of the coffin of Imam Hussein (AS), which is used during his symbolic procession ceremony.

Turkish Airlines to resume flights to five Iranian cities, including Tehran

TOURISM desk **TEHRAN –** Turkey's flag carrier Turkish Airlines has announced that it is scheduled to resume its flights to Tehran and four other major Iranian cities in September.

"Turkish Airlines, the national flag carrier of Turkey, announced in its latest flight schedule that it will resume flights to five Iranian cities of Tehran, Tabriz, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Isfahan early in September," ILNA quoted Maqsoud As'adi-Samani, a senior Iranian aviation official, as saying on Tuesday.

Talking about Iran-Turkey flights operated by Iranian carriers, the official said they will also be reestablishing in parallel with their Turkish-operated counterparts.

"With the resumption of Turkish flights to Iran, Iranian flights to Turkish cities will also begin, and it is not the case that flights will be operated only with the Turkish airline."

Giving a brief on the timetable, As'adi-Samani said "According to the schedule, 21 flights per week will be carried out to Tehran, four flights per week Tabriz and four per week to Shiraz as of September 1. And two flights per week will be made to the cities of Mashhad and Isfahan in a two-times-a-week agenda."

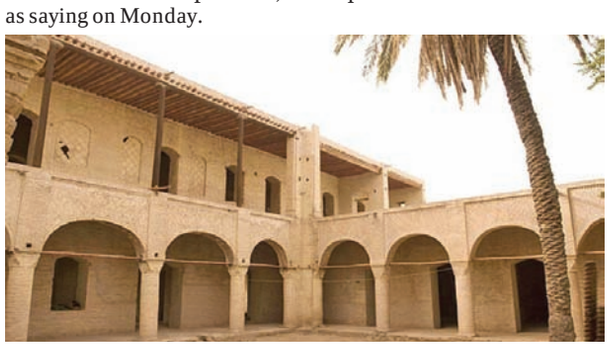
The pandemic has taken a huge toll on Iran's civil aviation sector with reports showing that airlines lost hundreds of millions of dollars because of flight cancellations during the busy New Year travel season in late March.

Some 1.37 million Iranian tourists visited Turkey during the first eight months of 2019, accounting for 4.4% of all international arrivals in the country.

Historical structures in southwestern Iran to be restored

TOURISM desk **TEHRAN –** Ten historical structures and aging buildings in the southwestern Khuzestan province are planned to be restored in the near future, a provincial tourism official has said.

Abdollah Banu Holy Shrine, Moein al-Tojjar historical complex, Dadras Mansion, and Amir Mojahed Garden are among the historical monuments in need of restoration, which are located in different cities of the province, IRNA quoted Ahmadreza Hosseini as saying on Monday.



Khuzestan is home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System yet it is a region of raw beauty where its visitors could spend weeks exploring. The province is also a cradle for handicrafts and arts whose crafters inherited from their preceding generations.

Lying at the head of the Persian Gulf and bordering Iraq on the west, Khuzestan was settled about 6000 BC by a people with affinities to the Sumerians, who came from the Zagros Mountains region. Urban centers appeared there nearly contemporaneously with the first cities in Mesopotamia in the 4th millennium. Khuzestan, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, came to constitute the heart of the Elamite kingdom, with Susa as its capital.

Coronavirus costs Iran's tourism $2.8b so far, minister says

→ 1 Mounesan went on to say that 2,451 tourism-related projects worth 1,370 trillion rials (around $32 billion) are being implemented across the country that signals a prosperous future for Iran's tourism sector.

"We have a vision of tourism that defines it as an emerging economy which people constitute its pillar, so that it has immense potential to play a key role for the country, and tourism is very important for generating employment for the youth."

Earlier this month, the tourism minister said the coronavirus pandemic should not bring traveling to a complete standstill. "Corona is a fact, but can the virus stop tourism? Certainly not. For us, the coronavirus is a new experience in dealing with crises that teaches tourism experts around the world how to deal with such a disaster, and thankfully governments are turning this into an opportunity for better planning."

In June, the United Nations World Tourism Organization praised efforts made by Iran's tourism ministry to manage the travel industry during the coronavirus pandemic. UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said in a letter to Mounesan that the country's measures have truly earned plaudits to mitigate the impact on tourism. "A series of measures that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran has taken, in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of UNWTO, has truly earned plaudits as an effective practice to mitigate the impact on tourism," the letter reads.



Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan speaks in an undated photo.

Some experts believe that the coronavirus pandemic may turn tours and travels into luxury items as observing health protocols will raise the cost of travel in the country. Mohammad Ali Vaqefi, the vice president of the Iranian Tour Operators Association, warned earlier in June that with the continuation of the coronavirus outbreak, tourists may prefer individual travel rather than tours, adding that they may also choose to go on a trip by their vehicles and stay in tents or in nature instead of hotels.

In the global scene, part of the new travel puzzle is the jet-set mindset focusing on tough hygiene care and social distancing as cardinal guidelines for slowing the spread of the virus. So the average expenditure will be raised for a typical traveler particularly inbound passengers so lesser ones can afford to buy privacy and space and safer travel amenities.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025. The latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

IranAir to resume Tehran-Madrid flights after 17 years

TOURISM desk **TEHRAN –** The Iranian embassy in Spain has announced that the country's flag carrier IranAir will resume flights after 17 years between Tehran and Madrid.

The license of IranAir service for Tehran-Madrid route has been (recently) received as per coordination made by the Iranian embassy, the Civil Aviation Organization, and IranAir with Spanish domestic institutions, the embassy announced.

"The flights are scheduled to be operated each week as of September 1, 2020."

The Iranian mission in Madrid has made a great deal of effort on the resumption of the service, which had been suspended since the beginning of 2001, and hopes that this important step in bilateral relations can strengthen the ties between the two nations.

Back in January, Tehran's envoy to Madrid Hassan Qashqavi drew public attention to Iran's tourism capacities in a meeting held on the sidelines of a ceremony for the 40th FITUR tourism trade fair. Referring to a 50 percent growth in the number of Spanish tourists to Iran over the past year, Qashqavi said that Iran is among the top ten countries in terms of tourist attractions diversity. The envoy pointed to the remarkable capacities of the two countries for widening cooperation in the fields of tourism, cultural heritage, and handicrafts, voicing Iran's readiness for promoting collaboration in those spheres.

In December 2019, Spanish Charge d'Affaires to Tehran, Jose Luis Solano, said, "I believe that there are very good tourism relations between the two countries as we have many requests each year from Iranians for [obtaining] visas and traveling to Spain." Iran is a country that is highly important in terms of culture and it embraces all the necessary attractions for Spanish tourists who like to travel to the country, he added. "Every year we see an increase in the number of Spanish visitors to Iran, and this is constant growth."



Restoration of Safavid-era fortress resumed

HERITAGE desk **TEHRAN –** The second round of restoration work has recently commenced on Paskuh Fortress in the city of Sib and Suran, the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, CHTN reported.

A budget of 300 million rials ($7,000) was allocated to this phase of the project, which involves renovating the fortress' rooms and strengthening its walls using cob material, provincial tourism chief Abdolsalam Mohammadi announced on Tuesday.

The Safavid-era (1501–1736) fortress is one of the oldest monuments in the region, which was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 2004.



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.

Sistan-Baluchestan was previously shunned by potential foreign and domestic travelers though it is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert, parts of latter is situated in Kerman province.

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

In ancient times, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, the Baluchistan region provided a land route to the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations. The armies of Alexander the Great marched through Baluchistan in 326 BC on their way to the Hindu Kush and on their return march in 325 experienced great hardships in the region's barren wastes.

