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Trade to be increased in region via Iran-Afghanistan borders

By Mahnaz Abdi
TEHRAN — Through launching Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) corridor and Iran-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan corridor, trade activities will be increased in the region via Iran-Afghanistan borders.
 India-Iran-Afghanistan corridor is the other transit path which plays a significant

role in boosting trade via borders between Iran and Afghanistan.
 Regarding the significant status of the mentioned corridors in the expansion of trade among the countries located in these paths, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) is seeking to bolster trade via Iranian borders, according to the IRICA spokesman, Ruhollah Latifi. →4

Lebanon president names Mustapha Adib as new PM

Lebanese President Michel Aoun has named the country's ambassador to Germany Mustapha Adib as the new prime minister after he secured the support of major political parties.
 A majority of lawmakers had to decide on whom to name as premier before Aoun tasked the candidate with forming a government.
 According to a Reuters tally of votes cast by lawmakers in official consulta-

tions, Adib secured the support of a majority of lawmakers to be designated as the new prime minister.
 Adib secured at least 66 votes, or more than half of the 120 MPs currently serving in the Lebanese parliament, after the Christian Free Patriotic Movement announced it had nominated him.
 Lebanon's parliament usually has 128 MPs but eight resigned following the Aug. 4 port explosion. →5

Resistance festival to review pro-Zionist cinema

TEHRAN — The 16th Resistance International Film Festival plans to review a lineup of films produced under the influence of the Zionists around the world in a special section named "Samiri Cinema".
 "Raising society's awareness of the world films produced under the influence of the Zionists and screened around the world is high on the agenda at the Resistance festival," the director of the section, Shafi Aqamohammadian, said in a press release on Monday.

"There is a difference between a Zionist filmmaker and a Samiri filmmaker," he noted and added, "It may be that a filmmaker does not belong to a Zionist community, but nevertheless acts based on their goals and ideology, therefore, he/she is a Samiri filmmaker. This kind of cinema may promote concepts such as modern idolatry, womanizing, racism and even terrorism."
 "A filmmaker may be religious or liberal, but may make his/her film under the influence of Zionism," he stated. →8

By Ebrahim Fallahi
 Tehran Times Journalist

Is al Kadhimi's visit to Washington going to impact Iran-Iraq energy ties?

As the U.S. waivers for Iraq's electricity imports from Iran are nearing their expiration in September, the Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's recent visit to the United States, has raised some questions about the future of the two neighbors' energy ties.

Some analysts believe that al Kadhimi's travel to the U.S. and some other Arab states including Egypt and Jordan is somehow a preparation for reducing the country's energy reliance on Iran, however, many other believe that such a goal, even if existed, is far from being realized.

Many experts and analysts believe that the agreements reached during these trips are not official and executable yet.

"Iraq's recent energy deals with U.S. companies were a mixed bag of loose agreements that need to be translated into firm commercial terms at a time when Washington failed to extend much-needed waivers for Iranian energy imports due to expire in September," S&P Global reported on August 26.

Meanwhile, Iraqi officials also believe that the agreements reached during the Prime Minister's visit to the United States on energy exchanges have little chance of reaching a conclusion, since the two countries' previous such agreements haven't yet been realized.

So Iran still remains the only option for Iraqi government for the safe and sustainable supply of the country's electricity needs.

The waiver on electricity imports from Iran

The U.S.'s 120-day waivers for Iraq's energy imports from Iran are due to be expired in September and the U.S has not yet made any clear announcement about ending or extending of the mentioned waivers.

Although, the two sides did not openly discuss this issue during al-Khadimi's visit to the U.S. but it is very unlikely that Washington would be able to end the mentioned waivers, since Iraq has recently signed a two-year deal with Iran for importing electricity and also there is no plausible replacement for the Iranian electricity at the moment. →4

Kashmir crackdown on Shia Muslims reveals long-simmering discontent

TEHRAN — Indian police attacked a Muharram procession in India-administered Kashmir on Saturday, injuring dozens of mourners commemorating the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS).

Mohsen Rouhifefat, an India expert, tells the Tehran Times that the attack constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights.

The attack came as the Shiite Muslims in the disputed Himalayan region held mourning rituals to commemorate Ashura, the 10th day of the Muharram month in the Islamic lunar calendar, which marks the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), a grandson of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) who was martyred in the Battle of Karbala on October 10, 680 (Muharram 10, 61 AH).

Government forces, armed with pump-action shotguns, fired shotgun pellets and tear gas to disperse hundreds of mainly Shiite Muslim mourners in the main city of Srinagar. Local

authorities made efforts to prevent Muslims from holding mourning processions given the coronavirus-related restrictions. A police officer said that people in Kashmir held processions in parts of Srinagar in violation of the restrictions imposed because of COVID-19.

However, witnesses said that the Saturday procession was peaceful and didn't violate health protocols.

"The procession was not just peaceful but was also following health protocols. They (government forces) unleashed such violence and did not spare even women mourners," the Associated Press quoted witness Sajjad Hussain as saying.

Jafar Ali, another witness, told AFP news agency that the procession started in the Bemina area on the outskirts of Srinagar while government forces were present in heavy numbers. Ali and other people who saw the clashes said security forces fired pellets and tear gas to disperse the mourners. →3

U.S. Protests: Trump and Biden clash over street violence

By staff & agencies

U.S. President Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Joe Biden have clashed over the violence that has erupted at protests in Portland, Oregon.

Trump blamed the Democrat mayor of Portland, Ted Wheeler, for allowing the "death and destruction of his city".

But Biden said the president was "recklessly encouraging violence".

A man was shot dead in Portland on Saturday as elsewhere in the city a pro-Trump rally clashed with Black Lives Matter protesters.

Portland has become a flashpoint for demonstrations against police brutality and racism since the police killing of African-American George Floyd in Minneapolis on 25 May triggered a wave of national and international outrage, BBC reported.

Mayor Wheeler warned against people coming to the city to seek revenge amid a

flurry of social media posts.

"For those of you saying on Twitter this morning that you plan to come to Portland to seek retribution, I'm calling on you to stay away," he said.

He also hit back at Trump's criticism, saying it was the U.S. president who had "created the hate and the division".

"I'd appreciate it if the president would support us or stay the hell out of the way," he said. Some activists have called for the mayor's resignation, saying he was not capable of resolving the protests.

'This is Trump's America'

In a series of tweets on Sunday, Trump said that "Portland will never recover with a fool for a mayor", and suggested sending federal forces to the city.

He also accused Biden of being "unwilling to lead".

Iranian craftspeople, businesses incur \$452m loss due to coronavirus

TEHRAN — Iran's deputy tourism minister on Thursday said that the handicrafts industry and related businesses across the country have suffered a loss of 19,000 billion rials (some \$452 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

"The coronavirus pandemic has so caused 19,000 billion rials damage in the area of handicrafts production across the country," Pouya Mahmoudian said.

"The outbreak of coronavirus was one of the

events that caused a lot of damage to the art of handicrafts in the country so that since the [Iranian] month of Esfand, last year, all handicraft markets have been closed and no exhibitions have been held in this area."

"Due to the lack of inbound passengers during this time, unfortunately, the amount of suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) diverged to almost zero," the official said.

According to Mahmoudian, Iran globally ranks first in terms of having the topmost number of

world cities [and villages] of handicrafts. "Some 295 fields of handicrafts are currently practiced across Iran with more than two million people engaging, majority of whom are women... Handicrafts also play an important role in the economy in our rural villages."

The Islamic Republic exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19), of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs. →6

FIFA threatens Iran with sanction

TEHRAN — FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura warned Iran FIFA and AFC are strongly opposing any use of legal threats and intimidation of any sort by anyone against a person or a group of persons.

The Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) has been recently ordered to pay Marc Wilmots an amount of approximately six million euros after the Belgian coach filed a complaint against Iran to FIFA.

Now, the Iranian Parliament is going to study the case to find out who is to blame for the mistake but Samoura says that FIFA and AFC strongly oppose any use of legal threats.

"It has been brought to our attention through various credible sources including media outlets quoting senior officials of FFIRI have apparently been "charged for negligence in performing their duties" by the General Inspection Agency in view of the recent decision rendered by the FIFA Players' Status Committee in the context of an employment-related dispute, whereby IRIFF was ordered to pay to the former coach of the national team, Mr. Marc Wilmots, an amount of approximately six million euros. We also understand that further investigation and legal prosecution are to come from the General Attorney of Tehran on the same," Samoura wrote in a letter to FFIRI Secretary general Mehdi Mohammad Nabi.

"First and foremost, we would like to emphasize that FIFA and AFC are strongly opposing any use of legal threats and intimidation of any sort by anyone against a person or a group of persons, particularly in the context of an attempt to exercise undue authority over a Member Association, thus violating the latter's autonomy. →3



Foreign company invests €70m in Iranian medical project

TEHRAN — Novo Nordisk, a leading global healthcare company, headquartered in Denmark, launched an insulin pen production line in Iran on Monday which is said to be the first of its kind in West Asia and East Mediterranean region.

According to deputy health minister Kiyanoush Jahanpour, the project can meet more than 30 percent of the country's need in the first phase and target the West Asia and East Mediterranean region's market once the production line is expanded. →7

Ayatollah Khamenei: Security owed to air defense readiness

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said that Iran owes its security to preparedness and vigilance of the Air Defense Force.

"Send my greeting to vigilant staff of the country's Air Defense; security of the country owes to preparedness and vigilance of the Air Defense," Ayatollah Khamenei said in a message on the occasion of the anniversary of the establishment of the Air Defense Force.

The Leader added, "Our religiously devoted people praise your incessant efforts, be appreciative of this."

Iran prioritizes expanding strategic ties with neighbors: Rouhani

POLITICAL TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that Iran prioritizes expansion of strategic ties with neighboring countries, especially in economic area.



"Historic and cultural affinities among the regional people are strong basis for expansion and promotion of cooperation with the neighboring countries which will benefit the regional people and governments," Rouhani said during session on "expansion of cooperation with neighbors".

He added, "Increasing and strengthening economic cooperation with the neighboring countries can play an important role in overcoming the problems."

The president also said that the Iranian government and people have always been beside the people in the neighboring countries and welcome expansion of relations.

"We all should make efforts to develop the whole region. A coordinated and joint economy in the region will help peace and security," he said.

Rouhani said in July that Iran is seeking to broaden its relations with its neighbors as well as other friendly countries.

"We hope to boost our cooperation with the neighbors including Iraq, Turkey, Qatar, Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as all other friendly states such as China and Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea littoral states," Rouhani said during a cabinet session.

Russia says 'nuclear deal participants have a lot to talk about'

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Preparatory meetings are underway in Vienna regarding the session of the Joint Commission on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), says Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations.

"Preparatory meetings are under way today in Vienna in connection with the session of the Joint Commission on #JCPOA at the level of Political Directors to be held on 1 September," Mikhail Ulyanov tweeted on Monday.

Ulyanov added, "Nuclear deal participants have a lot of topics to discuss."

Earlier, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Vienna to attend the JCPOA Joint Commission meeting which is scheduled to be held on Tuesday.



Araghchi is set to meet with some of the heads of the delegations attending the meeting.

The meeting will be chaired by Secretary-General of the European Union External Action Service Helga Schmid and Araghchi.

Last July, after receiving a letter from Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif over the non-adherence of European countries to the agreement, Schmid said the next meeting of the Joint Commission will be held as soon as the conditions for travel are available.

The meeting comes as the U.S. has illegally called for the reinstatement of the UN Security Council sanctions against Iran.

In mid-August, Washington officially informed the UN Security Council that it is demanding the restoration of all UN sanctions on Iran, claiming that the U.S. has the legal right to "snap back" UN sanctions even though U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal endorsed by Security Council Resolution 2231.

However, other parties to the nuclear deal, including Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, have voiced strong opposition to Washington's push for sanctions on Iran.

In a tweet on Friday, Zarif lambasted the U.S. administration for its insistence on triggering a highly controversial mechanism stipulated in Resolution 2231.

"After thrice being rejected by SC, U.S. now threatens 'sanctioning anyone & any entity that comes between US' & 'its snapback.' Obviously, they don't understand law or UN. Maybe they can grasp this: You divorced the JCPOA in 2018. Your name on the marriage certificate is irrelevant," tweeted Zarif.

U.S. President Donald Trump walked away from 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.

Air Defense Force at forefront of countering enemies, says commander

The air defense sector has been prosperous and innovative despite the sanctions, says General Sabahifard

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Commander of Iran's Air Defense Force says his forces are at the forefront of confronting enemies for their responsibility of establishing order and security in the country's airspace.

"Due to the Supreme Leader's decisions, the Air Defense Force in our country is at the forefront of confronting the enemies," Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard said on Monday.

