



No sanctions will be restored on September 20 **3**



Iran football move into FIFA top 30 **3**



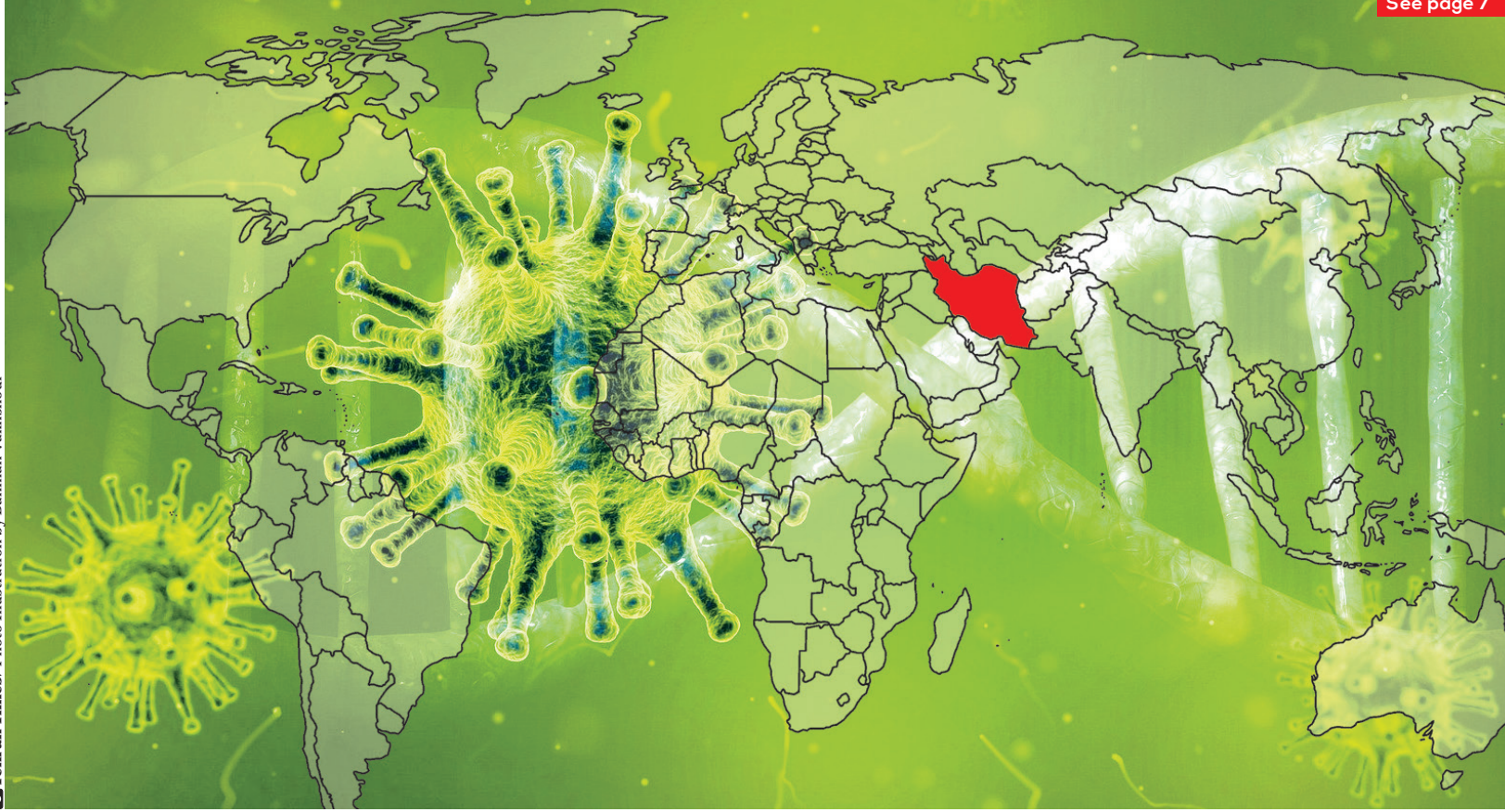
National gas network transmission capacity up 12% **4**



Resistance festival releases "Health Defenders" short documentaries **8**

Specific COVID-19 mutations identified in Iran

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U.S. set to plunge into the unknown as election integrity questioned

TEHRAN — With the U.S. presidential election less than two months away, analysts ring alarm bells about possible political conflict over election results. A U.S. expert tells the Tehran Times that the U.S. faces an ambiguous future due to differences over electoral integrity. As the political battle between Donald Trump and his rival Joe Biden heats up, so does the debate over the integrity of the elections, which is set to be held on November 3. While Trump and his supporters have managed to warn about possible voter fraud, Joe Biden and the Democrats raised the possibility that Trump would refuse to leave the White House if he loses the election.

"It's my greatest concern. My single greatest concern. This president is going to try to steal this election. This is a guy who said that all mail-in ballots are fraudulent, voting by mail, while he sits behind the desk in the Oval Office and writes his mail-in ballot to vote in the primary," Biden said in an interview on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show." **→3**

U.S. sanctions bring Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran together: Russian academic

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — An associate professor in the Department of Comparative Politics at Russia's RUDN University believes that the United States' sanctions are one of the factors that bring Iran, Russia, and China together.

Russia, China, and Iran are expanding economic and political ties as a result of U.S. pressure policy, Vladimir Ivanov tells the Tehran Times.