Golestan Palace's tiles, windows undergo restoration

TOURISM desk **TEHRAN –** A number of sash windows and colorful painted tiles of the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran have undergone urgent restoration.

The project also involved the insulation of rooftops, cleaning the mirror works of parts of the palace as well as cleaning and strengthening of doors and windows on the north side, Afarin Emami, the director of Golestan Palace announced on Tuesday.

Located in the heart and historic core of Tehran, the Golestan Palace complex is one of the oldest in the Iranian capital, originally built during the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) in the then walled town.

Following extensions and additions, it received its most characteristic features in the 19th century, when the palace complex was selected as the royal residence and seat of power by the Qajar ruling family (1789-1925).



During the time it became a center of arts and architecture, which is an outstanding example and has remained a source of inspiration for Iranian artists and architects to this day. It embodies a successful integration of earlier Persian crafts and architecture with Western influences.

At present, the Golestan Palace complex consists of eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates. The complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

Five tourism projects to come on stream in Hormozgan

TOURISM desk **TEHRAN –** A total of five tourism-related projects are scheduled to be inaugurated in southern Hormozgan province, provincial tourism chief has said.

An eco-lodge unit in Hormoz Island, as well as two traditional restaurants and an accommodation center in the provincial capital of Bandar Abbas, will come on stream, Reza Borumand said on Tuesday, CHTN reported.

Ahmad Khan Caravanserai in the city of Bastak will also be repurposed into a traditional restaurant and residence, the official added.

A budget of 200 billion rials (about $4.7 million) has been allocated to the projects, which will generate over 90 job opportunities for the locals, he noted.

Known as the province of islands, Hormozgan province is located on the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf. It embraces scenic islands among which Kish, Hormuz, Hengam, and Qeshm are the most beautiful ones and top tourist destinations in southern Iran.

Over the past couple of decades, the coral Kish Island has become a beach resort where visitors can swim, shop, and sample a laid-back and relatively liberated local lifestyle. It is home to free-trade-zone status, with ever-growing hotels, shopping centers, apartment blocks, and retail complexes.



Hormuz, which is mostly barren and hilly, is situated some eight kilometers off the coast on the Strait of Hormuz, which attracts many tourists by its colorful mountains, silver sand shores, and great local people.

Hengam Island has scenery rocky shores, serene sunset, and kind natives, which can attract travelers who enjoy a relaxing trip by spending time on this tranquil island.

Qeshm Island is a heaven for eco-tourists as it embraces wide-ranging attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island also features geologically eye-catching canyons, hills, caves, and valleys, most of which are protected as part of the UNESCO-tagged Qeshm Island Geopark, itself a haven for nature-lovers.

Over 130 knowledge-based companies set up by Iranian expatriates

SOCIETY desk

TEHRAN — More than 130 knowledge-based companies have been established in the country by Iranian expatriates thanks to the incentives and supportive programs of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

One of the basic programs is to create suitable conditions for the attraction of Iranians abroad, including specialists, elites, investors, and entrepreneurs in various businesses, Rouhollah Estiri, director of the international development and business at the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, said.

Support and incentive programs for attracting these people have been developed as a special framework in the field of science and technology since four years ago, but the scope in accordance with the requirements of the time and necessities have become more widespread, he explained.

The government also does not impose special conditions and strictures on the cooperation of Iranians abroad and how they cooperate with knowledge-based companies, so they can cooperate in their country of residence with Iranian universities, research institutes, and knowledge-based companies and take advantage of the incentives provided, he highlighted.

Specialists, investors or owners of foreign knowledge-based companies in Iran, will be awarded 1.5 billion rials (about $35,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) in the first step, he said.



$800m gained from exports

Knowledge-based companies exported products worth over $800 million in the past Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), Estiri highlighted.

Content production, application, and software development, as well as scientific and technological research in the field of IT, were among the exported items, he stated.

Pointing out that this amount of export is a result of 400 knowledge-based companies' efforts, he noted that currently, 1,500 knowledge-based companies out of a total of 5,000 existing companies have been registered in the field of information technology, a thousand of which have the capacity to export.

Most of these companies export technological products or services to Iraq, Russia, Afghanistan, and Syria, and this year some countries in the Persian Gulf, Austria, and even China are included in the special program for export, he highlighted.

'Surge in production'

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has named the current Iranian calendar year, 1399, as the 'Year of Surge in Production', aiming to create a tangible change in people's lives.

A total budget of 63 trillion rials (nearly $1.5 billion) is proposed to be allocated to support the knowledge-based companies leaping for production, Rouhollah Zolfaghari, deputy head of the Innovation and Prosperity Fund said in April.

"Last year, our performance in the implementation of innovative projects was 10 times more than last year," he said, adding, "Over the previous year, some 13,000 billion rials (about $309 million) provided to knowledge-based companies, besides, various loans amounting to 25,000 billion rials (around $595 million)."

This year, the Fund will also invest some 3 trillion rials (about $71 million) in sectors at risk and we will be able to manufacture new products along with minimizing the investment risks through insurance coverage, he stated.

Also, a total budget of 600 billion rials (nearly $14 million) in the form of non-repayable loans has been earmarked so that the companies can commercialize their products, and if they are in the research and development phase, proceeds in collaboration with universities, scientific and research centers, he added.

He went on to said that more than 15 trillion rials (nearly $358 million) have been allotted for the issuance of guarantees for knowledge-based companies, which will lead to the conclusion of contracts with state-run centers, agencies, and large industries.

WHO strengthens Iran's response to COVID-19

SOCIETY desk

TEHRAN — In an effort to strengthen Iran's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) delivered 100 ultrasound imaging machines to the Ministry of Health.

"These devices are important for the evaluation of COVID-19 patients. They will be delivered to many hospitals across the country to be installed in intensive care units and other wards that are treating patients with COVID-19. They have been sponsored by the State of Kuwait and the Government of Japan, at a total value of about $3 million, and we are grateful for their support," Christoph Hamelmann, the WHO Representative in Iran, said.

"These 100 ultrasonography units, which have been provided by the WHO to strengthen the country's COVID-19 response, will be sent to facilities affiliated with universities of medical sciences throughout the country according to a distribution list provided by the Ministry of Health," Hooman Narimani, deputy for planning and program, the board of trustees for patients' treatments with currency saving highlighted.



"These devices will address important needs of our health facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for that, we are especially grateful to WHO," he added.

The Ministry of Health will soon start shipping the devices to hospitals across the country.

WHO has continuously supported the health system's efforts in combat against the COVID-19 pandemic by providing personal protective equipment, medicines, and medical equipment.

Recently, the Organization delivered 16 CT scan machines to Iran, which were distributed among hospitals in different provinces of the country where they were urgently needed.

WHO has earlier sent an aircraft carrying tons of medical supplies and test kits along with a medical team to Iran in early March.

Also, it delivered a shipment of emergency medical supplies and medicine to Iran as part of COVID-19 response measures on March 24.

World needs more real-life heroes

1 → The reality of today's medical community shows that each member is working around the clock and does not back down.

Since March 25, it is reported that 138 healthcare workers in the country have lost their lives due to the coronavirus infection, most of whom were among the physicians amounting to 60 percent, and 20 percent were nurses and the rest were other hospital staff.

Maryam Hazrati, deputy health minister for nursing said in May that some 65 percent of 200,000 nurses in the country were at the forefront of coronavirus fight.

Doctors, nurses, and other staff are making efforts in overwhelming and frightening conditions, not only because the virus is new or invisible, but because mostly they are overworked and vulnerable to the infection.

They may also bear considerable mental stress as well as those at the front line of war events, in addition to the fear they feel about disease transmission when in contact with their family and loved ones.