"The same way that the police are responsible for establishing order and security on the ground, the Air Defense unit has that responsibility regarding the airspace," Sabahifard said, Mehr reported.

He highlighted the importance of Iran's Air Defense Force, saying air defense units were formed more than 100 years ago across the world after a need for them was felt due to the use of aircraft in the First World War.

Pointing to the significant progress in the air defense sector after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the general said the air defense sector has been prosperous and innovative despite the sanctions, threats and pressures.

Sabahifard described as remarkable Iran's progress in the field of electronic warfare, saying Iran's defense systems have been checked in difficult, real conditions and are ready for operation.

"Today, in addition to monitoring Iran's skies, our radar and reconnaissance sys-



tems are able to track the enemies and their activities in the region and beyond the country's borders," he said, adding, "These radars have been produced through cooperation and joint work among the Air Defense Force, the Defense Ministry and specialized scientific centers."

The general said Iran possesses air defense systems such as Talash, 15-Khordad, and Mersad in low and medium altitude

Air Defense Force chief says Iran's defense systems have been checked in difficult, real conditions and are ready for operation.

and Bavar-373 in high altitude. "These systems are made domestically, they can match the latest equipment in the world and they are in some cases even more advanced than them," Sabahifard explained.

The commander went on to say that the Air Defense Force observes regional airspace and all the activities taking place in it. He explained that attempts were made by enemy planes to invade Iran's airspace several times but they faced a strong air defense barrier.

Sabahifard also warned enemies not to try to harm Iran's interests, and instead, try to use past experiences.

Iran's air defense enjoying high position in the region'

Referring to the achievements made by the Air Defense Force in recent years, Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi said that Iran's air defense system has a "high status" in the region.

The Army chief made the remarks in his meeting with Sabahifard on Monday.

"During the post-revolution years, and especially after the establishment of the air defense unit in 2008, the country's air defense has made good achievements in various fields of air defense, including radar, missiles and communication systems," Mousavi pointed out, the English version of the Mehr news agency said.

Mousavi also stressed the need to increase cooperation among various branches of the armed forces.

Rouhani invites Malaysian king to visit Iran

POLITICAL TEHRAN — In a message to the Malaysia king on the occasion of the country's National Day, President Hassan Rouhani invited Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah to pay a visit to Iran.

In his message, Rouhani also expressed hope that in the light of the existing political will and solidarity between the two countries, Tehran-Kuala Lumpur relations will develop more than ever.

The text of Rouhani's message is as follows:

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful Dear Mr. Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Bilal Shah,

King of Malaysia, Congratulations on the arrival of Malaysia National Day to Your Excellency, Government, and people of your country.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while praising the positions and efforts of the government and people of Malaysia and the

common vision of the two countries in dealing with the crises of the Islamic world, including the occupation of Palestine and the suffering of its oppressed people, believes that the only way out of the problems the Islamic world facing with is dialogue and constructive interaction between Islamic states.

In this context, I would like to invite you to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran to discuss and exchange views on the problems of the Islamic world and the initiatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran to strengthen peace and stability, as well as further development of bilateral relations with the friendly and brotherly country of Malaysia.

I hope that in the light of the existing political will, we will see more and more solidarity between the two nations and the development of relations between the two countries in all political, economic, cultural, and international fields.

I pray to God for the health and success of his excellency and the well-being of the Malaysian people.



Iran adamant in pursuing assassination of Gen. Soleimani: Judiciary chief

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Judiciary Chief Hojjatoleslam Ebrahim Raeisi said on Monday that Iran's Judiciary and Foreign Ministry are adamant in legally pursuing the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

"Blood of martyr Soleimani has affected elements behind his terror, and the regional people's awareness will lead to the United States' exit from the region," the chief judge said during a meeting of

the Judiciary's supreme council.

On January 3, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered airstrikes that martyred General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), in Baghdad's international airport.

Soleimani was recognized internationally as a legendary commander in the war against terrorist groups, especially Daesh (ISIS). Only Daesh celebrated Soleimani's assassination.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs Mohsen Baharvand said in June that Iran will pursue assassination of Soleimani in international bodies.

"Diplomatic complaints have been filed through sending letters to the [UN] Security Council and UN Secretary-General [Antonio Guterres]. We are pursuing the case and completing our investigation in the Foreign Ministry. After that, international actions will be

taken," Baharvand told the IRIB in an interview.

Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaeili said during a press conference in January that Iran will file lawsuits against Trump and the U.S. government for the assassination of Soleimani.

"We intend to file lawsuits in the Islamic Republic, Iraq and The Hague Court (International Court of Justice) against the military and government of America and against Trump," he said.

Iran expresses concern over attack on Ashura mourners in Kashmir

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, voiced concerns on Monday over Indian security forces' attack on a Muharram procession in the Indian-administered Kashmir.

"While Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has paid tribute to Aba Abdullah [Imam Hussein (AS)] and mourning ceremonies for Imam Hussein have been held quietly across India, reports of Ashura mourners being injured in Kashmir are very worrying," Khatibzadeh told the Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA) on Monday.

The spokesman also called on the Indian government to investigate the Ashura attack and to provide medical assistance to the injured immediately.

On Saturday, Indian security forces, armed with pump-action shotguns, fired shotgun pellets and tear gas on the Muharram procession in parts of the main city of Srinagar, Kashmir. Local authorities took measures ahead of Ashura to prevent Kashmiri Shiite Muslims from holding mourning



ceremonies on the occasion of Ashura, the 10th day of the lunar month of Muharram in the Islamic calendar. Ashura marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), a grandson of the Prophet Mohammad who was martyred in the Battle of Karbala on October 10, 680 (Muharram 10, 61 AH).

Indian police crackdown on the Ashura procession left

more than 40 people injured. Images and Videos circulating on social media showed many young people suffering severe injuries to their faces and backs. Many of them had pellets stuck in their eyes and other parts of their bodies.

Indian authorities said the Muharram procession violated coronavirus-related restrictions imposed by the local government, a claim strongly rejected by the mourners and witnesses.

"The procession was not just peaceful but was also following health protocols," said Sajjad Hussain, a witness. "They [government forces] unleashed such violence and did not spare even women mourners."

Muharram is among the holiest months among Muslims around the world. During the first 10 days of the month, Millions of mainly Shiite Muslims hold mourning processions to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS). The mourners usually beat their chests while reciting elegies that glorify the heartbreaking martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson.

Nabih Berri: Investigation about Imam Musa al-Sadr will continue

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri has said that investigation about the top Shia cleric Imam Musa al-Sadr will continue until the truth comes to light.

"Investigation about the case of Imam Musa al-Sadr will continue and no one should be deceived by rumors. The strong men who are pursuing the issue will not make compromise about it," ISNA quoted Berri as saying on Monday.

Sadr, a prominent Iranian-Lebanese Shia scholar, went missing with two companions on August 31, 1978, during an official visit to the Libyan capital Tripoli. He was accompanied by Sheikh Mohammad Yaqoub

and journalist Abbas Badreddine.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has paid tribute to the religious scholar on the anniversary of his disappearance, saying Tehran has been making international efforts for four decades to find out the truth about him.

"There have been follow-ups and dialogs at bilateral and international levels to find out about his fate," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Saturday, according to Tasnim.

Khatibzadeh said Imam Musa al-Sadr is one of the most notable figures that did his utmost to ensure Muslim unity and dignity, dialogue among religions, and proximity of faiths.



Sadr's services and endeavors are so extensive that all people in the region enjoy them today, particularly the appreciative people of Lebanon, he said.

"He was the founder of an intellectual and behavioral school of thought in the Islamic world and the Shiite world whose benefits have continued until today and are becoming clearer every day," the spokesman added.

Khatibzadeh also attributed the victories, progress and achievements of the resistance movement to the presence of Sadr in Lebanon.

"Imam Musa al-Sadr is renowned in Lebanon mainly for his role in shaping the main cores of resistance against the Zionist regime's occupation and in creating unity and peaceful coexistence among followers of religions," he added.

Vaezi: U.S. threat of sanctions against opposing countries 'a dangerous precedent'

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Presidential desk chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi has said that publicly threatening countries that oppose U.S. policies is a dangerous precedent in the UN Security Council. "Publicly threatening with sanctions the countries that oppose the U.S. or do not accompany its policies is a dangerous precedent in the international system and the UN Security Council," Vaezi said on Monday, according to IRNA.

He made the remarks in reference to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who warned Russia and China not to disregard the U.S. reimposition of all United Nations sanctions on Iran.

Two weeks ago, Pompeo was asked by Fox News if the U.S. would target Russia and China with sanctions if they refuse to reimpose the UN sanctions on Iran, to which he responded: "Absolutely."

"We have already done that, where we have seen any country violate ... the current American sanctions, we've held every nation accountable for that. We'll do the same thing with respect to the broader UN Security Council sanctions as well," he said.

Vaezi said the U.S. government is influenced by the extremist approach of the Zionist regime and makes decisions which are "completely illegal and illogical".

"The U.S. government, in an illogical act, officially exited Barjam (nuclear deal) and



it's clear that it cannot use the mechanisms within the agreement anymore," he added.

According to Vaezi, the U.S. officials have realized what a terrible mistake they made by withdrawing from the nuclear agreement.

"They are now resorting to desperate and empty moves which are void of any legal standing," he remarked.

The official said the U.S., which claims to be the world's leader, has become isolated due to Iran's strong and rightful behavior.

He further said the U.S. will not succeed

in its anti-Iran bid, because it is not a party to the nuclear deal and all members of the international community oppose its move.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has said Pompeo is "living in an imaginary parallel world".

Pompeo said on August 27 that the United States would make sure the UN international sanctions against Iran return on September 20.

Firing back, Khatibzadeh maintained, "The hands of the clock only move in the

imaginary parallel world of Pompeo."

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has also said dismissed threats of the United States for imposing sanctions against any country that stands against their snapback measures.

"After thrice being rejected by SC, US now threatens sanctioning anyone and any entity that comes between US and its snapback," Zarif tweeted.

"Obviously they don't understand law or UN. Maybe they can grasp this: You divorced the JCPOA in 2018. Your name on the marriage certificate is irrelevant," Zarif added.

In mid-August, Pompeo announced that he triggered a 30-day process to reimpose all international sanctions on Iran by lodging a complaint with the council accusing Iran of breaching the 2015 nuclear deal.

It came after the Security Council resoundingly rejected a U.S. bid on August 14 to extend an arms embargo on Iran which will otherwise expire in October. Only the Dominican Republic joined Washington in voting yes.

Last week, Indonesia's Ambassador to the UN Dian Triansyah Djani, council president for August, announced that it was "not in the position to take further action" on a U.S. bid to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran because there is no consensus in the 15-member body.

Rouhani felicitates Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan on National Day

POLITICAL TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has felicitated Vietnam and Kyrgyzstan on their National Day, expressing willingness for enhanced ties with the two countries.

In a message to Vietnamese President Nguyen Phu Trong, Rouhani expressed congratulations to the Vietnamese people and government on the occasion of the country's Independence Day, hoping for increased cooperation between Iran and Vietnam.

He expressed the hope that Tehran-Hanoi ties would develop and deepen, especially with regard to the great capacities that exist.

The president also wished his Vietnamese counterpart

health and success and the people of Vietnam prosperity.

Vietnam attained its independence on September 2, 1945, and since then the Vietnamese mark it as a national holiday across the country. The occasion commemorates President Ho Chi Minh reading the declarations of independence of Vietnam at Ba Dinh Square in Hanoi.

In his message to Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Rouhani wished that bilateral relations would develop in all economic, political and cultural spheres, given the historical and cultural commonalities and in the light of joint efforts.

"I hope that given the historical and cultural common-

alities between the two countries and in the light of joint efforts, we witness the increasing development of relations between the two countries in all economic, political and cultural spheres," he noted.

"The efforts of the authorities of the two countries to identify and eliminate possible obstacles by using the capacities can be a great step in realizing the development of relations and providing more welfare and prosperity for our nations," he added.

Independence Day of Kyrgyzstan is the main official holiday in the country. It is celebrated annually on August 31 which marks declaration of independence in 1991.

Parliament committee calls for extradition of MKO terrorists

POLITICAL TEHRAN — In letters addressed to Iran's Foreign Ministry and Judiciary, Zohreh Elahian, the chairwoman of the Parliament's Human Rights Committee, has called for extradition of members of Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) from European countries.

"As you know, in the Islamic Republic of Iran more than 17,000 of our beloved compatriots have fallen victims to terrorist acts and gross and systematic violations by terrorist groups, in particular Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (known as hypocrites in Iran) and the ISIS, of the basic human rights including the right to life, security, and health," Elahian said in her Monday letter addressed to Judiciary Chief Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi.