"One of the forces that bring these countries together is U.S. sanctions pressure, which affects Iran, Russia, and China," the Russian academic says.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ Some analysts and politicians argue that Russia, China, and Iran are forming an alliance against Washington's bullying, sanctions pressure, and use of the dollar as a weapon. They cite the Iran-China-Russia joint naval exercise

in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Oman in December 2019 as the signs of such an alliance. What is your comment?

A: Today, many experts see Russia, Iran, and China's military exercises as a "Maritime security Belt" in the Northern Indian Ocean and the Arabian sea as the end of American hegemony in the Persian Gulf.

Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran have begun to outline a possible security system in the most important part of the world's oceans. Contrary the U.S. is trying to promote a naval coalition's idea to "protect" shipping in the region. So, Washington announced the formation of the International Maritime security coalition (IMSC) under its auspices. Also, Washington began to realize that Tehran is not isolated and will not be left alone, that the Iranians have serious partners who are ready to support them in the region. **→5**

UAE cracking down hard on anti-Israel sentiment with 10-year prison sentences: dissident

A dissident Emirati activist has said that the United Arab Emirates is cracking down hard on anti-Israel sentiment with 10-year prison sentences amid the Persian Gulf country's push to establish formal relations with the Israeli regime.

"We were born and lived in the UAE, and we know that the position of the Emiratis regarding Palestine is firm and definitive; the Palestinian cause lies in the heart of all Emiratis," Hamad al-Shamesi said in an interview with the Arabi 21 online newspaper.

Explaining why a limited number of Emirati activists had denounced Abu Dhabi's rapprochement with Israel, al-Shamesi said, "the answer is very obvious, anyone who criticizes the government has to pay a heavy price."

"He may be condemned to pay up to one million dirhams (the U.S. \$272,260) and ten years in jail," he added.

"Unfortunately, the government has stepped up its repressive measures against citizens and immigrants with a focus on security policies and control beliefs. People are paying a high price for this," he said.

Bahrain and the UAE signed controversial U.S.-brokered normalization agreements with Israel on Tuesday during a ceremony in Washington.

The event was slammed by many Arab and Muslim figures as a blatant betrayal of the Palestinian cause.

Al-Shamesi added that the UAE government had engaged in a gradual campaign to stifle anti-Israel sentiment in the Persian Gulf country. "The government has sought to change the minds of Emirati people and change the priorities in their minds and portray Iran primarily, and secondly Turkey, as their main concerns," he said. **→5**

Energy Ministry plans to increase efficiency of power plants

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Ministry is following a program for increasing the average efficiency of the country's power plants in the current Iranian calendar year.

The mentioned program is focusing on two major aspects, one of which entails upgrading the country's old power plants and converting

several gas power plants into combined cycle plants, and the other is preventing the use of old power plants with efficiency rates lower than 20 percent.

As for the first part of the program, the Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) is already installing steam units in some of the country's gas power plants to

increase their overall efficiency, while in the second part, the ministry is implementing consumption management programs including the allocation of various incentive packages to encourage the subscribers to consume less during the peak periods so that the ministry would not be needing to use old power plants. **→4**

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[→ See page 5](#) 1953

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Zarif wishes Jews a happy Rosh Hashanah

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has wished all Jews, particularly Iranian Jews, a happy Rosh Hashanah.

“On the occasion of the New Year, I wish Iranian—and indeed all—Jews happiness, and most of all, good health,” Zarif wrote in a tweet on Thursday.



Rosh Hashanah is one of the major Jewish holidays and the beginning of the Jewish New Year. It is the first of the Jewish High Holy Days specified by Leviticus 23:23–32 that occur in the early autumn of the Northern Hemisphere.

Zarif added, “The children of Adam, Abraham and Moses are siblings who deserve to live in a real democratic peace—not business deal,” he said, adding, “Our proposal has been #Referendum.”

The foreign minister was openly referring to the situation in Palestine, suggesting that peace among all inhabitants of Palestine should be based on democratic principles and not depriving a nation from its legal rights.

He pointed to Iran’s long held stance that referendum is remedy to the problems facing the people in the occupied Palestine.

South Africa terms assassination claim against Iran as ‘very strange’

1 → Marks is a South African-born American handbag designer who founded the eponymous fashion brand, Lana Marks. She presented her diplomatic credentials to the South African government on January 28, 2020.

“U.S. officials have been aware of a general threat against the ambassador, Lana Marks, since the spring,” Politico reported, citing intelligence provided by two unnamed U.S. government officials.



The South African minister explained, “It is a matter of the protection services and that which is provided to our diplomats, we have assured them through the statement of State Security Minister, Ayanda Dlodlo, that South Africa believes diplomats in our country are safe and should there be a need for additional measures, these would be taken and obviously we will ask and Minister Dlodlo would seek more information from her colleagues in the Security sector in the United States.”

“But it’s been a very strange public statement and of course our friends in Iran are as surprised as we were. I find it surprising, why would Iran being a very good friend of South Africa come and commit a horrendous act in a country which has been a good friend to Iran, and of such a nature? I can only describe it as bizarre and let me stop there,” she added.

Iran has also strongly rejected the report as “customer-made, biased and purposeful”.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a Monday statement that “we advise the United States’ officials to stop resorting to repeated and decayed methods to create anti-Iran commotion at the international arena.”

After the report was published, Trump took to Twitter to threaten Iran with a “1,000 times greater” attack in case of any Iranian attack.