We can help them by choosing to stay at home and not to be a chain in disease transmission will also be much helpful.

However, the government and decision-makers must also try best to set the most efficient policies in the fight against the disease and give the medical staff what they need to survive this crisis as long as we will need them in case the next pandemic arrives.

Guardians of nature 'symbols of selflessness'

Climate change, poaching, and armed conflict, in addition to the Covid-19 pandemic, are the issues affecting natural resources and those who protect them, particularly during this difficult time across the globe.

Multiple deaths and injuries of the rangers occur while trying to safeguard the environment and wildlife. Rangers who risk their lives protecting the environment and wildlife sometimes fall victim by getting into a fight with poachers and may either suffer severe wounds, get killed, or charged with involuntary manslaughter.

In Iran, rangers have been working for about half a century in four protected areas under the management of the DOE, to protect wildlife and biological species, and during this period 140 rangers lost their lives, in the world also more than a thousand environmental defenders have been killed over the last 12 years.

According to the international standard, there should be one ranger per thousand hectares, but in Iran, there is one ranger per 12,000 hectares, which means that the number of rangers in Iran is one-twelfth of the world standard, while the rangers protect 11 percent of the country's natural areas, Jamshid Mohabbat-Khani, commander of the protection unit of the DOE stated.

But we also have a number of responsibilities towards them, one of which is to compensate for the staff shortages, the other is to be more vigilant in environmental protection, as well as providing them with proper equipment and facilities while revising the laws in their favor.

Firefighters rescue, protect the public

The firefighters' battle with the fire will not come to an end, but it risks the ultimate sacrifice of their life.

In the Iranian calendar year 1359 (March 1980-March 1990), on the same day, Iraqi warplanes attacked the Abadan oil refinery and set it ablaze. Firefighters went on to extinguish the fire, but this time fire was not their only enemy; the refinery was extensively shelled again and many firefighters were martyred in the incident.

It was three years ago on January 19 when the fire was sparked by an electrical short circuit in the top floors of the crowded, 17-story Plasco building in Tehran, which then collapsed after a four-hour blaze and killed 16 firefighters who had been trapped under the rubble.

Although firefighters are committed to rescuing the citizens from natural or hazardous incidents, namely, fires, car rollovers or crashes, quake-hit areas, wildfires, floods and etc., they sometimes have to make immediate and life-threatening decisions in high-pressure situations which might end up in losing their own lives; so this what makes their performance outstanding and honorable.

Firefighting is a job directly related to people's lives, and given the importance of quick response of the firemen during the accident, it is necessary to pay more serious attention to such heroes.

Measures should be taken to equip the capital's firefighting stations with proper facilities; it cannot be denied that the facilities must be updated and replace them with new advances.

The most important thing in preventing accidents is educating and informing people on how to behave during emergency conditions.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

50bcm of groundwater withdrawn annually in Iran

An annual amount of 50 billion cubic meters of groundwater resources are withdrawn to supply agricultural, industrial as well as drinking water in Iran, a researcher in the field of water resources has stated.

The amount is 10 times greater than the water covering Lake Urmia, amounting to 50 billion cubic meters, ISNA news agency quoted Mohammad Reza Goldansaz as saying on Sunday.

سالی ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از آب‌های زیرزمینی برداشت می‌شود

یک پژوهشگر حوزه منابع آب با اشاره به اینکه سالانه ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از منابع آب زیرزمینی برای مصارف خانگی، صنعت و مصارف کشاورزی برداشت می‌شود.

محمدرضا گلدانساز در گفت و گو با ایسنا اظهار داشت: سالانه حدود ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از منابع آب زیرزمینی برداشت می‌شود که این مقدار به اندازه حجم ۱۰ دریاچه ارومیه است.

Gavkhouni wetland playing host to migratory flamingos

ENVIRONMENT desk

TEHRAN — Gavkhouni wetland, where the desert and the river meet to create a pristine and spectacular view of the wetland in the heart of the desert, has opened its arms hosting flamingos and many other migratory birds over the past two years.

Gavkhouni wetland, stretching to 47,000 hectares, is a salt marsh with an average depth of about 1 meter which is located on the terminal basin of the Zayandeh-rud river.



It is the 19th wetland in Iran designated as a Wetland of International Importance on the Ramsar list, which as defined by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, recognizes the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value.

The Convention was adopted in the Iranian northern city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.

The wetland is now home to a variety of migratory birds including, ducks, geese, sternidae, pelicans, and grebes. Flamingos have left the wetland over the past 2 years following the wetland drainage and lack of nutrition. However, they winged their way back to the wetland after the water flowed into the lakebed.

Wetland enthusiasts are well acquainted with Gavkhouni and other pristine natural areas. This is a destination for tourists who want to enjoy the pristine and untouched nature away from the crowds and to be inspired by the beauty of the region and the silence of the wetland.

Seeing migratory birds in the lakebed is a pleasure that is not easy to ignore. Every year, as the weather cools and winter enters, thousands of migratory birds enter Iran from cold regions, including Russia.

Although winter migrants travel in the warm season, the wetland also hosts guests from the south in the summer. Apart from migratory birds, it is also home to native animals, such as Asiatic mouflon, boars, Rüppell's sand fox, turtles, vipers, rabbits, goats, and bats.

The vegetation of the area is very special. Due to the salinity of the soil, there are no green plants and trees around the lake, but in the wetland, different species such as Cattail, reeds, Schoenoplectus, curled pondweed and various algae grow. Shrubs such as Haloxylon, Ephedra, Atraphaxis, and Seidlitzia rosmarinus can be found around the lagoon.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 4) *(Source: saadifoundation.ir)*

Persian Vowels – Persian has six simple vowels:

1	Short vowel	*a*	as in	English		hat
2	" "	*e*	"	"		men
3	" "	*o*	"	"	French	mode
4	Long vowel	*ā*	"	"	English	father
5	" "	*i*	"	"	"	east
6	" "	*u*	"	"	"	zoo

There are also several vowel combinations, like */ow/* and */ey/*, each consisting of a vowel and a consonant. The younger generation uses a simple */o/*, or a slightly longer */o/*, as a substitute for */ow/*. The sign */ow/* is used after the words involving this sound in wordlists and dictionaries of this book.

Vowels at the Beginning – Short vowels are initially written with alef and the signs ـَ, ـِ, ـُ, which stand respectively for */a, e, o/*. They are placed above or below alef:

/om/ اُم */em/* اِم */am/* اَم

Vowel signs are not usually used in writing except at elementary stages of learning or to avoid ambiguities.

Alef is also used for writing initial long vowels*:

that, it	*/ān/*	(formal) ***آن**
this	*/in/*	***این**
that, he, she, it	*/un/*	(spoken) ***اون**

Letter */jim/* has the sound */j/*, like j in just: * جـ جـ ج

crown */tāj/* تاج ← ت + ا + ج

Letter */če/* has the sound */č/*, like ch in chin: * چـ چـ چ

tea */čāy/* چای ← چ + ا + ی

* The words with the asterisk should be learnt here.

Hariri tribunal: Hezbollah, Syria had no link with 2005 blast

→ 1 On Tuesday, a special UN-backed tribunal in the Netherlands convicted one Lebanese man of participating in a conspiracy to carry out the attack, but acquitted three others, citing lack of evidence. The men — Salim Jalil Ayyash, Hassan Habib Merhi, Hussein Hassan Oneissi and Assad Hassan Sabra — had been accused of belonging to Hezbollah, Lebanon's powerful Shia political organization with a paramilitary wing.

Mr. Ayyash, accused of coordinating the team that carried out the bombing was the only one convicted by the court, NY Times reported.