She called on the judiciary chief to issue an order paving the way for identifying, suing, extraditing, prosecuting, and confiscating the assets of the MKO terrorists. She also called for gathering accurate information about MKO terrorists' activities at the UN.

Elahian sent a similar letter to Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, calling on the Foreign Ministry to make preparations for prosecuting MKO terrorists.

"Unfortunately, today the majority of these terrorists continue to hatch plans against the Iranian people by fleeing the blade of justice and seeking refuge in European countries," Elahian wrote to Zarif.

According to the letter, the chairwoman made four requests of Zarif with regard to MKO terrorists. First of all, she requested that the Foreign Ministry issue an immediate warning to the European countries that harbor MKO terrorists.

Second, she called for a meeting between the victims' families and ambassadors of countries supporting the MKO.

Third, the ministry should gather accurate information on how the European countries support the MKO.

And finally, the ministry should gather information on MKO's activities at the UN,



especially in Geneva.

Elahian also sent another letter to Head of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) Maria Arena, calling for a trial of MKO terrorists who are living in Europe.

"We expect that the European Parliament pursue the issue and the European governments act based on goodwill and the principle of commitment to the international undertakings, support the victims of terror and their family members, provide the victims with access to justice and put the terrorists

who live in these countries on trial to end the process of no punishment for the terrorists and take an effective step in the fight against terrorism," Elahian wrote, according to the Fars news agency.

According to the Fars report, the MKO is listed as a terrorist organization by much of the international community. Its members fled Iran in 1986 for Iraq, where they received support from Iraq's then-dictator Saddam Hussein. In 2012, the US State Department removed the MKO from its list of designated terrorist organizations under intense lobbying by groups associated to Saudi Arabia and other regimes adversarial to Iran. A few years ago, MKO members were relocated from their Camp Ashraf in Iraq's Diyala Province to Camp Hurriyet (Camp Liberty), a former US military base in Baghdad, and were later sent to Albania. Those members, who have managed to escape, have revealed MKO's scandalous means of access to money, almost exclusively coming from Saudi Arabia.

Kashmir crackdown on Shia Muslims reveals long-simmering discontent

I→ "The forces fired pellets at the procession that was mainly peaceful and included women," Iqbal Ahmad, a witness, said.

At least 19 people have been injured during the police attack on the mourners. And according to a Reuters report, at least 50 mourners were detained in Srinagar.

Videos and images circulating on social media showed people who suffered severe injuries to their faces and backs. Some victims had pellets stuck in their eyes and other parts of their bodies.

Recent violence in Kashmir raised concerns over human rights violations in the disputed region, which is claimed by India and Pakistan. The violence also raised questions as to why India brutally quash the Ashura procession while it officially pays homage to Imam Hussein (AS).

"We recall the sacrifice of Imam Hussain (AS). For him, there was nothing more important than the values of truth and justice. His emphasis on equality as well as fairness are noteworthy and give strength to many," tweeted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 30, the same day the Indian security forces were cracking down on the mourners in Kashmir.

Earlier, Kashmir's governor, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, issued a message on the occasion of Ashura saying that Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions sacrificed their lives for upholding the values of truth, justice, and righteousness. He added that their martyrdom "reminds us of the high principles of human dignity and morality."

"Muharram has deep cultural roots in India and leaders of various sects and ethnicities commemorate it. In New Delhi, a Hindu figure along with a Muslim figure, addresses the mourners. Ashura and Muharram are deeply cherished in the Hindu culture," said Rouhifefat in response to a question as to why the Indian authorities pay homage to Ashura while suppressing Muharram mourners.

Tensions in Kashmir have been simmering since last year, when the federal government revoked the region's

semi-autonomous status, causing anger among Kashmiri Muslims.

Indian-controlled Kashmir is home to at least 1.4 million Shiite Muslims, who rarely stage protests against the Indian government, and their relationship with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was good until recent times, according to Rouhifefat.

"The relationship between the [Indian] Shiite community and the BJP party has been good despite the fact that the party's relationship with Muslims, in general, wasn't good," Rouhifefat told the Tehran Times.

Rouhifefat added, "The day of Ashura is a national holiday in India and Shiites in Indian cities such as Kargil in Kashmir hold massive mourning ceremonies. Authorities prohibited Muharram mourning in Kashmir in 1989 due to the clashes that took place in that year. This prohibition is still in place. However, mourning ceremonies continued to be held in cities such as Budgam, which is home to Shiite Muslims."

According to the expert, 10 percent of India's population — about 40 million — are Shiite Muslims.

He went further to say, "Obviously, the [Shiite] people of India are uneasy about what happened in Kashmir over the past year. Human rights have been flagrantly violated there. The Indian government has imposed restrictions on Kashmir. People face difficulty moving in and out of Kashmir. This uneasiness was reflected in Muharram processions."

Kashmir, a Muslim majority region, is a triangle territory shared by Pakistan, India, and China and it has been the subject of dispute among the three countries since 1947. In a bid to directly control India-administered Kashmir, the Indian government revoked the special status, or the limited autonomy, granted to the region under the Indian constitution, a move that sparked anger among the native people of Kashmir. Since then, tensions have been on the rise in the Indian-controlled Kashmir. The Indian government has been accused of cracking down on Kashmir and violating human rights there.



Analysts and local leaders believe that human rights violations by Indian security forces have fuelled anger among Shiite Muslims in Kashmir.

Rouhifefat said violations of Muslim human rights in India have been condemned by the international community.

According to the Reuters report, protests by Kashmir's 1.4 million Shiite Muslims are rare. The 31-year revolt against Indian rule in the territory has been led by Sunni Muslim militants. But this year, Shiite youths have been vocal about alleged human rights violations by Indian security forces, said senior Shiite leader Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari.

"What happened in the valley of Kashmir has something to do with the pressures that the BJP-led government imposed on Indian Muslims. They [Indian authorities] have imposed huge pressures on Muslims to mobilize the Hindu public opinion in support of the BJP party. They do so to strengthen the popularity of their party, especially now that the Indian economy is on a slippery slope since the country's election. India's GDP and exports have declined and the Coronavirus pandemic has only worsened the existing economic woes. Furthermore, they want to cover up sectarian conflicts and other problems by cracking down on Muslims," Rouhifefat pointed out.

SPORTS

FIFA threatens Iran with sanction

I→ "This being said, in order to fully assess the situation at hand, we would kindly ask you to provide FIFA and AFC with a comprehensive report by 2 September 2020 at the latest relating the position of FFIRI and the details of the aforementioned situation.



"We take this opportunity to remind you that according to art. 14, par. 1 lit. i) and art. 19 of the FIFA Statutes, FIFA Member Associations are obliged to manage their affairs independently and without undue influence from third parties. Any breach of these obligations might lead to potential sanctions as provided for in the FIFA Statutes, including the suspension of the Member Association.

"Moreover, and in relation to the aforementioned, we would like to emphasize that any violations of art. 14, par. 1 lit. i) of the FIFA Statutes may also lead to sanctions, even if the third-party influence was not the fault of the member association concerned (cf. art. 14 par. 3 of the FIFA Statutes)," she wrote.

AFC President offers condolences on passing of Serjick Teymourian

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Asian Football Confederation (AFC) President Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa has sent his condolences to the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) and the family and friends of former Esteghlal midfielder Serjick Teymourian.

Teymourian passed away at the age of 46 on Saturday. The AFC President said: "On behalf of the whole Asian football family, please accept my heartfelt sympathies and condolences on the passing of Serjick Teymourian."

"He will always be remembered for his passion for football and his contributions to the development of the game in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Asian football," added Shaikh Salman.

Teymourian, the older brother of ex-national team player Andranik, was seriously injured in a car accident in July 2020 and was placed in a medically induced coma in the intensive care unit at the Shohaday-e Tajrish Hospital in Tehran.

The defensive midfielder began his career with FC Ararat before featuring for Iranian giants Esteghlal and eventually sealed a move to German side, FSV Mainz 05 where he stayed for two seasons before retiring from the game.

The thoughts and prayers of the AFC and the rest of the Asian football community are with the loved ones and friends of Teymourian, FFIRI and the IR Iran football family during this difficult time.

"The Iranian Job" for Italians

S P O R T S TEHRAN — It's not a secret that Esteghlal are looking to bring Andrea Stramaccioni back to Tehran; however the Iranian team are also weighing up another option for the new season.

Roberto Donadoni is the latest name who has been linked with the Iranian Blues. The Italian media reports suggest that Esteghlal's officials are in Italy to lure one of them.

Ex-Inter coach Stramaccioni had a very brief, but eventful, spell at Esteghlal from June to December 2019 but left the team due to a series of breaches, including payment irregularities and visa issues.

Now, the Iranian team are determined to bring him back with an impressive salary on a one-year contract. SerieBnews.com has reported that Esteghlal will turn to Donadoni if Stramaccioni rejects to return to Tehran.

Esteghlal are also eyeing ex-Shenzen coach Donadoni, however the former Italy coach has been also linked with a move to newly-promoted team Spezia. Esteghlal's offer could be a fresh experience for Donadoni, who has already traveled to Tehran to meet Esteghlal as Al Ittihad player.

Esteghlal, as one of the Iranian powerhouses, have not win a title in the Iran league from 2013.

"The Iranian Job" could be tempting for the Italian coaches but Esteghlal have not reached an agreement with them so far.

Esteghlal, Tractor to face off in Hazfi Cup decider: AFC

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Islamic Republic of Iran's long, unique 2019-20 football season has one match remaining, with Esteghlal and Tractor to meet in the Hazfi Cup Final on Thursday.

The teams secured their respective places in the decider with wins in last week's semi-finals. Tractor beat Naft Masjed Soleyman 1-0, but it was Esteghlal's success over Persepolis in the other semi-final which captured much of the attention.

The Tehran sides played out a superb, see-sawing battle at an empty Azadi Stadium, with Esteghlal equalized at 2-2 in injury time, before emerging from a nerve-shredding penalty shootout as winner.

Esteghlal finished second in the recently completed Iran Pro League, three points ahead of fourth-placed Tractor, who is chasing just its second Hazfi Cup title, with its previous win coming in 2014, the-afc.com reported.

Its opponent, on the other hand, is the competition's most successful team. Esteghlal has lifted the Cup on seven occasions, including five times since 2000.

The match has been scheduled to take place in Mashhad's Emam Reza Stadium.

Hazfi Cup is the Iranian football knockout cup competition, run by the Iranian Football Federation.

The competition was founded in 1975 as Pahlavi Cup but after revolution continued as Hazfi Cup.

'Removing production barriers, best way to support exports'

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Head of the Non-Oil Export Promotion Committee of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) says the government should focus on removing the barriers in the way of domestic production as the best way for developing non-oil export.

"The prerequisite for an oil-free economy is to be able, as the first step, to remove the barriers that limit the activities of traders and also to improve production. Especially in the year that has been dubbed Surge in Production," ICCIMA quoted Jamshid Nafar as saying.

Referring to the Leader's remarks on the need for directing liquidity toward production, Nafar said: "The realization of this statement is not possible except by removing barriers to production."

"But unfortunately, instead of supporting production and producers, capital has shifted from the manufacturing and export sectors toward intermediation and speculation," he regretted.

The official further stressed the need for the government to consult with the private sector and called the collaboration between the two bodies a necessity for the realization of the surge in production.

"Our main problems in export are the lack of infrastructure, the issues with the government directives and management, and if we want to increase the value of exports, these problems must be addressed through a combination of the private sector and government measures," he said.

Considering the reduction of Iran's oil revenues due to the U.S. sanctions and the fall in oil price due to the coronavirus pandemic, the government has been shifting its focus from oil toward the promotion of non-oil exports to offset the country's budget deficit.

In this regard, the promotion of domestic production has been seen as a vital factor in developing exports, so that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution has called the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) the year of "Surge in Production".

Number of trading accounts in stock market reaches 48.5m

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The number of trading accounts in Iran's stock market has reached 48.5 million by the end of the last Iranian calendar month (August 21), while the figure was 9.086 million at the end of the same month in the past year, Mehr news agency reported on Monday, citing the data released by Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry.

As reported, the mentioned figure also includes the accounts opened for trading the "Justice Shares".

Justice Shares are shares of government-owned companies that were given free to the six lowest income groups of the society almost a decade ago. Shareholders were not allowed to sell the shares until May, when based on a government's plan, the shares were allowed to be tradable in the stock market.

The shareholders were given the option to either directly gain the ownership of their shares and sell it in the stock exchange, or let the investment companies manage their portfolio as in the past.

The head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said that 4.5 million new trading accounts have been opened in the country's stock market during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21).