“According to press reports, Iran may be planning an assassination, or another attack, against the United States in retaliation for the killing of terrorist leader Soleimani, which was carried out for his planning a future attack, murdering U.S. Troops, and the death & suffering caused over so many years,” Trump said.

“Any attack by Iran, in any form, against the United States will be met with an attack on Iran that will be 1,000 times greater in magnitude!” he added.

In response, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations said Trump’s threat to use military force against Iran constitutes a gross violation of the United Nations’ Charter.

“I am writing to inform you that, on 14 September 2020, the President of the United States of America, referring to ‘press reports’, made a baseless allegation against the Islamic Republic of Iran and threatened to use force against my country,” Majid Takht-Ravanchi wrote in a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres

General: Army, IRGC ready to give decisive response to any threat

TEHRAN (MNA) — Commander of the Iranian Army’s Ground Forces Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari says any threat against Iran’s interests or security will draw a decisive response by the Iranian armed forces.

Speaking during a graduation ceremony at Imam Ali (PBUH) Military University in Tehran on Thursday, General Heidari said, “All the graduates of this university are ready to exert selfless efforts to protect the country and the nation.”

“We, along with our brothers in the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, will never allow anybody to undermine the integrity and security of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” he stressed.

The enemies, especially the United States, have been sticking to any means to reach their ill-wished goals against the Islamic Republic since the victory of the Islamic Revolution over 40 years ago.

Iran, however, has always expressed its firm resolve to protect its sovereignty against any act of aggression, saying the Islamic Republic will not capitulate to intimidation.

Iran warns against ‘sabotage acts’ on its nuclear facilities

“Such malicious acts should be condemned strongly by the Agency and its Member States,” Ambassador Gharibabadi says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations has warned against any act of sabotage against Iran’s nuclear facilities, saying such acts should be condemned by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

“We warn against any such reckless and dangerous adventurism,” Kazem Gharibabadi said on Thursday. “Such malicious acts should be condemned strongly by the Agency and its Member States.”

Gharibabadi made the remarks in his report to the seasonal session of the Board of Directors of the IAEA.

In addition to protecting its nuclear facilities in any way it deems necessary, Iran reserves its right to take appropriate actions against such threats, he said.

He was referring to a July 2 incident that took place at the Natanz nuclear facility. At the time, Iran didn’t disclose the cause of the incident.

Late last month, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Agency Organization of Iran (AEOI) announced that the explosion was an act of “sabotage”.

“Security investigations confirm the sabotage [nature] of this action and what is certain is that the explosion took place in Natanz, but the security officials will announce the details of the explosion and how it took place and what materials were used in the explosion,” Behrouz Kamalvandi told the



al-Alam news network on August 23.

Two weeks later, Kamalvandi said the elements and reasons behind the act of sabotage have been identified.

“The elements and reasons behind the act of sabotage at the Natanz facility have been identified, but it’s not possible to give out further information since the issue is under investigation,” he said on September 6.

Traitorous rulers are accomplice to Israel’s crimes, says Ghalibaf

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf says the traitorous rulers of some regional countries are accomplices to the Zionist regime’s crimes.

In a statement on Thursday, Ghalibaf said the current situation in the region is nothing new for the world, especially the Muslim community, Arab youths and the innocent people of Palestine.

“A lot of regional governments have been eagerly kissing the hands of the oppressive Zionists which are covered with blood,” he pointed out.

He described Palestine as a source of dignity and honor for Arab youths across the region, saying whoever oppresses Palestine is devoid of Islam, dignity and humanity.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced on September 11 that he brokered what he called “a historic deal” between Israel and Bahrain.

Under the deal, Israel and Bahrain have committed to begin the exchange of embassies and ambassadors, start direct flights, and launch cooperation initiatives across a broad range of sectors, according to a White House statement issued on September 11.

This deal came roughly a month after the normalization agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. Bahraini officials are expected to join Israeli and Emirati representatives at the White House for a formal signing ceremony on Tuesday.

On September 15, the two Arab countries signed normalization agreements with Israel at the White House amid outrage across Palestine and elsewhere throughout the Muslim world.

The agreements were signed by Emirati and Bahraini Foreign Ministers, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, and Israeli Prime Minister



Benjamin Netanyahu.

U.S. President Donald Trump also penned his blessing into the accords.

Tehran slams attack on British diplomatic vehicles in Baghdad

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has denounced a roadside bombing that targeted a British diplomatic convoy in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

In remarks on Thursday, Khatibzadeh also condemned any attack on diplomatic missions, the Foreign Ministry website reported.

Pointing to cases of attacks on Iran’s diplomats and diplomatic sites in Iraq, he called on the Iraqi government to intensify



and step up the protection of diplomatic places and guarantee the normal activity of

diplomatic missions in that country.

According to the British embassy in Iraq and Iraqi officials, a roadside bombing targeted British diplomatic vehicles in Baghdad on Tuesday.

The attack, the first against a British government vehicle in Iraq in more than a decade, took place outside the capital’s high-security Green Zone that houses the British embassy and other diplomatic missions.

The roads and the area of the attack, between the airport and the heavily fortified

Green Zone, are often used by diplomatic missions, the Associated Press quoted an Iraqi official as saying, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“The safety and security of our staff is of paramount importance and we are in close touch with the Iraqi authorities,” the British embassy said in a statement.