The key figure among the suspects, prosecutors alleged, was Mustafa Amine Badreddinne, a veteran of Hezbollah's special operations and close to its top leaders. Though among the accused when the trial began in 2014, Mr. Badreddinne was killed in Syria in 2016, ending the case against him.

Lebanon's an-Nahar daily ran the headline, "International Justice Defeats Intimidation" even before the decision was announced, referring to extensive attempts by certain parties within and outside the country to implicate four Hezbollah members with the atrocity.

Lawyers appointed by the tribunal itself said there was no physical evidence linking the four to the crime and that they had to be acquitted.

Hezbollah's Secretary-General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah had also said on Friday that he was not concerned about the proceedings, and that if any members of the resistance movement were claimed to be guilty, Hezbollah would stand by their innocence.

The tribunal, however, did not stop short of echoing those who have been trying to cook up the allegations against the resistance group and Damascus."The trial chamber is of the view that Syria and Hezbollah may have had motives to eliminate Mr. Hariri and his political allies," the judge said.

According to Press TV, observers said the latter part of the verdict showed that the countries that forced the United Nations Security Council into forming the tribunal in the first place — based on unproven hypotheses, without any legal basis, and in violation of Lebanon's sovereignty — were still influencing the verdicts that it issues.

Hezbollah — which has rejected the jurisdiction and independence of the court — has denied any link to or interest in the atrocity.

The group has invariably proven itself as a unifying factor in the country, including by forcing Israel into retreat in the occupying regime's 2000 and 2006 wars on the country.

The regime and its biggest ally, the United States, have, however, never brooked the movement's existence across Lebanon's defensive and political structure.

It was Israel's Channel 1 that first alleged an association between the Hezbollah members and the 2005 explosion.

The movement said afterwards that the tribunal was an opportunity for Tel Aviv to achieve its "unachieved" goals in Lebanon.

Rocket attack hits Kabul on Afghanistan independence day

At least 10 civilians, including four children, have been injured in the Afghan capital of Kabul in an attack with 14 rockets against the city's heavily-fortified green zone as the country marked its 101st independence anniversary.

The rockets were launched from two vehicles in the northern and eastern parts of the capital on Tuesday, Afghanistan's Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said.

"Most of the mortar shells hit residential houses in Kabul," Arian said. "Unfortunately, 10 civilians, including four children and one woman, have been wounded."

He said two suspects had been detained and investigations into the incident remained ongoing.

Witnesses, meanwhile, said that some of the rockets struck near the presidential palace and the Defense Ministry after the country's President Ashraf Ghani took part in an independence day event at the palace.

Other eyewitnesses cited by press agencies further said at least one mortar shell had landed in the affluent Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood, where numerous diplomats and senior government officials reside.

Resistance News

Israeli army continues airstrikes on Gaza

INTERNATIONAL desk **TEHRAN—** Israeli warplanes at dawn Tuesday launched several airstrikes on Rafah in the southern area of the Gaza Strip.

Local sources said that Israeli warplanes at daybreak repeatedly bombed Palestinian agricultural lands in the eastern area of Rafah.

Panic prevailed among local residents as a huge fire broke out after the air raids, but the civil defense crews who rushed to the scene managed to put it out within a few minutes.

No casualties were reported in the attack.

The Israeli army for a week now has been launching dawn airstrikes on the Gaza Strip on a daily basis, claiming that they come in response to fire balloons sent from the coastal enclave towards adjacent Israeli settlements.

Israeli bulldozers demolish six-floor building in Jerusalem

INTERNATIONAL desk **TEHRAN—** Israeli bulldozers on Tuesday morning demolished a Palestinian residential building composed of six floors in Jabal al-Mukabber town south of Jerusalem City.

Local sources said that Israeli bulldozers, escorted by armed forces, stormed Jabal al-Mukabber in the early morning hours and embarked on destroying the building which belongs to the Palestinian citizen Aziz Ja'abis.

They said that confrontations flared up between the Israeli forces and the Palestinian residents of Jabal al-Mukabber who tried to prevent the demolition but failed.

The Israeli authorities claimed that Ja'abis's building was demolished for being "unlicensed".

Based on a monthly report issued by the media office of Hamas in the West Bank and Jerusalem, the Israeli authorities during July 2020 destroyed 18 Palestinian homes and 104 commercial and agricultural facilities. Since the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, over 1,900 Palestinian houses have been demolished in the city.

As EU talks sanctions, Putin warns Merkel & Macron

Russian President Vladimir Putin has told his German and French counterparts Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron that any attempt by outside forces to intervene in the political crisis in Belarus would be counterproductive.

In two separate phone calls on Tuesday, initiated by Berlin and Paris, Putin stressed that placing external pressure on the leadership in Minsk is unacceptable. Russia and Belarus have formal military and political alliances, via the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and a 'union state' agreement, RT reported.

According to the German side, Chancellor Merkel told Putin that Alexander Lukashenko's government must stop using violence against peaceful demonstrators, enter into a dialogue with the opposition, and immediately release political prisoners.

The chancellor's comments came amid various discussions among European Union members about how to address the situation in Belarus. EU ministers agreed last Friday to draw up a list of targets for a new round of sanctions, and politicians in Poland and Lithuania, and other states, have pushed for interventions, to various degrees.

READ MORE: Will he call for EU to support Yellow Vests? Moscow accuses France's Macron of hypocrisy after Belarus protest intervention



"The parties thoroughly discussed the situation in Belarus following the presidential election," the Kremlin statement read. "Russia pointed out that foreign attempts to interfere in the country's domestic affairs were unacceptable and could further escalate tensions."

"Hope was expressed that the situation will improve as soon as possible," it concluded.

Later the same day, a second call took place with President Macron, in which Libya was also discussed.

"When discussing the complicated situation in Belarus, Vladimir Putin stressed that interference in the internal affairs of the republic and putting pressure on the Belarusian leadership would be unacceptable," the Kremlin explained. "Both sides expressed a desire for an early solution to the problems that have arisen."

Belarus is arguably Russia's closest ally and is a full member of two Moscow-dominated alliances which serve as alternatives to the EU and NATO in Europe – the EEU and the CTSO, in addition to the 'union state' agreement.

By contrast with some of the rhetoric from Western Europe, the official response from Moscow has been measured. Numerous Russian experts have expressed the view that the Kremlin would prefer if the situation in Belarus did not become another 'East versus West' geopolitical struggle.

A report from Reuters on Monday, headlined 'EU leaders to support Belarusian protesters, tell Russia to stay out', raised eyebrows in Moscow. As did comments from Macron calling on the EU to "continue to mobilize" on the side of anti-government protesters in Belarus.

The French president's stance prompted a harsh rebuke from Moscow, with Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova asking "when will he call on the European Union to be mobilized in support of hundreds of thousands of 'Yellow Vests' demonstrators (in France)."

Israel says UAE deal did not change policy on U.S. arms sales

Israel has not softened its opposition to any U.S. arms sales to the United Arab Emirates that could diminish its military superiority as part of the U.S.-brokered normalization of their ties, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said on Tuesday.

The statement followed a report in Israel's Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper that the Trump administration planned a "giant" sale of advanced F35- jets to United Arab Emirates as part of the Persian Gulf country's move last week to normalize ties with Israel, Reuters reported.

The U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem and representatives of the UAE government did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Under understandings dating back decades, Washington has refrained from West Asia arms sales that could blunt Israel's "qualitative military edge" (QME). This has applied to the F35-, denied to Arab states, while Israel has bought and deployed it.

"In the talks (on the UAE normalization deal), Israel did not change its consistent positions against the sale to any country



in the West Asia of weapons and defense technologies that could tip the (military) balance," Netanyahu's office said.

The Trump administration has signaled that UAE could clinch unspecified new U.S. arms sales after last Thursday's normalization announcement.