Hasan Qalibaf-Asl said it is while the number of trading accounts opened in the stock market was 820,000 in the past year and 50,000 in its preceding year.

The SEO head further announced that the new shareholders have entered the stock market with the average capital of 100 million rials (about \$2,380) — 150 million rials (about \$3,571).

It should be noted that in late February, SEO set new regulations for the opening of trading accounts for the new shareholders in the country's stock market.

Based on an announcement by the SEO, the new applicants can conduct trade one month after opening their trading accounts and they are required to pass an exam given by Securities and Exchange Brokers Association (SEBA) or SEO during the one-month time, while they are also committed to avoiding signal selling and some other actions, and if they do so, their accounts will be blocked.

As decided by SEBA, the applicants are required to take the mentioned exam in person or virtually, and it is in line with elevating the knowledge of shareholders.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the SEO head said that the capital market was not paid attention by the people in the past years, adding, "But this market is currently highly welcomed which has made a real change and development in it."

He said while the total investment in the capital market reached 350 trillion rials (about \$8.33 billion) in the previous year, the figure was one quadrillion rials (about \$23.8 billion) just in the four first months of the current year.

Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand has recently said, "We try to save the liquidity attracted by the capital market and lead it toward production and development."

TPO sets up special task force on saffron trade

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said that the organization has set up a special task force on trade of saffron, the TPO portal published on Monday.

Underlining the significance of saffron in Iran's exports, Hamid Zadboum said that TPO has had supporting the exports of this product through offering different incentives a top agenda of its activities since the Iranian calendar year 1380 (March 2001-March 2002).

The special task force held its meeting at the place of TPO in the presence of the representatives of Agriculture Ministry, Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI), Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Health Ministry, Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI), Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC), National Saffron Council, and the Organization for Protection of Consumers and Producers (OPCP).

About 85 percent to 90 percent of Iran's saffron is produced in the northeastern provinces of North Khorasan and Khorasan Razavi and the eastern province of South Khorasan.

Based on the data released by Iranian Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, 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.

Is al-Kadhimi's visit to Washington going to impact Iran-Iraq energy ties?

I → "The U.S. is highly unlikely to end its sanctions' waivers, particularly with the degree of focus on the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority connectivity for Iraq," said Patrick Osgood, senior Iraq analyst at Control Risks.

The chances of the U.S. ending the waivers further wane as Iraq's oil production is also declined under the pressures by OPEC+ to comply with the pact and to compensate for previous non-compliances leaving the country's electricity production more vulnerable than before.

■ The U.S. deals in Iraq

As mentioned before, during al Kadhimi's visit to Washington, several energy agreements were signed between the two sides, including a \$1.2 billion deal with General Electric (GE).

These deals, however, seem not be convincing for many Iraqi officials and analysts, since they are not "something new" and the U.S. companies have already failed to fulfill their commitments to Iraq's energy projects.

Back in October 2019, the former council of ministers approved a GE proposal to rehabilitate Iraq's power grid and substations, including 750 kilometers (km) of transmission lines and 17 substations



in the liberated areas of Mosul and Anbar provinces, and the provision of interconnectivity with Jordan with a total cost of \$727 million, according to Harry Istepanian, senior fellow at the Iraq Energy Institute.

"The former government also agreed with GE to undertake contracts valued at \$500 million for the upgrade and maintenance of 6,000 MW of the ministry of electricity power generation turbines but signing the

contract was delayed due to government resignation in November 2019."

■ Saudi propaganda

Along with the U.S. deals, Saudi Aramco might also be pushing for cutting the energy ties between Iran and Iraq, as the Kingdom's Oil Company Aramco is said to be among the companies which are going to collaborate in developing Iraq's Al Ratawi gas field.

As the country's biggest gas project, developing al Ratawi has been delayed several times due to lack of financing.

Saudi Aramco and ACWA Power could be among the players in the Al Ratawi project, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Ali Allawi said on August 21.

■ Iranian perspective

Despite all the efforts made by the U.S. and other Arab nations, Iran has no objection to Iraq expanding its energy relationships with the world.

As Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi told Al-Monitor: "Bilateral relations between countries are basically internal and related to the foreign policy of each country. We do not intend to interfere in an internal matter. Iraq is our friend and brother country, and its leaders recognize their national interests better than anyone."

The ambassador said the nature of the relationship between Iran and Iraq is unchangeable. "No matter what government is in power in Iraq, the relations between the two countries are so intertwined in different areas that no government can ignore them."

Iraq could connect its networks with other Persian Gulf Arab countries but no other country can take Iran's special place among Iraq's top trade partners.

Trade to be increased in region via Iran-Afghanistan borders

I → On August 10, Iran sent two transit cargoes from Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas to Uzbekistan through a newly established Iran-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan corridor under a pilot operation to assess the mentioned route, an official with the IRICA announced at the time.

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

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

"The pilot opening of this corridor indicates that Afghanistan is seriously determined to develop transit in its territory and connect Central Asian countries to the southern

waters, including the ports along the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman (Chabahar)," he noted.

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

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

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

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

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

Meanwhile, in 2016, Iran, India, and Afghanistan decided to jointly establish a trade route for land-locked Central



Asian countries.

India sent its first consignment of wheat to Afghanistan through Iran's Chabahar Port back in 2017.

Later on, in February 2019, the Afghanistan-Iran-India trade corridor for the trade between the two countries through Chabahar Port was officially inaugurated.

Two weeks ago, the seventh cargo ship carrying Indian wheat for Afghanistan with 352 containers arrived at Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar.

Iranian ports attract over \$85m of investment in Q1

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Despite the restrictions and limitations created by the outbreak of the coronavirus, Iranian ports managed to attract 3.57 trillion rials (over \$85 million) of investment in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

The mentioned investments have been done mainly with the aim of developing and maintaining infrastructure and equipping ports, IRNA reported.

Also to facilitate business in the country's ports, 2.836 trillion rials (about \$67.5 million) was also invested by the private sector in the form of five contracts during the said period.

Accordingly, the total amount of non-governmental investment in the country's commercial ports has reached 161.235 trillion rials (about \$3.83 billion) in the form of 333 contracts.



As reported, Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) also implemented or studied over 580 projects worth 151.025 trillion rials (about \$3.59 billion).

The construction of six floating wharves for passengers and tourism in Soheili and Gurzin ports in Qeshm and Hengam Islands in the southern Hormozgan Province, and

continuing the third phase of Shahid Rajaei port's development project are also among the PMO achievements this spring.

Back in April, PMO's Deputy Head for Ports and Economic Affairs Farhad Montaser Kouhsari had said investment in the country's ports increased by 61 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) compared to its preceding year.

According to the official, in the past few years, PMO has changed its approach and strategies from authority and ownership to supervision and support and that has had a great impact on the involvement of the private sector in the port projects and has increased the level of investments.

Montaser pointed to the preparation and updating of various packages for attracting domestic and foreign investment, and development and updating of appropriate regula-

tions to allocate a percentage of government revenues from maritime trade activities to the development of coastal areas and protection of the marine environment can be mentioned as factors that can contribute to the increase of investment in the country's ports.

Facilitating the issuance of guarantees by Iran Marine Fund, granting facilities according to the participation and operation in marine projects, upgrading Iran Marine Fund to the level of a maritime development financial institution and the provision of appropriate working capital, as well as the development of executive regulations for acknowledging international maritime industry and service activities as export products were also among the issues that have been considered by the Ports and Maritime Organization to attract more investment in ports, according to the official.

Corona facilities to rail transport companies to be paid as of early Sep.

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) said the facilities allocated for compensating the damages caused by the coronavirus outbreak for passenger rail transport companies are due to be paid as of early September.

Speaking to IRIB, Saeed Rasouli said 9.4 trillion rials (about \$223.8 million) was allocated by the government to compensate for the damage caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus, especially the decline in the passenger traffic.

A quota has been set for each company and these companies have been introduced to the acting banks to go through the administrative process, but to date, no rail transport company has received these facilities, Rasouli said.

Referring to the sharp decline in revenues of rail passenger companies after the coronavirus outbreak, the official added:



"In the past six months, the revenues of railway passenger companies have fallen sharply and the financial condition

of most of them has become acute. And since none of the employees of these companies have been fired, we expect the banking system to hasten the process for the payment of these facilities."

He noted that most of the companies eligible for receiving the mentioned facilities are at the stage of completing documents or providing collateral, and based on the serious follow-ups by the Transport Ministry and the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, hopefully, these companies will be able to receive the support loan by early September.

Back in June, Rasouli had announced that 63 companies were going to benefit from the mentioned facilities.

Speaking in a press conference on June 6, the RAI head noted that the eligible companies will be offered facilities with low-interest rates.

Incentive packages expected to reduce electricity consumption by 10%

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Ministry's program for rewarding efficient electricity subscribers with 100 percent discount on their bills is expected to reduce the country's electricity consumption by 10 percent, IRNA reported.

This program called "power of hope", was unveiled by the Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian in mid-August under the framework of the A-B-Iran program.

"This program will be implemented to both reward low-consuming subscribers and to encourage others to consume less and it is expected to reduce power consumption by 10 percent," Ardakanian said in a press confer-

ence on the occasion of the Government Week (August 23-29).

The minister noted that according to a cabinet decision, all the subscribers that cooperated well with the Energy Ministry's consumption management programs this summer are to be awarded.

"To do so, home subscribers were divided into three categories, which include low-consumers, normal-consumers, and high-consumers," he said.

He noted that two programs have been prepared for high-consuming subscribers so that by implementing these plans, these subscribers would also join the low-consumer group.

The official described the first program as a training course to teach consumption management methods with the help of knowledge-based companies and start-ups, and said: "Start-up companies will be formed in this field and will help us optimize the consumption of high-consuming subscribers by providing simple solutions."

The second plan is to install solar panels on the roofs of high-consuming subscribers' houses so that such subscribers would meet their electricity needs by installing these PV stations, Ardakanian explained.

Managing electricity consumption by various sectors including households, agriculture, and industry, and reducing the consumption

of fossil fuels used by power plants has become one of the major priorities for the government in recent years.

Earlier, the Energy Ministry Spokesman for the electricity sector Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi had told Tehran Times that the ministry's specialists and experts defined different packages for different sectors to manage the country's electricity consumption.

Rajabi Mashhadi said that since the households account for the majority of the electricity consumption, the main part of the Energy Ministry's program was focused on encouraging the households in metropolitan areas like Tehran to reduce their consumption in peak hours.

No drastic difference between Democrats' proposal and Trump's policies regarding nuclear deal: Professor

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — Nader Entessar, professor emeritus of political science from the University of South Alabama, is of the opinion that there is no "drastic difference between the Democratic Party's proposal regarding the nuclear deal's future" and that of Donald Trump.

Last week, the U.S. claimed that it has triggered a 30-day process to restore virtually all UN sanctions on Iran after the Security Council refused to uphold the American draft.

Actually, all other Security Council members flatly rejected Washington's position, repeating their position that the U.S. had lost its legal standing to act after the Trump administration withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal more than two years ago.

The Security Council resolution endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — the U.S., Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France — Germany and the European Union.

The resolution allows "a JCPOA participant state" to trigger the "snapback" mechanism. The U.S. keeps claiming that it has the legal right as an original JCPOA participant even though it ceased participating in 2018.

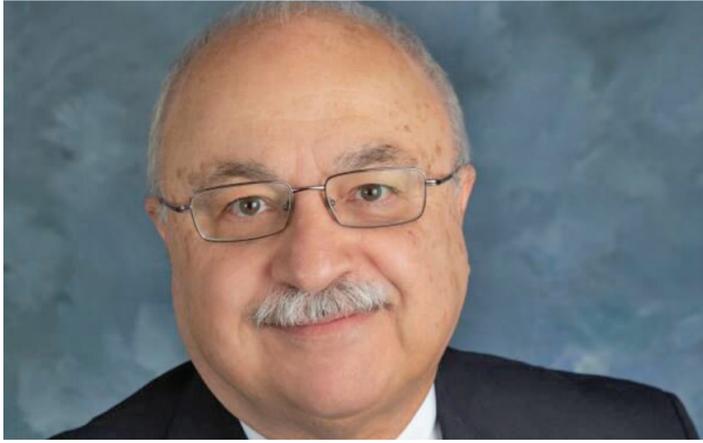
On the other hand, Trump thinks that he could still renegotiate the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran, despite its extremely punitive sanctions on Iran.

In this regard, Entessar tells the Tehran Times that the Trump administration is not trustworthy to make a new deal with.

"The record of the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from its international obligations and long-cherished treaties, especially in the past three years, speaks for itself," Entessar says.

While Trump tries to show the "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran as a resounding success, the critics believe that it was nothing but an abject failure underscoring the United States' receding influence on global affairs.