The attack is the first in months to target a diplomatic convoy and comes amid near daily rocket attacks against the Green Zone and Iraqi army bases hosting U.S. troops.

Iran warns of ‘dangerous’ U.S. move as Trump mulls arms trade ban

TEHRAN (Press TV) — Iran has warned against Washington’s “dangerous” defiance of international law as the U.S. has signaled that it seeks to illegally extend an expiring arms embargo on Iran.

Nabi Azadi, the political adviser to Iran’s Permanent Mission to Geneva, made the comments in response to earlier remarks by Washington’s representative to the Geneva Disarmament Conference Robert Wood on Thursday.

The American envoy accused Iran of backing terrorism and said that Washington seeks to extend a United Nations ban on Tehran despite its expiration in October under UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the Iran nuclear deal in 2015.

Azadi rejected the statements, saying that such a move violates Resolution 2231 and amounts to an attempt to destroy multilateral bodies such as the UN after Washington failed to gain international backing to extend the embargo at the Security Council in August.

Azadi said U.S. President Donald Trump’s repeated threats of using force against Iran are provocative and in violation of the UN Charter about prohibition of threat or use of force

or serious threat to international peace and security.

The Iranian representative warned against serious consequences of Washington’s irresponsible policies and illegal actions, saying that Tehran will swiftly respond in kind to any act of aggression against the nation, sovereignty, territorial integrity and its national interests.

Azadi also slammed U.S. accusations of terrorism, saying Washington is the one which is supporting terrorists.

The Iranian representative referred to remarks made by Trump and former U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton admitting to the U.S. role in creating terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and Daesh.

Also replying to remarks made by Saudi Arabia’s representative to the conference, Azadi called for Riyadh’s full transparency and cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) alongside ending its five-year war on Yemen.

Last month, reports emerged indicating that Saudi Arabia had been engaged in “undeclared” nuclear activities.

■ **‘Trump to issue anti-Iran executive order’**
Reuters reported on Thursday that Trump plans to issue

an executive order allowing him to impose U.S. sanctions on anyone who engages in arms deals with Iran despite the upcoming expiration of the UN arms embargo.

The report cited four sources familiar on the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Earlier this week, U.S. Special Representative for Venezuela and Iran Elliott Abrams and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that Washington would be seeking to reimpose UN sanctions, including the arms embargo, despite failed attempts at the UN Security Council.

One of the sources speaking to Reuters said that the order intends to show that Washington will “not be deterred” despite failing to convince the UN council to impose a “snapback” of nuclear sanctions on Iran last month.

Such moves are effectively more symbolic than practical as trade with Iran is already sanctioned by the U.S., according to sanctions lawyer Doug Jacobson.

Other parties to the Iran nuclear deal and most of the UNSC have also rejected U.S. attempts to reimpose UN sanctions on Iran, claiming that such moves have no legal effect in the eyes of the UN.

U.S. Treasury imposes sanctions on Iranian entities, individuals

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — The United States has imposed sanctions on two Iranian entities and 45 associated individuals, the U.S. Treasury Department said.

The Treasury claimed the companies -- called Advanced Persistent Threat 39 and Rana Intelligence Computing Company (Rana) -- are owned or controlled by Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence.

“Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed sanctions on Iranian cyber threat group Advanced Persistent Threat 39 (APT39), 45 associated individuals, and

one front company. Masked behind its front company, Rana Intelligence Computing Company (Rana), the Government of Iran (GOI) employed a years-long malware campaign that targeted Iranian dissidents, journalists, and international companies in the travel sector. Concurrent with OFAC’s action, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) released detailed information about APT39 in a public intelligence alert,” the Treasury said in a statement on its website.

“Rana advances Iranian national security objectives and the strategic goals of Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security



(MOIS) by conducting computer intrusions and malware campaigns against perceived adversaries, including foreign governments and other individuals the MOIS considers a

threat,” it added.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement, “The United States is determined to counter offensive cyber campaigns designed to jeopardize security and inflict damage on the international travel sector.”

This comes amid Washington’s attempts to trigger a snapback mechanism in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal that would restore all UN sanctions on Tehran.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has called the move a great strategic mistake, which has been rejected by the international community.

Advisor dismisses UAE, Bahrain deals with Israel as election histrionics

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the special aide to the speaker of the Iranian Parliament on international affairs, said on Thursday that the normalization deals between Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates and Israel are part of Trump's reelection campaign.

"The fake show of the UAE-Bahrain compromise with Tel Aviv is meant for achieving election goals only and has no value," the advisor said at a meeting with Stefan Scholz, the Austrian ambassador to Iran.

He added, "The U.S. seeks to forcefully and authoritatively force the rulers of some Persian Gulf countries into establishing relations with Tel Aviv. If the U.S. were not pursuing an imperious and humiliating behavior in this regard, there would be no need for Trump's histrionic circus on the balcony of the White House."

Bahrain and the UAE have recently taken the rare step of fully normalizing ties with Israel. The U.S.-brokered normalization deals were signed on September 15 at a White House ceremony attended by high-ranking U.S. and foreign officials including President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Abdullah bin Zayed, the



foreign minister of the UAE, and Abdullatif al-Zayani, the foreign minister of Bahrain. The deals have been widely condemned

in the public opinion of the Arab world, with some countries in the region, including Iran, denouncing the deals as a treason.