Intelligence Minister Eli Cohen, an observer in Netanyahu's security cabinet, said the decision-making forum had held no discussion about any changes to QME policy and that Israel had not agreed to any changes by the United States.

"Israel has not given its consent to coming along and changing the arrangement," Cohen told public radio station Kan.

Millions in India face eviction amid coronavirus recovery push

Thousands of people were evicted across India during lockdowns to contain the coronavirus pandemic, with millions more at risk of being uprooted as authorities push infrastructure projects to spur economic growth, housing rights campaigners said.

At least 20,000 people were evicted from their homes between March 16 and July 31, despite court orders that banned such actions during lockdowns, according to a report published by the Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) in Delhi Tuesday.

In the last three years for which HLRN has records, at least 568,000 were forcibly removed from their homes across India, or 22 people every hour. Last year alone, more than 107,600 people were evicted, Reuter reported.

"India's grave housing crisis has been exacerbated by the forced eviction and home demolition of marginalized, low-income communities - even during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Shivani Chaudhry, HLRN's executive director.

"Many of these evictions were likely carried out during the lockdown to take



advantage of the curfew-like conditions, when movement of affected persons was restricted and they did not have access to legal remedies. This is indefensible," she said.

Nearly half of all evictions were for so-called city beautification drives, with infrastructure projects, conservation schemes and disaster management also being reasons for displacement, according to HLRN.

In nearly all cases, authorities did not follow due process including giving sufficient notice, and only about a quarter of those removed were resettled, it said.

There is no official data on evictions in India.

Aoun: Impossible that Beirut blast was caused by Hezbollah arms

Lebanese President Michel Aoun says it is "impossible" that a recent deadly explosion in the capital Beirut was triggered by a blast from a deposit of arms belonging to the Hezbollah resistance movement.

In an interview with the Italian daily Corriere della Sera published on Tuesday, Aoun stressed that Hezbollah did not store weapons at the Beirut port.

Asked about those pointing the finger of blame at the resistance group for the incident, he said, "Impossible, but serious events like these light up spirits and imagination," adding that "even this lead will be investigated."

Aoun also underlined the need to listen to all the hypotheses regarding the blast that rocked Beirut two weeks ago, killing at least 178 people, wounding more than 6,000 others and causing damage amounting to $10-15 billion.

"Although it seems that (it) has been an accident, I want to avoid being accused of not having listened to every voice," Aoun said.

The Lebanese president further noted that many people claimed seeing airplanes fly by the port just before the explosion and, although "not very credible," they should be listened to.

On 4 August, 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate stored the Beirut port blew up, obliterating the city's main commercial hub and damaging buildings across a wide swath.

According to Press TV, the cause of the blast, the most destructive in the country's troubled history, is still unclear and a probe is looking into whether it was caused by neglect, an accident or external interference.

Earlier, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah denied accusations that his group had weaponry warehoused at the Beirut port.

Libya unity govt signs military accord with Qatar, Turkey

Qatar and Turkey have signed an accord to send military advisers and instructors for the armed forces of Libya's Government of National Accord, the UN-recognized GNA said.

"We have reached an agreement with Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and Qatar's (minister) Khaled bin Mohammad Al-Attiyah on tripartite cooperation to build a military institute for training," said the GNA's deputy defense minister, Salah al-Namrouch.

According to AFP, both Sheikh Khaled, Qatar's minister of state for defense, and Akar were in Tripoli Monday for meetings with the GNA's military and for talks on three-way military cooperation.

Under the accord between the three countries, Turkey and Qatar will send military advisers and provide training at their military academies for Libyan cadets, Namrouch said.

Also visiting Tripoli on Monday, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas warned that Libya faces a "deceptive calm" since fighting stalled in June around the coastal city of Sirte.

Outside powers are "continuing to massively arm the country", said Maas, whose government has tried to broker peace in the war-torn North African country.

"In Libya at the moment we are observing a deceptive calm," he told journalists in Tripoli, seat of the GNA.Libya has been in chaos since a Western-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi in 2011.

Eastern-based military commander Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive in April 2019 to seize Tripoli.

After 14 months of fierce fighting, the Turkish-backed pro-GNA forces expelled Haftar's troops from much of western Libya and pushed them eastwards to Sirte, a gateway to Libya's rich oil fields and export terminals.

While the GNA has also been supported by Qatar, Haftar has had the backing of the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Visual point of view



Tehran Times/ Abbas Goudarzi

Crowd protests outside U.S. Postmaster's North Carolina home

→ 1 **A violent protest in Chicago leads to 2 dozen people arrested and 17 officers injured**

Meanwhile, peaceful protests throughout Saturday were hijacked by agitators later in the day, leading to multiple arrests and officers getting injured, Chicago police said.

About 200 people gathered to protest against police brutality earlier Saturday, CNN affiliate WLS reported.

"People are tired," protester Taylor Smith told the news station. "No one wants to die at the hands of CPD."

Police made no arrests during the daylong protests, Chicago Police Superintendent David Brown said in a news conference. Those demonstrations and marches, covering nearly five miles, were peaceful, and police were there to ensure the safety of protesters, Brown said.

But a separate protest that occurred Saturday evening resulted in 24 arrests after "multiple agitators" used black umbrellas, changed their appearance and assaulted officers by using skateboards, bottles, bicycles and other projectiles as well as mace, Brown said.

A Black Lives Matter activist holds a flag during a march through Chicago's South Side in protest of police misconduct.

Four of the arrests were for battery of a police officer -- a felony charge, Brown said. Seventeen officers were treated for non-life-threatening injuries, and two people were treated at the scene, he said.Protesters told WLS they were also met with force from police.

"In my opinion, what went wrong was I just think the cops don't know how to de-escalate situations. They just bring it to a scary level," protester Womyn Wonder told the affiliate.

Brown defended the actions of police, saying officers responded proportionately to get the situation under control and used pepper spray to deter agitators.

Football federation responsible for Wilmots's contract: Alinejad

SPORTS desk **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ministry of Sport and Youth had no role in signing the contract of the former national football team head coach, Marc Wilmots, according to a top official of the ministry.

Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) must pay more than six million euros in compensation to Wilmots, according to a decision made by the FIFA Players' Status Committee on Monday.

Mehdi Alinejad, the Iranian Deputy Minister of Sport and Youth, emphasized that the ministry has played no part in any way in the contract with the Belgian coach at the time of appointing him as the head coach of the national team in 2019.

"The football federation is responsible for the contracts executed between the federation and the staff



of the national football team, and accordingly, the Ministry of Sport and Youth had no involvement in Wilmots's contract," Alinejad said in a TV interview.

Further, Alinejad has revealed that the Iranian Ministry of Sport and Youth allocated just a total of 5,330,000 euros to all national sports federations under its supervision last year.

According to the FIFA verdict, the Iranian Football Federation will have to pay compensation in excess of six million euros (6,137,500 euros) to the 51-year-old coach.

"We support the federation and it's different from the interference. We lent money to the FFIRI to sign a contract with Wilmots, and it by any means doesn't mean that the ministry had intervened in the federation's internal issues," Alinejad concluded.

Safety of para athletes is top priority of Iran's NPC: Tabe



SPORTS desk **TEHRAN** — The health, wellbeing, and safety of the para athletes is top priority of Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC), the top official said.

Iran's NPC hosted an online webinar on Tuesday and secretary general Mohammad Tabe answered the questions vie the online conference.

"Our priority is the health, wellbeing, and safety of the para athletes. We are in no hurry to start the training camps since the Games have been rescheduled to 2021," Tabe, who was appointed as Iran's NPC secretary general on Monday, said.