Some Analyst says Washington's approaches toward Tehran and Beijing have pushed Iran and China to embark on inking a 25-year comprehensive agreement, a move that will



strengthen China's presence in West Asia.

But Entessar thinks that the proposed Iran-China agreement requires some time before it is finalized and put into operation.

"Therefore, its impact on Washington's 'Maximum Pressure' policy will not be felt until the Iran-China agreement is implemented, and we know the specifics of the proposed agreement," he argues. "The nuclear deal has been dying a slow death for some time now and is currently in a comatose stage and may indeed be reaching the end of its life cycle."

Responding to a question about passive European reaction to U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal, Entessar notes that the European position has been extremely timid with a strong mendacity dose.

"Europe has been a junior partner of the United States from the very beginning of nuclear negotiations with Iran, and it has not played an independent role throughout this process," the political expert says.

Some prefer to bet on the Democrats' possible win to revive the nuclear deal after Joe Biden criticized Trump for his unilateral withdrawal from the agreement.

However, Entessar doubts that the nu-

clear deal survive in its current form even if Biden wins the U.S. presidential election this November.

"In fact, Biden's chief foreign policy advisors have intimated that future discussions about the nuclear deal must be expanded to include limitations on Iran's defensive capabilities, especially the country's missile system, its regional policies, as well as permanent restrictions on the country's nuclear program once the current restrictions expire in 2025," he states.

Entessar is of the opinion that the recently published 80-page 2020 Democratic Party Platform clearly specifies most of these restrictions if the nuclear deal is to be revived.

"Frankly, I don't see a drastic difference between the Democratic Party's proposal regarding the nuclear deal's future and what Trump has been proposing in the past three years," he emphasizes.

But Entessar points out that Trump makes his proposals in a "bombastic way", but Biden would resort to a "more nuanced and diplomatic language".

In addition to imposing sanctions and diplomatic campaigns against Iran, the Trump administration and Israel do not seem reluc-

tant to spark another war in the West Asia region before the U.S. presidential elections.

On July 23, a Mahan Air commercial airliner was intercepted by a U.S. F-15 fighter jet over southeast Syria. The flight was en route to Beirut from Tehran when the U.S. fighter flew close for visual inspection.

Confirming these provocative moves by the U.S., Entessar says the Trump foreign policy machinery may try to goad Iran into taking some actions in order to create a foreign policy crisis that may help Trump's reelection.

"The best policy for Iran is not to fall into their traps," the South Alabama University professor suggests.

■ **'Washington's approach to Tehran has been shaped over the past four decades'**

"If Biden is elected, his administration will first and foremost seek to repair that has been done to U.S. relations with its traditional allies and restore a semblance of normalcy in U.S. foreign policy towards its allies," Entessar predicts.

He adds, "With respect to the U.S.-Iran relations, we have to remember that Washington's approach to Tehran has been shaped over the past four decades and does not change significantly with a change in the U.S. presidency."

Entessar underlines the U.S. policy toward Iran is consistent and no change is expected.

"Of course, tactical nuances may be introduced in America's approach to Iran, but Washington's strategic goals toward Tehran have been remarkably consistent in the past forty years."

Regarding Iran's opportunities to strengthen ties with Beijing in view of confrontation between the U.S. and China, the professor says China's relations with the United States have gradually become strained, however the China-U.S. relations remain robust in many ways.

"Given the magnitude of U.S.-China economic ties and the fact that China has adhered to most of the anti-Iran U.S. sanctions, Iran is not in a position to play its 'China card' in its dealings with the United States at this time, Entessar concludes.

Mike Pompeo is the worst secretary of state in history

As secretary of state, Mike Pompeo has presided over the collapse of negotiations with North Korea, the failure of a pressure campaign against Iran and an abortive attempt to oust Venezuela's authoritarian regime, Washington Post reported in a commentary on Monday.

On his watch, China has carried out genocide in its Xinjiang region and the suppression of Hong Kong's freedoms without resistance from Washington until it was too late.

Pompeo has failed to fill dozens of senior positions at the State Department, and hundreds of career diplomats have left or been driven out in political purges. Morale is at a historic low: In staff surveys, there has been a 34 percent increase between 2016 and 2019 in those who say the State Department's senior leaders "did not maintain high levels of honesty and integrity." Maybe that's because Pompeo himself has defied legal mandates from Congress, skirted a law restricting arms sales to Saudi Arabia, tasked staffers with carrying out errands for himself and his wife, and fired the inspector general who was investigating his violations.

Last week, Pompeo crossed yet another ethical line by speaking before the Republican National Convention, thereby disregarding the State Department's explicit legal guidance against such appearances. The speech he delivered was weak and littered with false or simply ludicrous claims, such as that the recent diplomatic accord between Israel and the United Arab Emirates is "a deal that our grandchildren will read about in their history books." Maybe if they major in Middle Eastern affairs.

Blasts hit Dubai, Abu Dhabi ahead of first flight from Israel

One person has been killed and several people injured in two separate explosions in the United Arab Emirates' capital Abu Dhabi and its tourism hub Dubai, police and local media say.

The incidents came as the first direct flight between Israel and the United Arab Emirates entered the Saudi airspace before landing in Abu Dhabi, which was hit by a rare blast shortly before the arrival of U.S. and Israeli officials.

The Saudi move signals the possibility Riyadh could regularly allow these flights, shortening the route length and making them viable commercially. It is also seen as a sign of Riyadh's support for the Israeli-UAE normalization deal.

The El Al plane is carrying U.S. and Israeli officials, who are set to meet with Emirati officials on Monday to further advance the accord.

Israel and the UAE on August 13 reached a deal that will lead to a full normalization of diplomatic relations between the two sides, in an agreement apparently brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Lebanon president names Mustapha Adib as new prime minister

➔ A relatively unknown 48-year-old diplomat, Adib, a close aide to former premier Najib Mikati, is about to form a government after he secured backing from the country's politicians.

On Sunday, the Sunni Muslim political figures in Lebanon, including the Future Movement party headed by former premier Sa'ad Hariri, picked Adib to succeed Hassan Diab, who resigned as prime minister following Beirut's blast.

Under a power-sharing agreement that ended the 1975-1990 civil war in Lebanon, the prime minister must be a Sunni Muslim, the president a Maronite Christian and the parliament speaker a Shia Muslim.

Hariri announced on Monday that he had nominated Adib to the position in formal consultations with Aoun.

Speaking after a meeting with the president, Hariri said the new government should be formed quickly and made up of specialist ministers. Hezbollah members of Lebanon's parliament also nominated Adib as the next premier.

Hezbollah's parliamentary bloc "informed President Aoun of its agreement to the nomination of Mustapha Adib.

Sudan signs historic peace deal with five rebel groups

Sudan's power-sharing government signed a peace agreement with the country's five key rebel groups on Monday, a significant step towards resolving deep-rooted conflicts that raged under former leader Omar al-Bashir.

The civilian and military leaders sharing power following Bashir's overthrow in April 2019 say ending decades-long internal conflicts is a top priority of a 39-month transition, Reuters reported.

The deal, signed in the South Sudanese capital Juba, offers rebel groups political representation and devolved powers, integration into the security forces, economic and land rights and the chance of return for displaced people.

The groups that signed include the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and Minni Minawi's Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), both of the western region of Darfur, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) led by Malik Agar, present in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

More than 300,000 people are estimated to have been killed and 2.5 million displaced after the conflict in Darfur spread after 2003 as government forces and mainly Arab militia moved to repress mostly non-Arab rebels.

Resistance News

Hamas vows to end all forms of Israeli siege on Gaza

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN—The head of the political bureau of the d e s k Gaza-based Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has called for an end to more than 12 years of Israeli all-out siege on the coastal enclave, promising that it will spare no effort to achieve this goal.

In a statement released by his office on Sunday, Ismail Haniyeh said that Hamas will continue to make efforts to end all forms of blockade on the Gaza Strip.

He said "his movement and the people in Gaza are determined to confront the unjust blockade until it is lifted entirely."

"The Hamas leadership is keenly following the current situation in the Gaza Strip as well as the contacts and efforts being made by many parties to end the siege on the Strip," the statement read.

Elsewhere in the statement, the Hamas leader expressed his confidence in the mediation efforts being made by Egypt and Qatar to end the Israeli blockade on Gaza.

Reasons behind Trump's focus on anti-Iran agenda at UNSC

By Javad Heirannia, Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — The U.S.' recent failures at the UN Security Council, although proving the country's lack of legitimacy in the international community, may have far-reaching benefits for Donald Trump.

After the scandalous failure of Washington in extending the arms embargo on Iran in the Security Council, the U.S., with an interpretation that lacks both legal and collective support from the international community, including its European allies, has called itself a "participant" in the Iran nuclear deal known as the JCPOA and based on this absurd claim, it has called for activation of the trigger mechanism to reinstate the UN sanctions against Iran.

Thirteen members of the Security Council immediately rejected the U.S.' call and in letters addressed to the rotating chairman of the Security Council (Indonesia).

On the other hand, the Security Council chairman announced the lack of consensus on this issue, which is yet another defeat for the United States.

The question now is if the U.S. was truly unaware of the possible outcome of the vote? That Trump's advisers were truly unaware of other countries' positions on these issues, which could have been easily discerned even by tracking media coverage?

If they were aware of the outcome, why did the Trump administration's special envoy, Brian Hook, make frequent trips to Security Council member states to gain their support and have those countries vote on the extension of the arms embargo on Iran?

Although the outcome can clearly show the United States' illegitimacy and the victory of Iranian diplomacy, this is not the whole story. Addressing this issue requires examining Trump's foreign policy on the one hand, and the U.S. upcoming election on the other.

Since taking office, Trump has sought to show that the neoliberal institutions that emerged after World War II are no longer compatible with American aspirations.

Of course, this issue was not unique to the Trump administration. For years, there has been controversy among American thinkers and politicians about the "low-cost foreign policy" of the U.S. in the international order.

Proponents of neoliberalism argue that U.S. foreign policy should be based on international cooperation, especially in the field of economics, and that the U.S. should impose its own order by establishing and supporting international regimes and preventing other countries from forging bonds with others, including China.

The World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund at the international level, and NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) at the regional level were formed based on the same idea. During his time in the office, Obama sought to establish a free trade agreement between Canada and ten other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, known as CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership), in a bid to alter the order in Asia, but then Trump took over the White House and undid all of Obama's efforts in this regard.

In fact, Trump believes that the era for a neoliberal approach, in which the U.S. must pay a high price for maintaining a liberal order, is over, and that the country must pursue its interests through unilateralism and bilateralism, and all member states of an international regime or organization such as NATO, or the WTO, must pay a proportionate or equal share to that of the U.S.

This view, of course, is also supported by thinkers of the school of "neoclassical realism." For example, John Mearsheimer, a well-known thinker of the school of "offensive

realism" in his recent book written in the critique of liberalism, argues that the teachings of liberalism have failed for the American foreign policy. Accordingly, he believes that the U.S. should act according to a realistic approach in foreign policy and adopt liberal teachings only in dealing with domestic policy.

But proponents of liberalism still see this school's teachings and neoliberalism as necessary to "establish and maintain order."

The U.S. effort to focus on its dirty play against Iran at the Security Council, the outcome of which was clear beforehand, is also worth considering. Through his repeated efforts to extend Iran's arms embargo and activate the trigger mechanism against Iran, Trump has been conveying to the public that he is trying to confront Iran, but is utterly unable to realize his goals through these channels, that is, the United Nations on the one hand and its traditional allies (Old Europe) on the other. In other words, he needed these Security Council votes to support his arguments in his presidential campaigns and to justify his one-sided policies and his problems with his traditional allies. The votes would have helped him show that he was right, and he could use them to sway the public opinion in his own favor.

From this perspective, Trump showed that the policy of multilateralism in support of "institutions" and "regimes" is no longer useful to the U.S. That is why Nikki Haley, who once represented the Trump administration at the United Nations, said: "Now, the UN is not for the faint of heart. It's a place where dictators, murderers, and thieves denounce America and then put their hands out and demand that we pay their bills. Well, President Trump put an end to all of that. With his leadership, we did what Barack Obama and Joe Biden refused to do."

"From the very beginning, it was clear that the United States lacked any legal basis and the necessary support to call for the immediate resumption of sanctions on Iran," Dr. Osman Faruk Logoglu, deputy of Turkey's Republican People's Party (CHP), told Mehr News Agency. "So why did the United States raise this issue in the Security Council for the second time? There may be at least three motives for this: One could be that the United States is trying to build up a case against the United Nations, which the Trump administration has never been a fan of. A case to justify America's ultimate challenge of the UN system. The second motive may be to provide better reasons for continuing the U.S. bilateral sanctions. Ultimately, the last motive may be part of the overall U.S. effort to isolate Iran in West Asia, and with this misconception, it thinks that the UAE-Israel agreement would be a great success in advancing its goals."