Iran denounced the normalization deals as "strategic stupidity" and "treason" against the Palestinian people.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran considers this 'shameful' action of Abu Dhabi in normalizing ties with the fake, anti-human and illegitimate Zionist regime a dangerous action and warns about any interference of the Zionist regime in equations of the Persian Gulf region and announces that the government of the Emirates and other accompanying governments must admit responsibility for consequences of this action," Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on August 14.

Amir-Abdollahian has previously warned that Iran's response to any provocative move by the Israeli intelligence services in the region would include the UAE.

"Since the UAE disclosed the normalization of its relations with the fake regime of Israel, Iran's response to any overt or covert move by Israel's Mossad spy agency or their agents in the Islamic Republic or the region will not be directed at the Zionist entity only, but the UAE will also be part of the response," Amir-Abdollahian said in an interview with al-Alam news network.

No sanctions will be restored on September 20, Zarif says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — In response to his American counterpart who has said all UN sanctions will be reimposed on Iran on September 20, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif asserted that no sanctions will be reinstated on that day.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said many times that, no matter what members of the UN Security Council would do, the international sanctions will return on September 20.

"If any member of the UN Security Council introduces a resolution to continue sanctions relief, the U.S. will oppose it. If no resolution is introduced, the sanctions on Iran will still return on September 20. That's how UNSCR 2231 works," Tweeted Pompeo on August 27, a week after he traveled to New York to "notify" the Security Council of Iran's "significant non-performance" of its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, which is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Pompeo also attached to his tweet a photo of a paragraph of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 explaining how the UN sanctions on Iran will return if a party to the JCPOA notifies the Council of Iran's non-performance.

However, Zarif said Pompeo was wrong to think that the UN sanctions on Iran would be reimposed on September 20. "Wrong again, Pompeo. Nothing new happens on 9/20.

Just read Resolution 2231. Bolton—who convinced the boss to order you to 'CEASE U.S. participation'—did. In his words: Process is not 'simple', automatic or snappy. But intentionally 'complex & lengthy'. U.S. is NOT a participant," Zarif tweeted on Thursday.

On August 20, the U.S. submitted a notification to the Security Council calling for the restoration of the international sanctions on Iran based on Resolution 2231, which endorsed the JCPOA.

The resolution stipulates that "the Security Council, within 30 days of receiving a notification by a JCPOA participant State of an issue that the JCPOA participant State believes constitutes significant non-performance of commitments under the JCPOA, shall vote on a draft resolution to continue in effect the terminations of the provisions of previous Security Council resolutions." And "if the Security Council does not adopt a resolution to continue in effect the termination of previous resolutions, then effective midnight GMT after the thirtieth day after the notification to the Security Council, all of the provisions of resolutions 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), 1835 (2008), 1929 (2010) and 2224 (2015) shall apply in the same manner as they applied before the adoption of resolution 2231 (2015)."

All JCPOA participants including Washington's European allies and almost all members of the UN Security Council,

except for the U.S. and the Dominican Republic, have clearly opposed the U.S. notification, saying that the U.S. had no legal right to submit such notification because it withdrew from the nuclear deal on May 8, 2018.

The U.S. push to trigger the snapback process has even drawn criticism from former officials of the Trump administration, most notably John Bolton, the former national security advisor who is known for his hawkish views on Iran. In an opinion piece published by Bloomberg on August 27, Bolton questioned the legality of the U.S. move to trigger the snapback process, a mechanism built into the JCPOA to allow participants to the deal to restore all UN sanctions on Iran in case it didn't uphold its commitments under the JCPOA.

"The White House asserted on Aug. 20 that the U.S. was still a 'JCPOA participant state' under Resolution 2231, and thus had standing to invoke snapback. Of course, when Trump left the deal, he directed the State Department to 'take all appropriate steps to cease the participation of the United States in the JCPOA'," Bolton wrote.

He added, "State Department lawyers, in an opinion not available publicly, apparently argue that, having been once defined as a 'JCPOA participant state,' the U.S. is still one for snapback purposes. This is not only incorrect legally and not the intention of the nuclear pact's drafters but, ironically, could backfire on the U.S. if Biden wins the election."

U.S. set to plunge into the unknown as election integrity questioned

1→ Biden also said that many states have taken measures to make it harder for people to vote. Therefore, his campaign would put together a team of lawyers across the country to oversee the election.

The Democrat candidate announced that he considered the possibility that Trump might refuse to leave the White House after he loses the election. He asserted that the military would help out Trump if he loses the election but refuses to leave the Oval Office. Biden alluded to the criticism from military officials against Trump, saying they oppose militarizing the response to nationwide protests.

"I was so damn proud to hear that four chiefs of staff coming out and ripping the skin off of Trump, and you have so many rank-and-file military personnel saying, 'Whoa we're not a military state, this is not who we are,'" Biden said.

He went further to say, "I promise you. I am absolutely convinced they will escort him from the White House with great dispatch."

On the other hand, Trump sought to brush aside fears he might not leave office willingly if November's election doesn't go his way.

"Certainly, if I don't win, I don't win," he told Fox News' Harris Faulkner in an interview in June. If he doesn't win the election, Trump continued, "you go on, do other things."

Despite Trump's clarification, speculations that he might not leave the White House continued unabated. Recently, Attorney General William Barr rejected rumors about Trump

refusing to leave office after the general election in November.

"You know liberals project," Barr told the Chicago Tribune's John Kass. "You know the president is going to stay in office and seize power and all that s---? I've never heard of that crap. I mean, I'm the attorney general. I would think I would have heard about it."