Tabe replaced Hadi Rezaei in the position after Rezaei stepped down from his role on June 20.

"I would like to thank Mr. Rezaei for his services in the role. I have to say he will remain Iran's delegation Chef de Mission for next year's Paralympic Games in Tokyo and will also lead Iran sitting volleyball team in the Games," he stated.

The most sports activities have been suspended in Iran due to coronavirus.

"Whenever the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters allow us, we will begin our training camps with stringent health protocols due to a COVID-19 outbreak. Then, our teams and athletes will start preparation for the qualifying tournaments for Tokyo," Tabe added.

Iran sent a record number of competitors to Rio 2016, being represented by 110 athletes in 12 sports.

They took home eight gold, nine silver and seven bronze medals and finished in 15th place in the medal table.

The west Asian country plans to take a reduced team of 72 athletes to Tokyo Games.

Tottenham sign Joe Hart on free transfer

Tottenham have signed former England and Manchester City No. 1 Joe Hart on a free transfer, the club have announced.

The 33-year-old left Burnley at the end of June after the club declined to renew his contract and has signed a two-year deal with Jose Mourinho's side.

He joined the Clarets from City in 2018 for £3.5 million and made just three appearances for the side during the 2019-20 season. The last time he appeared in the Premier League was against Everton on Boxing Day 2018 when Burnley lost 5-1.

Hart joins the side as a backup to Tottenham manager Mourinho's first choice keeper Hugo Lloris. Tottenham are mindful of improving their homegrown quota to increase the overall squad available to Mourinho. Premier League rules dictate a maximum of 17 overseas players can be named in any 25-man squad and Mourinho only picked four homegrown players in February which restricted his squad size.

Sources have told ESPN that the club are also looking to extend Lloris' contract. The French international's deal expires in 2022.

(Source: ESPN)

Barcelona sack coach Setien following Bayern drubbing, call elections

BARCELONA (Reuters) — Barcelona have sacked coach Quique Setien and brought presidential elections forward to March 2021, the club said on Monday, three days after the Spanish side were hammered 8-2 by Bayern Munich in the Champions League quarter-finals.

Setien, 61, was appointed in January after the club sacked two-time league winner Ernesto Valverde despite his side sitting top of the La Liga standings on goal difference.

But after Barca were condemned to their heaviest defeat in European competition on Friday, Setien was also sacked after only seven months in charge, after overseeing the club's first trophy-less season in 12 years.

Barca finished second in La Liga behind champions Real Madrid and were knocked out of the Copa del Rey at the quarter-final stage by Athletic Bilbao.

"This is the first decision within a wider restructuring of the first team which will be agreed between the current technical secretary and the new coach, who will be announced in the coming days," added Barca's statement on Setien.

According to widespread Spanish media reports, Neth-



erlands coach and former Barca defender Ronald Koeman is set to be named as Setien's successor.

The statement, which was released more than nine hours after president Josep Maria Bartomeu and directors had begun a board meeting, also said the club's hierarchy had decided against calling an election imminently in the wake of the Bayern defeat, as many fans and influential voices had demanded.

"The board understand that an immediate call for elections is not feasible, given that the league season will begin on the weekend of September 12, 2020, and the situation arising from the COVID-19 crisis - both economically and socially," added the statement.

"Consequently, the club will continue to implement the plan to reverse the sporting and economic situation, based on profound changes to the first team, plus a redefined budget to deal with the new situation caused by COVID-19, before the end of the current mandate."

As at Real Madrid, Athletic Bilbao and Osasuna, Barcelona presidents are voted for by club members.

Bartomeu won the last election, held in 2015, but is barred from running in the next round of elections as he has already served two consecutive mandates, having been named president in 2014 after the resignation of Sandro Rosell.

Victor Font is the front-runner for the election, while former president Joan Laporta has also declared his intention to run.

Further changes to the international match calendars due to COVID-19

In addition to the previous decisions by the FIFA Council, the Bureau of the Council has unanimously approved a set of further changes to the men's and women's international match calendars in response to the global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which persists in most parts of the world.

These changes follow a thorough consultation process with the Confederations and football stakeholders. This process resulted in proposals via the FIFA-Confederations COVID-19 Working Group that maintain the previously agreed principle that a tailor-made and flexible approach between Confederations is required, reflecting the varied circumstances of the pandemic across the world. The main changes are the following:

Men's international match calendar

- to replace the window from 31 August to 8 September 2020 with a window from 24 January to 1 February 2022 for all Confederations except UEFA. This means that there is no mandatory release of players for Member Associations from these Confederations in September 2020;
- to include the new period of January 2022 for the CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), with the exact dates to be determined at a later stage; and
- to include the new dates of the CONCACAFGold Cup 2021 (preliminary rounds from 2 to 6 July 2021 and final tournament from 10 July to 1 August 2021) with a mandatory release starting on 28 June 2021.

Women's international match calendar

- to replace the dates for the Women's Olympic Football Tournament, originally scheduled from 22 July to 7 August 2020, with new dates of 21 July to 6 August 2021;
- to finalize the dates of the originally scheduled Type I window in June-July 2021 as 7 to 15 June 2021;
- to cancel the existing window of 14 to 22 September 2020 for all Confederations except UEFA;
- to include alongside the existing Type I window from 13 to 21 September 2021, an alternative option of a Type III window from 13 to 25 September 2021 for all Confederations except UEFA;
- to finalize the dates of the existing Type II window in June-July 2021 as 7 to 16 June 2021 for all Confederations except UEFA;
- to remove the current blocked period for the Women's AFCON from 23 November to 20 December 2020; and
- to include UEFA in the blocked period from 4 July to 7 August 2022.

The FIFA-Confederations COVID-19 Working Group will continue to monitor the situation in each Confederation and if required make additional proposals to the FIFA Council.

(Source: FIFA)

4th FIBA Photo Contest celebrates Women in Basketball

The winners of the 4th FIBA Photo Contest have been revealed. Photographers and basketball lovers from around the world were invited to send their best photographs that represented the theme 'Women in Basketball'.

Women in Basketball is one of FIBA's 3 strategic pillars, a manifestation of the Federation's will to promote all women in basketball. Not only players, but also fans, referees and coaches as well as all basketball lovers.?

FIBA's Foundation, the International Basketball Foundation (IBF), which organized the contest, received over 900 photos from 56 different countries.

The winning pictures illustrate the passion that these women and girls have for basketball and how the sport can inspire.

Pictures like the winning "Hope and Dream" by Andi Nursam from Indonesia is a great example of this. The photograph shows how basketball can bring children together, keeping them active and giving them something to look forward to. This is what the Foundation's 'Basketball For Good' mission is all about. It also shows us how easy it is to play, all you need is a hoop and ball.

The first place was awarded to Andi Nursam from Indonesia for his photograph entitled 'Hope and Dreams?'.

Second place was awarded to Recirdo Bernard from the Philippines for his photograph entitled 'Play like a girl'.

This year, the jury chose two third place photographs.

Lea Miranda Monteiro from Switzerland was awarded third place for her photograph 'We work together as a team '.

Sherwin O. Flores from the Phillipines was also awarded third place for his photo entitled 'HQB (Home Quarantine Basketball)'.

(Source: FIBA)



Persepolis 8th in Club Asia Rankings

Iran's Persepolis is eighth in the current Club Asia Ranking, released by footballdatabase.com.

Persepolis were crowned champions of Iran Professional League for the fourth time in a row last month.

Persepolis sit eighth in the ranking with 1572 points.

Esteghlal and Sepahan are 13th and 24th in Club Asia Ranking with 1531 and 1484 points, respectively.

Al-Hilal of Saudi Arabia lead the table with 1682 points, followed by Jeonbuk from South Korea and Qatar Al-Duhail, respectively.