"I think the Trump administration wants to make it clear to the American people that the United Nations is not good, and it is not in America's best interest," he said. "Trump may think that taking over the United Nations may help him in the November election." But another issue that the Trump administration pursued through this lost game was the intensification of "Iran phobia", "China phobia", and "Russophobia" sentiments in public opinion.

In the "Iran phobia" project, which Trump has been pursuing more vigorously than any other U.S. presidents before him since the beginning of his presidency, he was able to sell billions of dollars in weapons to the Persian Gulf littoral states; in an arms deal with Saudi Arabia alone, the Trump's administration managed to create as many as 60,000 jobs in the U.S.

The trade war with China and the fact that the U.S. has so far been "tolerating" China and giving it a "free ride" were also raised by Trump from the beginning. Influenced by Henry Kissinger's views, Trump sought to justify and pursue tougher

measures by highlighting and curbing China. Accordingly, Trump previously stated that if his Democrat rival Joe Biden won the election, China would own the United States.

In fact, Trump and supportive media were trying to show that the president's focus on Iran phobia and China phobia projects were justified. That's how two birds are killed with one stone. First, Trump is strengthening his "ballot box" and preventing it from suffering from possible drops as a result of the Democrats' arguments, and second, he may be able to gain some part of the Democrats' "ballot box" or the gray votes (undecided) to whom these issues matter.

"In general, the United Nations is the most important and legitimate international body that has a great role to play in resolving crises," Dr. Arthur Cyr, a professor of political economy and former vice president of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, told Mehr News Agency. "Keep in mind that the United Nations has always been a contentious issue in the U.S. domestic politics, and there have always been conservative parties that have constantly called for the United States to leave the organization. Despite the U.S. withdrawal from the World Health Organization, no one today recommends leaving the UN. I believe that European countries now have an opportunity to reconsider their policies on Iran and other issues."

Thus, conservative public opinion welcomes the idea of the United States withdrawing from international institutions, including the United Nations, and the outcome of the two Security Council votes against Iran could be used by Trump as examples of the inefficiency of these institutions, which would then help consolidate these votes in his ballot box.

Another issue that Trump pursued by focusing his efforts on this already failed game was to justify his argument in the way he confronts his traditional allies. Since coming to power, Trump has repeatedly pressured and humiliated his traditional European allies for one reason or another.

Exerting pressure on America's traditional allies began with each member's issue needing to pay its share to NATO, which was previously taken care of by the U.S. alone. Trump constantly threatened them to pay their membership dues in full and allocate a fair share of their countries' budgets to NATO. The scope of the U.S. government's threats escalated to the point that European countries, led by Germany and France, spoke of forming a "European army" independent of the United States and outside the NATO's sphere of influence. In this regard, French President Emmanuel Macron had spoken about the "brain death" of NATO before the start of an important NATO summit some time ago.

Although the level of success of the German-French plan to form a joint European army is not the subject of this article, a more serious tendency towards the plan speaks of the fact that Washington has become aware of the amount of support for the plan among the U.S. traditional European allies now and in the future.

As such, Trump called Europe containing his traditional allies an "Old Europe" and focused on expanding relations with Eastern European countries, including Poland. In this regard, the U.S. government withdrew some of its troops from Germany and deployed them in Poland. He even suggested that Brazil, a country whose right-wing president is called the South American version of Donald Trump, should join NATO.

Overall, it can be said that Trump will benefit from the outcomes of the two UN Security Council votes against Iran to justify his arguments about Iran phobia, China phobia, the inefficiency of international institutions, including the United Nations, the inefficiency of America's traditional European allies, and the benefits of bilateralism instead of multilateralism.

Iranian craftspeople, businesses incur \$452m loss due to coronavirus

→ 1 and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade through various provinces, according to data compiled by the ministry of tourism.



Iran's handicrafts exports reached \$289 million in the year 1397, showing three percent growth year on year, based on data released by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornaments with precious and semi-precious gemstones were exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

The number of foreign travelers to Iran has drastically plunged due to the global coronavirus pandemic as the Islamic Republic registered only 74 visits during the spring season, tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said in a televised interview late in August. "Iran's [inbound] tourism came to almost zero and the country had 74 foreign tourists in the first three months of this [Iranian calendar] year (started on March 20), due to corona outbreak."

Tour guide cards validity extended

TOURISM TEHRAN – The validity of the tour guide cards has been extended until the end of the current Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2021), deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri announced on Monday.

Considering the outbreak of the coronavirus and the need to observe health protocols in order to protect public health, and with the aim of reducing in-person visits as well as facilitating conditions, the tour guide cards will be valid until the end of this year, the official explained.



Although the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 has brought the world's tourism to a standstill, experts expect Iran to achieve a tourism boom after coronavirus contained, believing its impact would be temporary and short-lived for a country that ranked the third fastest-growing tourism destination in 2019.

The Islamic Republic 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, Iran 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 (ended March 20).

Private sector investing \$7.3b in Khorasan Razavi tourism projects

TOURISM TEHRAN – Currently, 243 tourism-related projects worth 310 trillion rials (around \$7.3 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) are currently being developed in Khorasan Razavi province by private investors.

"For the time being, 243 projects in tourism [and hospitality] arena worth 310,000 billion rials are being developed across the province.... And their total values are added up to 600,000 billion rials (around \$14 billion) if the worth of land properties are included," deputy provincial tourism chief Ahmad Dinari announced on Monday.

The projects, which are of nearly 47 percent completion on average, have generated jobs for over 11,000 people, the official noted.

Moreover, the province has attracted 82 million dollars of foreign investment [since 2013 onwards] in the tourism sector, which has led to the creation of jobs for 1,890 people during the period, he explained.



Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi province, is Iran's holiest and second-largest city. Its raison d'être and main sight is the striking massive shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam

Dozens of five-star hotels and hostels are dotted across Mashhad. The city has also the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces a variety of cultural and historical sites that are generally crowded. The metropolis is also a good place to buy top handwoven rugs and carpets, and it's a staging post for travel to Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and little-touristic Khorasan regions.

Before the coronavirus puts almost everything on lockdown, Mashhad, played host to thousands of travelers and pilgrims who come from various Iranian cities, neighboring countries, and even across the globe to visit the holy shrine.

According to official statistics, some 37 million Iranian pilgrims and travelers visited the shrine city of Mashhad during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year 1398 (started on March 21, 2019). Of whom some eight million came by road, six million by rail, 3.8 million by air, and 18 million by private cars.

We have to hire 300,000 workers to enhance cultural heritage protection: minister

TOURISM TEHRAN – Iran's tourism minister has said that his ministry must hire 300,000 workers in a bid to enhance the protection of cultural heritage sites, relics, and monuments.

"The department for protection of cultural heritage has some 2,000 employees [at the present], and there are some 100,000 historical sites so far recognized across the country, 32,000 sites and relics inscribed on the national heritage list, and 24 World Heritage sites, and to protect those, we have to put guards in three shifts, and in fact, we have to hire 300,000 people, which is a very difficult challenge," IRIB quoted Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan as saying on Friday.

Despite the lack of sufficient employees, the minister acclaimed supports from the police forces and the judiciary system in the arena of cultural heritage protection.

"Fortunately, the police forces are working shoulder to shoulder with our colleagues in the field of [cultural heritage] protection, and we have the support of the judiciary in this regard."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mounesan referred to the government's efforts to repatriate relics once illegally smuggled abroad.

[A total of] 2671 historical relics have been returned to the country since President Hassan



Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan

Rouhani took office in 2013, he said, adding "Some of which were back home from the U.S. after some 80 years (ones on loan to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago since 1935)."

Moreover, the police forces in charge of protecting cultural heritage are doing their best to prevent illegal diggings and excava-

tions, and they have made a good record of seizures so far.

Last October, Iran managed to repatriate the fourth batch of Achaemenid-era clay tablets (1,783 pieces), which were on loan to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago since 1935

"Considerable achievements have been made

in the field of repatriation of historical relics [over the past couple of years]... all historical objects are now registered in the ministry's database and we quickly introduced them to UNESCO to be returned to the country wherever it is in the world [in case of being stolen/smuggled]. However, previously, we first had to prove that a smuggled object belongs to our country."

In February 2018, and following years of ups and downs, the fate of the aforementioned clay tablets, which reveal the economic, social, and religious history of the Achaemenid Empire and the larger Near Eastern region in the fifth century BC, was left in the hands of a U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of Iran.

Archaeologists affiliated with the University of Chicago discovered the tablets in the 1930s while excavating in Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire. However, the institute has resumed work in collaboration with colleagues in Iran, and the return of the tablets is part of a broadening of contacts between scholars in the two countries, said Gil Stein, director of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.

The Achaemenid [Persian] Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time. The empire stretched from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia, and to India.

Four European countries set rules for inbound Iranian travelers

TOURISM TEHRAN – Although Iranian airlines have resumed their flights to some European countries following months of suspension over the coronavirus outbreak, there is still no possibility of unnecessary tourist trips to these countries and Schengen visas are not currently issued to Iranian citizens.

France, Britain, the Netherlands and Austria are among the European countries that have direct flights to Iran and have announced new travel regulations for Iranian citizens, ISNA reported on Monday.

France allows Iranians holding EU, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swiss, British, Canadian, and Australian passports to enter the country.

The country has recently eliminated the coronavirus PCR test for the travelers but still insists Schengen visas will not be issued until further notice.

Travelers are also advised to complete a health form, which is provided to passengers through the embassy and the airline, before traveling to France.

The 14-day quarantine also applies to all travelers in France, and it is emphasized that they must be quarantined at a specific home address during this period.

The passengers are not allowed to carry wheeled baggage inside the cabin on flights and wearing a mask is required on all flights.

These rules also apply to some extent to travelers to the Netherlands and Austria. The Netherlands has emphasized



that the quarantine law does not allow the entry of passengers whose flight tickets are valid for less than 14 days.

Travelers from high-risk countries to Austria, who are over the age of 11, need to hold a health certificate with a negative coronavirus PCR test result in English, issued at most 72 hours before arrival.

The Netherlands and Austria have also stated that it is currently not possible for Iranian citizens to travel on a Schengen Type C visa.

The UK has allowed entry to Iranians who are holding EU, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swiss, British, Canadian, American, and Australian passports, as well as those with a residence permit, student visa, and even a UK tourist visas.

Iranian citizens need to be quarantined for 14 days after

entering the United Kingdom.

Completing a self-declaration health form, which is provided to passengers by the embassy and the airline, is required, otherwise the passenger will be fined.

These regulations are mutually enforceable in Iran for foreign nationals, as in late July Iranian authorities announced new regulations and instructions for traveling to Iran.

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

As restrictions over the coronavirus pandemic have been relaxed, Iranian international flights to destinations such as Paris, London, Manchester, Amsterdam, Vienna, Dubai, Doha, Bangkok, and Kuala Lumpur resumed, said Maqsood As'adi-Samani, a senior Iranian aviation official.

Direct flights from Tehran to Guangzhou in China, Moscow in Russia, Delhi in India, and Beirut in Lebanon are also scheduled to resume, the official added.

However, travelers need to follow the health protocols announced by these countries.

Most countries require a health certificate with a negative coronavirus PCR test result as well as self-isolate for 14 days.

Still many countries are reluctant to fully reopen their borders and only allow people with residence permits, work, or student visas to enter.

Kermanshah, Hamedan, Kordestan to co-host last Noruz festivity of century

TOURISM TEHRAN – Three provinces of Kermanshah, Hamedan, and Kordestan are scheduled to hold an event jointly to celebrate the last Noruz (Iranian new year holidays) of the 14th century.

Hosting such an international event on the occasion of the Iranian new year 1400 (starts on March 21, 2021), is a unique opportunity to promote and develop tourism in these regions, Iman Derakhshi, an official of Kermanshah Municipality said on Monday, IRNA reported.

Other cities and provinces, who are the members of the tourism route of history and



civilization, are also to join the event to introduce their tourism potentials to domestic and foreign travelers, he added.

Several countries in the world celebrate Noruz and Iran traditionally hosts them in

such events.

Noruz, which usually falls on March 21st every year, marks the beginning of spring across a vast geographical area. The feast was initially registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009, as a common tradition for Iran, Azerbaijan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. However, the five other countries put in requests officially to be added to the list during a meeting held in Tehran in January 2014.

In December 2016, Iran and 11 other countries registered Noruz as a common tradition during the 11th session of the Intergovern-

mental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Noruz, according to UNESCO, promotes the values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families, as well as reconciliation and neighborliness, thus contributing to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples and various communities.