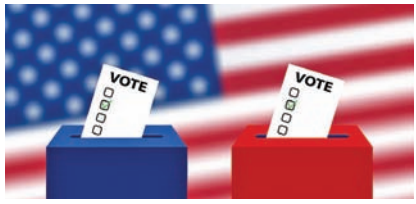
It's not clear what might happen if Trump loses the election but refuses to leave the White House. Some analysts believe that the U.S. military might intervene to settle the standoff.

"There are no precedents in American history that a sitting president refuses to leave office after he loses the election. So, it's not easy to say what would happen in the event that Trump loses the election but refuses to leave the White House. The president is the commander-in-chief. So the military might intervene to oust him. But, traditionally, the U.S. military does not interfere in politics," Fowad Izadi, a professor of American studies at the University of Tehran, told the Tehran Times.

Trump and his allies continue to dispel rumors in this regard while seeking to cast doubt on the integrity of the election. The U.S. president has voiced concerns over the possibility that the election would be rigged. Trump said mail-in ballots would pave the way for Democrat governors to rig the election.

"It's going to be fraud all over the place," Trump said in June, adding, "This will be, in my opinion, the most corrupt election in the history of our country and we cannot let this happen."

During a Nevada rally, Trump railed



against the state's governor, Steve Sisolak, saying the governor will do everything he can to rig the election.

"This is the guy we are entrusting with millions of ballots, unsolicited ballots, and we're supposed to win these states. Who the hell is going to trust him?" Trump said of Sisolak. "The only way the Democrats can win the election is if they rig it."

In a tweet on September 15, the president also said, "We had great rallies this past weekend after the Governor of Nevada worked very hard to cancel all of our venues. Despite the fact that he controls the state, he failed but would have rather done rally outside. Can you imagine this man is in charge of the Ballots in Nevada!? Not fair, Rigged Election! Sisolak will use every trick in the book to cheat with Ballots."

The issue of voter fraud has created a deep partisan divide among the Americans, with 43% Republicans versus 11% Democrats identifying voter fraud as a "major problem" associated with mail-in ballots, according to a new poll from Pew Research Center, which was published on September 16. The poll also found that 25% of Americans believe

voter fraud is a major problem.

Izadi said this election is different from previous elections given the deep partisan divide and mail-in ballots. He also referred to Republicans and Democrats putting together lawyers to patrol the election as a sign that this election would be different and ambiguous.

"Mail-in ballots increases the likelihood of voter fraud. Besides, the institutions tasked with patrolling the election are involved in partisanship," Izadi pointed out.

In an attempt to counter what some commentators call Trump's disinformation campaign against the election, the Biden campaign has launched "the largest election protection program in presidential campaign history" by putting together a team of lawyers, according to the New York Times.

"Inside the campaign, they are creating a 'special litigation' unit, which will be led by Donald B. Verrilli Jr. and Walter Dellinger, two former solicitors general, who are joining the campaign. Hundreds of lawyers will be involved, including a team at the Democratic law firm Perkins Coie, led by Marc Elias, which will focus on the state-by-state fight over vote casting and counting rules," the New York Times said.

The Times added, "And Eric H. Holder Jr., the former attorney general in the Obama administration, will serve as something of a liaison between the campaign and the many independent groups involved in the legal fight over the election, which is already raging in the courts."

SPORTS

Iran football move into FIFA top 30

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team have moved into FIFA top 30 at the new world ranking published on Thursday.

After more than six months of disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, international matches have finally recommenced.

With the exception of Uzbekistan's 2-1 friendly victory over Tajikistan, the countries back in action have all been European. The successful staging of these games was nonetheless encouraging for teams from other confederations as they seek to resume international fixtures in the weeks ahead.

While there has been no movement among the leading quartet — in descending order: Belgium, France, Brazil and England — Portugal (5th, up 2) have moved into the top five thanks to victories over Croatia (8th, down 2) and Sweden (18th, down 1).

Despite not playing, Iran (30th, up 3) moved into the top 30 after Serbia and Turkey (32nd, down 3) dropped points.

The next FIFA World Ranking will be published on 22 October 2020.

Shahr Khodro eliminated from AFC Champions League

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Shahr Khodro football team of Iran were eliminated from the 2020 AFC Champions League after losing to Shabab Al Ahli of the UAE.

Pedro Conde scored the only goal of the match in the 83rd minute when he received a dinked ball from Eduardo to put him in on goal. The Emirati football team are third with six points.

Shahr Khodro are rooted at the bottom of Group B table without a point in four matches.

"We are satisfied with the performance of our players since we fielded our young players. We conceded a goal after our players made mistake but didn't let them to create opportunities," Shahr Khodro coach Mohammad Navazi said.

Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia sit top with 10 points followed by Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor with six points.

Shahr Khodro will meet Al Hilal and Pakhtakor on Sept. 20 and 23.

Alireza Mansourian appointed Tractor coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Alireza Mansourian has been appointed as new head coach of Tractor football team on Thursday.

The 48-year-old coach, who has also worked as Iran national football team interim coach in 2011, has penned a three-year contract with the Tabriz based football team.

Mansourian replaced Saket Elhami in the Iranian top flight football team.

Tractor were forced to part company with Elhami after the coach was handed three-month ban from all football activities after the disciplinary committee found him guilty of inappropriate conduct during Iran's Hazfi Cup final.