Bayern Munich have moved up six spots to lead the Club World Ranking with 2074 points.

(Source: Footballdatabase.com)

Giorgi Gvelesiani extends contract with Sepahan

Tasnim— Georgian midfielder Giorgi Gvelesiani has penned a one-year extension with Sepahan football club.

The 29-year-old player joined the Iranian football club last season and scored four goals in 16 matches for Sepahan.

Gvelesiani, who was sidelined for several month due to the injury, has extended his deal.

Last week, Ukrainian-born Hungarian winger Vladimir Koman parted company with Sepahan.

Brazilian player Bruno Tiago joins Iran's Hoorsun

Volleyball.ir— Brazilian outside spiker Bruno Tiago Da Silva has joined Iranian volleyball club Hoorsun Ramsar.

The 33-year-old player has penned a contract with the Iranian club for the 2020-21 Iran Volleyball Super League which will start on Sept. 9.

Bruno Tiago has previous played in Brazilian, Swiss and Cypriot clubs.

The new season will be held in two rounds of preliminary and playoffs. In the preliminary round the competition will be played in a two-legged system. The top eight teams will qualify for the playoffs round.

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

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

Sardar Azmoun going nowhere

Tasnim— Iranian forward Sardar Azmoun will not leave Zenit football team despite speculations linking him with the Italian teams.

A couple days ago, Sport-express.ru had reported that the Russian team is going to sell its striker in the summer transfer window.

Azmoun capped another brilliant season for Zenit by finishing as the 2019-20 Russian Premier League (RPL) top scorer with 17 goals.

Zenit coach Sergei Semak needs the player since the Russian team will have to participate in the 2020-21 UEFA Champions League and Azmoun can play a vital role in the competition.

Iran taekwondo fighters shine in int'l online competitions

IRNA — Iranian taekwondo fighters received three medals in international online competitions, head of Khuzestan Taekwondo committee said.

Speaking to IRNA, Ahmad Anari said the international competitions in pumsae field were held in the presence of 239 athletes from 25 countries in men and women categories.

In the12-year-old category, Yasna Jalili ranked third and Setayesh Goudarzi in 16 to18-year-old categories bagged bronze medal, he added.

Mohammad Farrokhzad in 13 to15-year-old categories stood in the second place, he noted.

Anari went on to say that 12 international and national referees judged the event.

Stressing the fact that it was for the first time that the event was held online, he said each athlete performed his pumsae online and referees gave their comments and introduced scores.

Four-team volleyball tournament to be held ahead of league

IRNA — Haraz volleyball club are going to hold a four-a-side tournament in Amol, northern Iran.

The three-day tournament will start from Thursday, FNA reported.

Haraz Amol, Hoorsun Ramsar, Shahdab Yazd and Shahrdari Gonbad will participate in the tournament.

The teams will take part in the tourney as part of preparation for the 2020-21 Iran Volleyball Super League which will start on Sept. 9.

The ISL will be held in two rounds of preliminary and playoffs. In the preliminary round the competition will be played in a two-legged system. The top eight teams will qualify for the playoffs round.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

I do not see death except prosperity and life along with the oppressors except anguish. O Allah! You know that all there was from us was not in competition to seek power, nor to gain refuse of the world [i.e. wealth], but it was nothing other than to present the signs and essence of Your religion, and to promote reform in Your land, [so that] oppressed members of your servants find safety and security, and Your laws, orders and obligations are acted upon.

Imam Hussein (AS)

Lebanese publisher buys rights to Iranian POW Mehdi Tahanian's memoir

CULTURE desk **TEHRAN—** Dar al-Hadarah, a Beirut-based publishing house, has recently purchased rights to the memoir of Iranian prisoner of war Mehdi Tahanian.

The rights to the book "All My Life at Thirteen" were sold to the Lebanese publisher based on a deal with Tamass Literary in Tehran, which was established in 2014 to implement a new way of selling the rights of Persian books to overseas publishing houses.

As an Iranian volunteer, Tahanian was captured by Iraqi forces during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war when he was at the age of 13.



Front cover of Iranian prisoner of war Mehdi Tahanian's memoir "All My Life at Thirteen".

In a video released by Iraq in 1983, Tahanian, held in Iraq's Camp Ramadi, refused to give an interview to an Indian journalist until she wore a hijab.

In its negotiations with Tamass, Dar al-Hadarah expressed its hope that the Arabic translation of the book would come to bookstores in Arab countries by 2021.

Golestan Jafari has written the book based on interviews with Tahanian, and the original book was published by Sureh-Mehr in 2016.

Another part of Tahanian's memories of life in captivity was published in "Imam Khomeini's Little Soldier", which Payame Azadegan published in 2018 based on interviews with Tahanian by writer Fatemeh Doostkami.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has praised "Imam Khomeini's Little Soldier" in a commendation published shortly after the release of the book.

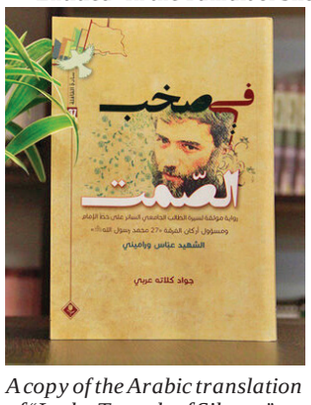
"The story of this brave, intelligent and patient adolescent in the [Iraqi] prisoner of war camps is one of the wonders of the Sacred Defense. The story of a thirteen or fourteen-year-old boy who first experienced the war, and then fielded resistance against the cruel Ba'th forces with his amazing behavior and spirit, and was triumphant in both," the Leader wrote in the commendation for the book.

"In this book, the signs of wickedness and vulgarism in the behavior of the Ba'th forces are more obvious than other similar books that I have read so far," he noted.

Book on Iranian war veteran Abbas Varamini published in Arabic

CULTURE desk **TEHRAN—** The Al-Maaref Islamic Cultural Association in Lebanon has recently released the Arabic translation of a book on Iranian martyr Abbas Varamini, the commander of 27th Mohammad Rasulullah Division in Tehran.

Entitled "In the Tumult of Silence", the book has been written by Javad Kalateh-Arabi.



A copy of the Arabic translation of "In the Tumult of Silence" on Iranian war veteran Abbas Varamini.

The original book was published in Iran in winter 2018 and a few months later its second edition came out.

Varamini was an educated individual different from his companions. He was a coordinator in the process of capturing the American Embassy in Tehran.

After the formation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), there was a necessity to recruit experienced experts and forces, and Varamini entered IRGC and later participated in several operations during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

He was martyred during an operation on the Panjvein frontline in November 1983.

The book contains four seasons named "Unforgettable District", "Years of Tension", "Towards the University of Frontline" and "In the Tumult of Silence".

The book was selected for Arabic translation in a book fair held in Beirut last year.

Farshchian's "Evening of Ashura" perfect expression of grief

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet



"Evening of Ashura" by Mahmud Farshchian.

TEHRAN— Master miniaturist Mahmud Farshchian created "The Evening of Ashura" both to depict one of the greatest tragedies for Muslims and to represent the power of art in expressing major events of history.

The masterpiece portrays the helpless household of Imam Hussein (AS), mourning after his horse returns from the battlefield without him. Their deep grief for their beloved has been depicted perfectly in this Persian miniature painting.

Ashura is the 10th day of Muharram, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala as a result of their valiant stand against the injustices of the oppressive Umayyad dynasty in 680 CE.

The 90-year-old Farshchian once said that he has drawn the painting on Ashura in 1977 while people around the country were mourning during the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his loyal companions.