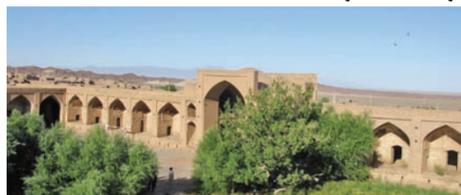
Noruz traditions, however, vary from place to place, ranging from leaping over fires and streams in Iran to tightrope walking, lighting candles at house doors, traditional games such as horse racing, or the traditional wrestling practiced in Kyrgyzstan.

Historical structure of Mayamey restored

HERITAGE TEHRAN – The historical structure of the city of Mayamey in north-central Semnan province has been restored, a local tourism official has announced.

The restoration project involved repairing the flooring of the area, re-carpeting the damaged floorings, releasing the area around the old trees of the city, which have been inscribed on the national heritage list, and strengthening the area using cob material, Seyyed Mohammad Sadeq Razavian said on Monday.

Shah Abbasi and Mayamey historical caravanserais, Aqaian Mosque, Aqaian Mansion, Aqaian bathhouse, and Emarat cistern as well as some other historical sites located inside



the city were also restored, the official added.

Some 58 historical monuments and aging structures of the

city have been inscribed on the National Heritage list so far.

The main population centers of Semnan province lie along the ancient Silk Road (and modern-day Imam Reza Expressway), linking Rey (Tehran) with Khorasan (Mashhad). While few visitors spend much time in the area, driving through you can easily seek out several well-preserved caravanserais (notably Dehnamak and Ahowan), cisterns (the Cafe Abenbar in Garmsar is a special treat), and ruined mud citadels (Padeh is lumpy but fascinating). The large, bustling cities of Semnan, Damghan, and Shahrud (Bastam) all have a small selection of historic buildings and Semnan has a fine old covered bazaar.

Muharram mourning rituals: Nakhlgardani in Shahrud

By Seyed Hossein HosseiniSeddiq

(Part 1/2)

Nakhlgardani or palm-carrying ritual is the carrying of a huge wooden coffin and is a symbol of Muharram mourning in Iran. In the first decade of this month, the coffin, while covered with black and green cloth, is carried by numerous mourners due to its heavyweight. This structure is kept in Husseiniyehs (religious places) and mosques for the rest of the year. Apart from Shahrud, the palm-turning ritual is performed in the cities of Yazd, Taft, Gonabad, Ferdows, Estahban, Zavareh, Kashan, and Taleqan. Of course, in these cities, the method of execution and the type of decoration, and the number of these symbolic coffins are different.

So that, one of the mourning methods of Muharram in Shahrud city is Nakhlgardani or palm-carrying ritual. According to an ancient tradition, every year on the eleventh day of Muharram, the mourners of Imam Hussein carry the black symbolic coffin in front of the Pay-e Nakhli Mosque to the old cemetery of the city and return it to its original place after an hour of mourning.

Nakhli or symbolic coffin has 9 main poles that have been assigned to certain tribes and families since its construction, and during many years, people belonging to the same tribe or family are placed under their own bases when carrying Nakhli. According to the trustees of the city, the servants of Tekiyeh (a kind of religious place) of Bazaar (another name for Bazaar Tekiyeh is Zanjiri), Tekiyeh of Bid-Abad,

and Pay-e Nakhli Mosque are among the founders of this ceremony.

Every year, on the morning of the eleventh day of Muharram, the Nakhli body is covered in black by several servants of the Bazaar. For this purpose, a group of Sadat (those who are from the generation of Household of the Prophet of Islam), servants of Tekiyehs and Pay-e Nakhli Mosque went to the house of the late Kharrats family and after mentioning the tragedy about Imam Hussein and having breakfast, they handed over the cloths to cover Nakhli.

Dressing of the Nakhli in black is accompanied by the recitation of Salawat (which means peace be upon him) and the distribution of vows such as milk, syrup, fruit, etc. by other mourners. Decorations such as swords, shields, etc. on the Nakhli



body to make it more beautiful by the servants of Tekiyeh of Bid-Abad. Other Nakhli decorations include mirror frames, delicate nets, and green coverings.

(The author is a faculty member at the Islamic Azad University)

Over 20 Asiatic cheetahs sighted in north-central Iran

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Twenty-one Asiatic cheetahs have been observed in the north-central province of Semnan since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), Amir Abdous, head of the provincial department of environment (DOE), has announced.

Emphasizing that the plan to preserve the cheetahs in Iran is to protect it in its natural habitat, he said that the success achieved in the reproduction of the endangered species in their habitat is greater than that of the captive breeding projects.

Noting that the most important threat to cheetah habitats is the presence of livestock and herding dogs, he highlighted that currently, about 500,000 hectares of the 1.5 million-hectare area of Turan - including the entire 100,000-hectare area of Turan National Park - have been cleared of livestock, and a safe haven has been created at the Turan Biosphere Reserve for cheetahs.

According to the agreement between the Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization and the DOE, only one-fifth of the protected area and wildlife sanctuaries can be evacuated from livestock as a safe area for cheetahs.

Based on photos caught on cameras and local people sightings, 21 cheetahs have been



observed in Semnan province since the beginning of this year, and 13 of them have identity cards, he stated.

He went on to say that the images of these cheetahs were clear and could be issued in

birth certificates, as the certificates are based on the spots on the cheetahs' body, which are unique to each.

The world's fastest mammal, capable of reaching speeds of 120 kilometers per hour,

once stalked habitats from the eastern reaches of India to the Atlantic coast of Senegal, once their numbers have stabilized in parts of southern Africa, but they have practically disappeared from northern Africa and Asia.

The subspecies "Acinonyx jubatus venaticus", commonly known as the Asiatic cheetah, is critically endangered, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with fewer than 50 believed to remain in Iran.

The cheetah thrives in open lands, small plains, semi-desert areas, and other open habitats where prey is available. The Asiatic cheetah mainly inhabits the desert areas around Dasht-e Kavir in the eastern half of Iran, including parts of the Kerman, Khorasan, Semnan, Yazd, Tehran, and Markazi provinces. Most live in five protected areas, Kavir National Park, Touran National Park, Bafq Protected Area, Darreh Anjir Wildlife Refuge, and Naybandan Wildlife Reserve.

Roads fragmenting cheetahs' habitats are the main threats for the species, while guard dogs and stray dogs, drought spells, decreasing population of the prey species to support the cheetahs, and habitat loss are also other factors endangering the sparse population of the cheetahs in the country.

Iran to attend intl. seismology workshop

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran will participate in an international workshop on global seismology and tectonics which will be held online from September 14-25.

Mehdi Zare, professor of engineering seismology at the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES) and an associate member of the academy of sciences of Iran will represent the country which will be organized by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of the North East Institute of Science and Technology-Jorhat, Assam, India.



The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes. About 2% of the earthquakes of the world occur in Iran but more than 6% of the victims of the world earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes. This shows the high level of vulnerability in Iran, according to Zare.

Most recently, an earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale shook the capital city of Tehran on May 8, killing two and injuring 33. The causative fault for the earthquake was Moshafault, 5km north of the city of Damavand.

Tehran is one of the most hazardous metropolises in the world in terms of the risk of different natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, subsidence, drought, landslide, fire following an earthquake, etc.

Foreign company invests €70m in Iranian medical project

I → The production line was established by investing some 70 million euros, creating jobs for at least 150 Iranian skilled workers.

It is projected to manufacture up to 25 million insulin pens in the first year and the output will increase to 45 million in the second year, saving 60-50 million euros of foreign currency per year.

Iraq, Afghanistan, and some other neighboring countries will be the initial export markets for the insulin pens manufactured in the country.

Foreign investment the top priority

On the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony, Health Minister Saeed Namaki said that the promotion of foreign investment is the ministry's top priority which is preferred to the importation of medicine.

Referring to statistics, he said that some 313,000 individuals die every year in the country as a result of non-communicable diseases, like diabetes.

5 million Iranians suffering from diabetes

Alireza Mahdavi health ministry official in November 2019 said that some 11 percent of Iranians above 25 years old, accounting for 5 million people, is suffering from diabetes, and 18 percent of the population are pre-diabetic.

Afshin Ostovar, the Health Ministry's director for non-communicable diseases, said in November 2018 that diabetes has direct and indirect costs for Iran to the tune of 4\$ billion per year.

Globally, an estimated 422 million adults were living with diabetes in 2014, compared to 108 million in 1980. The global prevalence of diabetes has nearly doubled since 1980, rising from 4.7 to 8.5 percent in the adult population. This reflects an increase in associated risk factors such as being overweight or obese. Over the past decade, diabetes prevalence has risen faster in low and middle-income countries than in high-income countries.

In 2016, an estimated 1.6 million deaths were directly caused by diabetes. Another 2.2 million deaths were attributable to high blood glucose in 2012.

Almost half of all deaths attributable to high blood glucose occur before the age of 70 years. WHO estimates that diabetes was the seventh leading cause of death in 2016.

Diabetes is a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke and lower limb amputation. Healthy diet, physical activity and avoiding tobacco use can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. In addition, diabetes can be treated and its consequences avoided or delayed with medication, regular screening and treatment for complications.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 13) (Source: saadifoundation.ir)

I am not	/nistam/	نیستم*
I do not have	/nadāram/	ندارم
You do not have	/nadārid/	ندارید*
interrogative particle	/āyā/	آیا
yes	/bale/	بَله*

Tešdid " " - The orthographic sign " " indicates the doubling of a consonant in pronunciation without the releasing the consonant:

thank you /motešak'keram/ *مُتَشَكَّرَمْ + کَرَمْ

Rampant destruction of forests 'will unleash more pandemics'

Scientists are to warn world leaders that increasing numbers of deadly new pandemics will afflict the planet if levels of deforestation and biodiversity loss continue at their current catastrophic rates.

A UN summit on biodiversity, scheduled to be held in New York next month, will be told by conservationists and biologists there is now clear evidence of a strong link between environmental destruction and the increased emergence of deadly new diseases such as Covid-19.

Rampant deforestation, uncontrolled expansion of farming and the building of mines in remote regions - as well as the exploitation of wild animals as sources of food, traditional medicines and exotic pets - are creating a "perfect storm" for the spillover of diseases from wildlife to people, delegates will be told.

Almost a third of all emerging diseases have originated through the process of land use change, it is claimed. As a result, five or six new epidemics a year could soon affect Earth's population.

"There are now a whole raft of activities - illegal logging, clearing and mining - with associated international trades in bushmeat and exotic pets that have created this crisis," said Stuart Pimm, professor of conservation at Duke University. "In the case of Covid-19, it has cost the world trillions of dollars and already killed almost a million people, so clearly urgent action is needed."

It is estimated that tens of millions of hectares of rainforest and other wild environments are being bulldozed every year to cultivate palm trees, farm cattle, extract oil and provide access to mines and mineral deposits. This leads to the widespread destruction of vegetation and wildlife that are hosts to countless species of viruses and bacteria, most unknown to science. Those microbes can then accidentally infect new hosts, such as humans and domestic livestock.

Such events are known as spillovers. Crucially, if viruses thrive in their new human hosts they can infect other individuals. This is known as transmission and the result can be a new, emerging disease.

An example of such events is provided by the HIV virus, which in the early 20th century spread from chimpanzees and gorillas - which were being slaughtered for bushmeat



in West Africa - to men and women and which has since caused the death of more than 10 million people. Other examples include Ebola fever, which is passed on by bats to primates and humans; the swine flu epidemic of 2009 and the Covid-19 virus, which was originally passed to humans from bats.

"When workers come into rainforests to chop down trees they don't take food with them," said Andy Dobson, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Princeton University. "They just eat what they can kill. So that exposes them to infection all the time."

This point was backed by Pimm. "I have a photograph of a guy slaughtering a wild pig deep in the Ecuadorian jungle. He was an illegal logger and he and his fellow workers needed food so they killed a boar. They got splattered with wild pig blood in the process. It's gruesome and unhygienic and that is how these diseases spread."

However, not every emerging disease is caused by a single, major spillover event, stressed zoologist David Redding, of University College London. "In places where trees are being cleared, mosaics of fields, created around farms, appear in the landscape interspersed with parcels of old forest."

"This increases the interface between the wild and the cultivated. Bats, rodents and other pests carrying strange new viruses come from surviving clumps of forests and infect farm animals - who then pass on these infections to humans."

An example of this form of transmission is provided by

Lassa fever, which was first discovered in Nigeria in 1969 and now causes several thousand deaths a year. The virus is spread by the rodent *Mastomys natalensis*, which was widespread in Africa's savannahs and forests but now colonises homes and farms, passing on the disease to humans.