Mansourian most recently coached Zob Ahan. The former midfielder of Iran national football team has also headed Naft Tehran and Esteghlal from 2014 and 2017.

Mansourian led Iran U23 football team from 2011 to 2014.

He will be assisted by Mohammad Khorramgah and Alireza Dehghani in Tractor.

Tractor finished fourth last season in Iran Professional League.

Ghoddos one step closer to joining Brentford

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian attacking midfielder Saman Ghoddos has reached a final agreement with English side Brentford.

A source at Brentford has told Football Insider that the 27-year-old has already undertaken his medical and the move is set to be completed shortly.

Ghoddos has been a long-term target for Bees boss Thomas Frank and the Championship outfit tried to sign the playmaker last summer.

However, he remained with Amiens but spent most of the season on the sidelines through both suspension and injury as the club were relegated.

The Swedish-born Iranian international was suspended for four months by FIFA in August last year for failing to honor an agreement to join Huesca.

The 21-cap international star now looks set to bolster Brentford's side as Frank's men look to bounce back from their play-off disappointment last season.

ACL2020: Al Hilal's Gomis rues missed chances against Pakhtakor

Al Hilal SFC French forward Bafetimbi Gomis was disappointed after missing several scoring chances in his side's goalless draw with Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in their 2020 AFC Champions League Group B tie on Thursday.

The 2019 AFC Champions League MVP and Top Scorer failed to find the net for the second consecutive match although the defending champions remained top of Group B despite Thursday's stalemate.

"I wanted to score because we were eager to win the match," said Gomis. "The most important thing for us was to score goals but this is football."

"We performed well and we showed great fighting spirit, despite missing several key players. We showed that we can still play good football."

Salem Al Dawsari, named Man of the Match for the second consecutive time against Pakhtakor, had reason to be happy despite the stalemate with the Uzbeks.

"Yesterday I had a newborn and I'm happy that he's doing well along with my wife," said Al Dawsari with a smile on his face after the match.

(Source: AFC)

By Reuters and staff

Washington says it has triggered a return of all UN sanctions on Iran, which would take effect this weekend.

But the remaining parties to the nuclear deal - Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia - and most of the UN Security Council have said they do not believe the United States can reimpose the UN sanctions on Iran.

"It's like pulling a trigger and no bullet comes out," a senior UN Security Council diplomat said on condition of anonymity, Reuters reported. "There will be no snapback, the sanctions will remain suspended, the JCPOA (nuclear deal) will remain in place."

Asked if Washington is "making concrete plans now for secondary sanctions" to enforce the arms embargo on Iran, U.S. Special Representative for Venezuela and

Iran Elliott Abrams told reporters: "We are, in many ways, and we will have some announcements over the weekend and more announcements on Monday and then subsequent days next week."

Diplomats say few nations are likely to reimpose UN sanctions on Iran.

Earlier on Wednesday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters, "We'll do all the things we need to do to ensure that those sanctions are enforced."

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday described the opposition to Washington as a "victory of the Iranian nation and the disgraceful defeat of the United States in activation of the snapback mechanism."

In 2018 U.S. President Donald Trump quit the Iran nuclear deal - under which Tehran limited its nuclear activities in return for termination of sanctions - and

reimposed U.S. sanctions.

In response to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who has said UN sanctions will be reimposed on Iran on September 20, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif asserted that no sanctions will be reinstated on that day.

Pompeo has said many times that, no matter what members of the UN Security Council would do, the international sanctions will return on September 20.

Zarif said Pompeo was wrong to think that the UN sanctions on Iran would be reimposed on September 20.

"Wrong again, Pompeo. Nothing new happens on 9/20. Just read Resolution 2231. Bolton—who convinced the boss to order you to 'CEASE U.S. participation'—did. In his words: Process is not 'simple', automatic or snappy. But intentionally 'complex & lengthy'. U.S. is NOT a participant," Zarif tweeted on Thursday.

Preparations underway for 12 major enterprises to join stock market

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iranian Privatization Organization (IPO) said 12 enterprises are going through the final stages for being listed on the country's stock exchange, IRIB reported.

“In addition to the companies already listed on the stock exchange, 12 major enterprises including three power plant holdings are preparing to enter the capital market,” Alireza Saleh said.



Referring to the preparation of companies to enter the capital market, the official added: “By the end of the [current Iranian calendar] year (March 2021), we will have an initial public offering on the stock exchange every month.”

“In the past year, the Privatization Organization has put the privatization of [government-owned] companies through the stock exchange on its agenda and is making every effort to make this transformation through the capital market,” Saleh stated.

Back in June, Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Saeed Zarandi had said that 100 production companies are projected to be listed on the stock exchange of the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

Zarandi said that 250 production companies have announced readiness for offering their shares in the stock exchange.

“The goal is to use capital market capacities to boost production, and now 250 companies have announced their readiness to enter the stock market,” he said.

Later in August, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand said that according to the agreement made between his ministry and the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, the shares of 50 private companies are planned to be offered in the stock market.

According to Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), the capital market has provided one quadrillion rials (about \$23.809 billion) of financing during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21).

The current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) is named the year of “Surge in Production” by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

While materializing this motto requires all-out cooperation between the state-owned and private bodies, the country's stock market is taking some big steps to play a significant role in this due.

The market is trying to attract the liquidity existing in the society toward production and development projects, and many ministries and organizations including the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development have already announced that they are planning to fund their development projects through the stock market.