"I stayed at home on that day as a strange feeling was creeping over me," Farshchian said and added, "My mother gave me a real earful about my staying at home on such an occasion."

"After hearing my mother's reprimand, I went into a room, taking a paintbrush, and did the painting without any preplanning."

Farshchian donated the masterwork to the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad in 1990.

He later also created other works about the tragedy of Ashura. "Ali-Asghar (AS)" and "The Standard-Bearer of Truth" are among the works.

"Ali-Asghar (AS)", created based on historical documents, depicts Imam Hussein (AS) and his newborn son, Ali Asghar (AS), in his arms shot with an arrow piercing his throat on Ashura.

The Imam's brother, Abbas ibn Ali (AS), who was the standard-bearer of his division on the battlefield, has been depicted in "The Standard-Bearer of Truth".

His "Heaven on the Earth" depicting Hazrat Zainab (SA), the sister of Imam Hussein (AS), and a number of angels mourning for the Imam after being martyred at Karbala in 680 CE, was unveiled at the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum in November 2017.

The museum also holds 12 other paintings by Farshchian, which are on display in a special section dedicated to artworks.

Farshchian was among the 40 Iranian artists honored by the National Library and Archives of Iran for their outstanding works created about the tragedy of Ashura over the past century.

Tehran cultural, religious centers to host tazieh performances

ART desk **TEHRAN—** The director of the Khatam Cultural Center has announced that several cultural and religious centers across Tehran will be hosting tazieh performances for ten nights during Muharram.

Seyyed Ahmad Musavi added that over 50 taizeh performances on Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of the Shia, and his family members and loyal companions will be staged in a program titled "Mourning of the Sun".

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

A number of the performances will take place in the courtyards of Imamzadehs, the tombs of the Shia Imams' descendants.

The courtyards of the cultural centers of Khatam, Eshraq, Razi and Bahman, as well as Imamzadeh Ali-Akbar (AS) in Chizar, Imamzadeh Ahl ibn Ali (AS) in Khavaran, and Imam Hossein Square are among the main locations for the tazieh performances.

"The performances will take place in open spaces observing health protocols proposed by the Health Ministry so that the mourners can make the best use of these mourning days," he added.

The performances will begin on Friday and will continue until September 17.

Hojjatoleslam Meisam Amrudi, the director of Art and Cultural Organization of the Tehran Municipality, had also announced earlier that the courtyards of its cultural centers will be dedicated to Muharram mourning ceremonies.

He added that the decision has been made to support the mourning groups across capital.

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



Thespians perform a tazeih in an undated photo. (ILNA/ Mohammadreza Joneidifard)



A view of the library of the National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) in Tehran.

Coronavirus shuts down Iran's national library again

CULTURE desk **TEHRAN —** The National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) has been closed to prevent the spread of coronavirus following a request by the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters.

"Tehran is currently in the so-called 'red area' with high coronavirus hospitalizations, and to combat the virus, the halls of the library will be closed until the headquarters announces permission to reopen," the NLAI announced in a press release published on Tuesday.

The library was closed with the very beginning of the spread of coronavirus in late February. Part of the library reopened in June, however, it has been closed again until further notice.

The NLAI is home to over 40,000 copies of rare manuscripts with some dating back 700 years.

I am living just for children: writer Mostafa Rahmandoost

CULTURE desk **TEHRAN —** Children's book writer Mostafa Rahmandoost, famous for his poem on the pomegranate "100 Pieces of Ruby", says that he writes for children because he is living for children.

"This is life, everybody has a goal in his life and my goal in life is children. I write for children and I am alive just for them," he said.

He noted that the first priority in purchasing books for children is their pleasure, adding, "We must first know what our children like and what topics they enjoy the most."

"We must connect with children in a way to understand their feelings and thoughts, asking questions is not enough," he said.

On the current situation of coronavirus that has forced many children to stay at home, Rahmandoost said, "My children have grown up and have left the house, but if I had a little child at home, I would certainly spend more time to choose a good book."

"We used to buy 10 books with a small amount of money, and if one or two of the books were not good enough it was not that important. But now we can only buy one with the same amount of money, so we must be more careful in choosing a good book for our children," he explained.



Children's book writer Mostafa Rahmandoost in an undated photo.

He also added that there are several institutes that offer good books, providing better opportunities for families and schools deciding how to spend money on their children's books.

He added that the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) used to introduce children's books, and that was a very good idea.

"This way it would be useful both for families, while it would also help equip IIDYCA libraries across the country," he concluded.

Rahmandoost, the author of "Zal and the Phoenix" was born in Hamedan in 1950.

He has been working for children and young adults for over 30 years. He has so far published over 300 books, poetry and book translations.

His credits include over 150 stories and poem collections such as "The Sky Also Smiled", "I Like Children" and "The Story of Five Fingers".

Movies from Iran to compete in Cheongju Intl. Short Film Festival

ART desk **TEHRAN —** Three movies by Iranian filmmakers will be competing in the 17th Cheongju International Short Film Festival in South Korea.

"The Rotation", "Gabriel" and "Epilogue" will be screened in the various sections of the festival, which will be held online and physically from August 20 to 29 and September 25 and 26.

"The Rotation" by Hazhir As'adi and "Gabriel" by Yusef Kargar have been selected to be screened in the Programmer Selection.

In "The Rotation", there is a war between two tribes over a claim that the sun in the sky. As a result of that war, the sun is annihilated and the volcano erupts. The lava kills both of the two tribes, and also creates a new sun as well. Several centuries pass by, and humans are still at war claiming the sun is in the sky.

"Gabriel" is about a middle-aged man who lives with his son. His wife has been lost for some time. All the people are suspicious of her. One day news comes to him and he has to choose one: expediency or conscience?!

The animated movie "Epilogue" co-directed by Mehdi Azari and Amin Ektesabi will be screened in the Others section.

The film is all about the men who hand out books and trade them for food. What goes on behind that shutter?

The festival will open by screening French director Thomas Scohy's "Invisible", and will come to end with Israeli director Sahar Cohen's "Tow Zone".



Animated movie "The Rotation" by Hazhir As'adi.

Iranian bookstores sell "Gourmet Rhapsody"

CULTURE desk **TEHRAN —** A Persian translation of French novelist Muriel Barbery's "Gourmet Rhapsody" has recently been published by Avande Danesh Publications.

The book has been rendered into Persian by Leila Nazari.

The book is about Pierre Arthens, the greatest food critic in the world, who is dying in the heart of Paris, in the same posh building made famous in "The Elegance of the Hedgehog".

Revered by some and reviled by many, Monsieur Arthens has been lording it over the world's most esteemed chefs for years, passing judgment on their creations, deciding their fates with a stroke of his pen, destroying and building reputations on a whim.

But now, during his final hours, his mind has turned to simpler things. He is desperately searching for that singular flavor, that sublime something once sampled, never forgotten, the flavor par excellence.

Indeed, this flamboyant and self-absorbed man desires only one thing before he dies: one last taste. Thus begins a charming voyage that traces the career of Monsieur Arthens from childhood to maturity across a celebration of all manner of culinary delights.

Alternating with the voice of the supercilious Arthens is a chorus belonging to his acquaintances and familiars – relatives, lovers, a would-be protégé, even a cat.

Each will have his or her say about M. Arthens, a man who has inspired only extreme emotions in people. Here, as in "The Elegance of the Hedgehog", Muriel Barbery's story celebrates life's simple pleasures and sublime moments while condemning the arrogance and vulgarity of power.

Barbery is professor of philosophy. She entered the École Normale Supérieure de Fontenay-Saint-Cloud in 1990 and obtained her agrégation in philosophy in 1993. She then taught philosophy at the Université de Bourgogne, in a lycée, and at the Saint-Lo IUFM.