"The crucial point is that there are probably 10 times more different species of viruses than there are of mammals," added Dobson. "The numbers are against us and the emergence of new pathogens inevitable."

In the past many outbreaks of new diseases remained in contained areas. However, the development of cheap air travel has changed that picture and diseases can appear across the globe before scientists have fully realised what is happening.

"The onward transmission of a new disease is also another really important element in the pandemic story," said Professor James Wood, head of veterinary medicine at Cambridge University. "Consider the swine flu pandemic. We flew that around the world several times before we realised what was going on. Global connectivity has allowed - and is still allowing - Covid-19 to be transmitted to just about every country on Earth."

In a paper published in Science last month, Pimm, Dobson and other scientists and economists propose setting up a programme to monitor wildlife, reduce spillovers, end the wildlife meat trade and reduce deforestation. Such a scheme could cost more than \$20bn a year, a price tag that is dwarfed by the cost of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has wiped trillions of dollars from national economies round the world.

"We estimate that the value of prevention costs for 10 years to be only about 2% of the costs of the Covid-19 pandemic," they state. In addition, reducing deforestation - which is a major source of carbon emissions - would also have the benefit of helping the battle against climate change, add the researchers.

"The rate of emergence of novel disease is increasing and their economic impacts are also increasing," states the group. "Postponing a global strategy to reduce pandemic risk would lead to continued soaring costs. Society must strive to avoid the impacts of future pandemics."

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

← → ↻

Iran well rid of 153 swarms of desert locusts

Some 153 swarms of desert locusts from Saudi Arabia which penetrated into the southeastern provinces have been controlled, Esmail Najjar, head of Iran's Crisis Management Organization has said.

Since the [Iranian calendar] month of Bahman (starting on January 21) we fought swarms of desert locust in approximately 532,000 hectares of farming lands, IRNA news agency quoted Najjar as saying on Saturday.

Provinces of Bushehr, Fars, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad, Hormozgan, Kerman, Khuzestan, and Sistan-Baluchestan have been affected by the locusts which incurred major losses on farming lands and gardens.

Farm lands in the aforementioned provinces have undergone aerial spraying of chemical insecticides and ground pest control operations, he stated.

He went on to say that a budget of 300 billion rials (around \$7 million) is required to completely eradicate the outbreak, while some 100 billion rials (nearly \$2.3 million) have so far been allocated, and another budget of 200 billion rials (nearly \$4.6 million) is planned to be allotted in this regard.

۱۵۳ دسته از ملخ های صحرائی نابود شدند

رئیس سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور گفت: ۱۵۳ دسته از ملخ های صحرائی که به استان های جنوب شرقی کشور حمله ور شده بودند، نابود شده است.

اسماعیل نجار روز شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا درباره آخرین اقدامات برای مبارزه با ملخ های صحرائی در کشور، گفت: از بهمن ۹۷ تاکنون در ۵۳۱ هزار و ۸۸۸ هکتار مبارزه با ملخ های صحرائی انجام شده است.

تاکنون در استان های خوزستان، بوشهر، فارس، هرمزگان، کرمان، سیستان و بلوچستان، جنوب کرمان، و کهگیلویه و بویراحمد اراضی و باغات مورد هجوم ملخ های صحرائی و خسارات جبران ناپذیری قرار گرفته اند. این مناطق با استفاده از هواپیما سمپاشی هوایی و از طریق نیروی انسانی سمپاشی زمینی شده است.

وی درباره اختصاص منابع مورد نیاز مبارزه با ملخ ها صحرائی نیز توضیح داد و گفت: برای مبارزه با ملخ های صحرائی ۳۰ میلیارد تومان بودجه نیاز است که ما این مبلغ را به دولت اطلاع داده ایم که تاکنون یک سوم آن یعنی حدود ۱۰ میلیارد تومان در این خصوص اختصاص یافته و اخیراً نیز ۲۰ میلیارد تومان دیگر برای مبارزه با ملخ ها تخصیص یافته که مراحل آن در حال انجام است.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If you don't believe in any religion, at least be free-spirited and honest in your actions.

Imam Hussein (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



Photo
■ "Color... Sonnet... Rain", a collection by photographer Robert Shahbazi, is currently on display in an exhibition Aban Art House. The exhibition will run until September 13 at 72 Sepand St. off Ostad Nejatollahi St.



Painting
■ Paintings by Hossein-Ali Ramezani is currently on view in an exhibition at Delgosha Gallery. The exhibit will run until September 6 at the gallery, which can be found at 30 Mohajer Alley, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.



■ Vida Heidarzadeh is hanging her latest collection of paintings "Metaphor" in an exhibition at Saye Gallery. The exhibit will continue until September 2 at the gallery that can be found at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. off Karim Khan Ave.



Levitation
■ Idea Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a group of artists, including Payam Yasini, Zahra Eishi, Hamed Sadre Arahimi, Aida Razaqzadeh, Abdi Asbaqi, Amir-Ali Momen and Tahereh Samadi. The exhibition titled "Levitation" will run until September 2 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



■ A collection of paintings by Ava Shirjafari is currently on display in an exhibition at Hoom Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Doodle" runs until September 11 at the gallery that can be found at No. 2, 4th Alley off Qaem Maqam St.



Video performance
■ An exhibition of video performance by Hamed Babai is currently underway at Platform 3 Gallery. The exhibit titled "The To-Play Tool" will run until September 10 at the gallery, which can be found at 29 Shahamati Alley near Vali-e Asr Square.



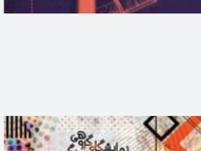
Installation
■ A group of artists is showcasing sets of installation in an exhibition titled "40 Minutes Interview on Eastern Whistle" at Soo Gallery. The exhibition will run until September 8 at the gallery located at 30 Purmusa St. off Somayyeh St.



Multimedia
■ A group of artists is displaying paintings, sculptures, and photos in an exhibition at O Gallery. The exhibit titled "Light: A Selection of a Private Collection" will continue until September 21 at the gallery, located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.



■ Paintings, drawings and prints by Ahmad Vakili, Reza Hedayat, Fatemeh Yusefzadeh, Nasser Mohammadi, Marjan Qoreishi, Sara Karimi and dozens of other artists are on view in an exhibition at Artibition Gallery. The exhibit titled "Archive" will continue until September 5 at the gallery located at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Golnabi St., off Shariati Ave.



■ A collection of artworks in various media by Alireza Mehri, Sahar Hosseini, Jahangir Rezazadeh, Raheleh Rasuli, Narges Karami and a large group of other artists is on display in an exhibition at Naqshe Jahan Gallery. The exhibit "Deliberation in Figure and Color" runs until September 1 at the gallery located at 9 Ayatollah Mahmudi St. in the Niavaran neighborhood.

Controversial movie "The Bear" illegally uploaded on YouTube

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi

TEHRAN — Iranian director Khosro Masumi's controversial 2011 drama "The Bear" has been illegally uploaded on YouTube.

The upload has been done by a channel named "Shokufa Film", and over 19,000 views have been registered for the film over the past two days, the Farabi Cinema Foundation (FCF), the owner of the movie, announced on Sunday.

The foundation has sent an email demanding that YouTube delete the movie from its platform. The FCF also said that a relevant organization at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance plans to file a lawsuit against the culprits.

"The Bear" is about Nureddin, who has been missing in action for eight years. After all this time, he's assumed dead and declared a martyr. His wife has moved on with her life; she's remarried and has two children. When Nureddin reemerges, he is devastated to discover that his beloved wife's life is miserable: for years she's been subjected to physical violence and mental abuse by her new husband. Longing to resume his family life and save his wife from torment, Nureddin pursues justice. But the complexity of family dynamics means that achieving a happy ending is by no means certain, and



"The Bear" by Iranian director Khosro Masumi.

as reason fails, violence erupts.

It had its premiere in Tehran during the 30th Fajr International Film Festival in 2012. Afterwards, the movie failed to gain the culture ministry's permit to screen allegedly for its differences with the sharia law.

The culture ministry's affiliate, the Farabi Cinema Foundation, purchased the rights

to the movie in the support of the producer.

"Those who banned 'The Bear' several years ago are responsible for the piracy," Masumi said in a press release published on Monday.

"The film is an 'anti-war' movie because we were not the initiator of Iraq's eight-year war against Iran, we just defended ourselves, and

"The Bear" is not against the sacred defense," he added.

Masumi said that Netflix, an American technology and media services provider and production company, has earlier held negotiations with him to screen the film around the world.

However, the FCF has ignored his request for issuing a screening license for the movie. "The Bear" is not the first Iranian victim of piracy that has occurred due to unnecessary bureaucracy in the country.

Earlier in September 2019, the Arabic version of "Hussein, Who Said No", Iranian director Ahmadreza Darvish's controversial movie about the uprising of Imam Hussein (AS) against the Umayyad dynasty in 680 CE, was illegally uploaded on YouTube, Facebook and EarthLink.

YouTube deleted the copy of the movie from its platform in October following a threat from the film's director and shareholders to take legal action against the video-sharing website.

Darvish spent 11 years making the film, which was completed in 2013. Its premiere during the 32nd Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran in February 2014 sparked a storm of protest from some of the top Islamic clerics over its depiction of Shia saints; consequently, it was officially banned in 2015.

Resistance festival to review pro-Zionist cinema

→1 Samiri is a phrase used by the Quran to refer to a rebellious follower of Prophet Moses (AS), who created the golden calf and attempted to lead the Hebrews into idolatry.

Aqamohammadian said that the study of the enemies is one of the main goals of the Resistance festival, and added, "Resistance cinema audiences should have substantial knowledge of the enemies, and know how they instill the Zionist beliefs into them."

The festival is organized every year to commemorate

the anniversary of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, which is known as the "Sacred Defense" in Iran.

The 16th edition of the event is scheduled to go online due to a spike in the virus cases in the country.

The festival is scheduled to be organized in two stages, the first of which will take place during the Sacred Defense Week from September 21 to 28.

The second part of the festival will be held from November 21 to 27 to celebrate the anniversary of Basij Day, which falls on November 25.



A poster for "Samiri Cinema" at the Resistance International Film Festival.

Masud Mehrabi, director of Iran's most professional film magazine, dies at 66

ART TEHRAN — Masud Mehrabi, the managing director of "Film", Iran's most professional Persian monthly journal on cinema, died of a heart attack on Monday morning, his

friend Abbas Yari announced.

Mehrabi was 66. He was a film critic, writer and journalist.

He was also the writer of several cinematic books including "History of Iranian Cinema"

and "Culture of Documentaries in Iranian Cinema".

"History of Iranian Cinema", which chronicles the history of Iran's post-revolution cinema, soon became a bestseller after its

publication in 1992.

Mehrabi had also collaborated with several magazines. He was also a cartoonist, whose works were showcased during several group and solo exhibits.

Iranian platform to stream "The Last Fiction" next week

ART TEHRAN — Upera, a major Iranian platform for online movie screening, will be streaming the acclaimed animated film "The Last Fiction" by Ashkan Rahgozar next Monday.



A scene from "The Last Fiction" by Ashkan Rahgozar.

A production of Hoorakhsh Studio, "The Last Fiction" recounts a story from Persian poet Ferdowsi's epic masterpiece Shahnameh. It is about Zahak's treacherous rise to the throne in Jamshid in Persia. The young and naive hero Afaridoun will have to save the kingdom and its people from darkness. But he must first conquer his own demons in this portrayal of Persian mythology that reveals human nature.

An all-star cast including Parviz Parastui, Leila Hatami, Hamed Behdad, Baran Kowsari, Ashkan Khatibi, Akbar Zanzanpur and Farrokh Nemati have lent their voices to the characters in the production.

The world-renowned Iranian vocalist Shahram Nazeri has sung the closing credits song in the movie, which has been acclaimed at several prestigious Iranian and international events.

The movie has been screened in numerous international events, winning over a dozen awards. It was named best animated film at the 37th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February 2019.

"The Last Fiction" was among the submissions for the 2020 Oscars consideration, but it failed to receive a nomination.

The film went on screen in a non-competitive section of Annecy in 2018.

Hoorakhsh Studio also unveiled a video game based on the movie in December 2019.

The game includes ten characters of the Shahnameh with their own superpowers, and can be downloaded from Café Bazar and Sib Apps for free.



Only for God

He held mourning ceremonies during Muharram and other religious occasions, but was upset that people called it "Hajj Qassem house's religious ceremonies". He said it would be better to name this place so that it would be known by that name.

So, he dedicated his house and named it "Bayt al-Zahra (SA)" so that it would no longer be named after him.