Deadline for 2nd ETF underwriting extended until Sunday

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The deadline for underwriting to buy the shares of four major refineries that are going to be offered through Iran's second exchange-traded fund (ETF) was extended until Sunday (September 20), IRNA quoted Hassan Alaei, the deputy head of Iran's Privatization Organization, as saying.

The underwriting process, had begun on August 26 and was due to continue for two weeks until September 9, but it was extended for another week until September 16.



While there is no need for having a trading account at the first step, the applicants for buying the shares through this ETF can do the underwriting by their national ID code and then open trading account in the coming months.

The shares will be tradable one month after the underwriting is finished.

As reported, the government shares in Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, and Bandar-Abbas refineries will be offered through this ETF, at the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) which is the main stock exchange of Iran.

The offering of the second EFT had been postponed several times due to some technical problems so that rumors of its cancellation were being heard, however in late June Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand announced August 26 as the date for the offering of the second EFT and put an end to those rumors.

The offering of this EFT comes as the value of shares offered via the first exchange-traded fund has also increased significantly.

On May 2, the TSE listed the first exchange-traded fund from a series of three ETFs, through which shares of some state-owned organizations and companies are planned to be offered.

In mid-June, the finance and economic affairs minister announced that the value of shares that are offered by the first exchange-traded fund had doubled.

Referring to the offering of the shares via the first ETF, Dejjpasand said, “The offering was our first experience in this field. About 3.6 million persons purchased the units of shares offered by the first fund.”

An ETF is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges, much like stocks. An ETF holds assets such as stocks, commodities, or bonds and generally operates with an arbitrage mechanism designed to keep it trading close to its net asset value, although deviations can occasionally occur.

Energy Ministry plans to increase efficiency of power plants

1 → In this regard, Iran's Deputy Energy Minister Homayoun Haeri has said that the efficiency of the country's power plants is going to improve to 39 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

According to Haeri, the average efficiency of the power plants was improved by about 0.5 percent at the end of the previous Iranian calendar month of Mordad (August 21), compared to the same date last year.

The efficiency of a plant is the percentage of the total energy content of a power plant's fuel that is converted into electricity.

There are nearly 3,000 megawatt capacity of old power plants with low efficiency (about 20 percent) in Iran which are only used during the summer peak consumption periods, and by implementing consumption management programs by the Energy Ministry the mentioned power plants won't be used and consequently, the average efficiency will increase, according to Haeri.

He further mentioned the annual overhaul program for the country's power plants, saying: “The annual overhaul program has



already begun and to prepare the country's power plants for the next year's peak consumption period.”

Back in October 2018, the head of the Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH) unveiled a program for increasing the efficiency of the country's power plants up to 40 percent.

According to Mohsen Tarztalab, the efficiency improvement program was provisioned following a development initiative foreseen in the country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), according to which the average efficiency of the country's power plants was to increase 2.1 percent.

According to the sixth development plan, new power plants in Iran should operate with an efficiency of at least 55 percent.

Iran's nominal electricity generation capacity of Iranian power plants currently stands at 85,500 megawatts [85.5 gigawatts (GW)].

Currently, combined cycle power plants account for the biggest share in the country's total power generation capacity followed by gas power plants.

Industry, agriculture ministries ink MOU to co-produce chemical fertilizers

1 → Based on the MOU, NICIC is going to produce the mentioned fertilizers and the Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC), will make a guaranteed purchase of the fertilizer produced by the National Copper Company to provide the high-quality product to the country's farmers.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Sa'd Mohammadi said that the NICIC will invest 250 million euros to build the phosphoric acid and phosphate fertilizer plants.

“The amount of investment required for the phosphoric acid production plant is 100 million euros and the amount of investment for the phosphate

fertilizer production plant is about 150 million euros, so a total of 250 million euros will be invested in this field by the National Iranian Copper Industries Company,” he said.

According to the official, phosphoric acid is currently priced at \$650 per ton in the global markets and phosphate fertilizers such as DAP are priced at around \$350 per ton; Therefore, the construction of these factories will provide about 1.5 million tons of fertilizers, which were previously supplied through imports, to the farmers and prevents the outflow of hundreds of millions of dollars from the country.



National gas network transmission capacity up 12%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Gas Transmission Company (IGTC)'s managing director said the transmission capacity of the national gas network has risen 12 percent in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21) to reach 870 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d), Shana reported.

“Currently, there are 37,400 kilometers of high-pressure transmission lines in the country, and in terms of global ranking, we have the fourth position in this sector, which is also unique in West Asia,” Mehdi Jamshidi Dana said in a press conference



on Wednesday.

He said that the length of Iran's gas transmission lines is three times the diameter of the planet, adding: “In total,

these lines have 86 pressure boosting stations, each of which has about three, four or five turbochargers; sometimes all of them have to be operational in the winter, and in some cases, even spare turbines must be used to deliver maximum gas throughout the country.”

Jamshidi-Dana further mentioned the increase in the production of the South Pars gas field and said: “We expect another 50 million cubic meters will be added to the country's production capacity, and at the same time the ninth national [gas transmission] line will be put into operation so that we can easily manage the

added inflow into the network.”

Regarding the plans of the Gas Transmission Company for the cold season, he said: “The main concern of the National Iranian Gas Company in all its subsidiaries, including refineries, gas transmission company, and provincial gas companies is to maximize the services from production to consumption, especially for household consumers; The priority of the National Gas Company is that the supply to households should not be cut off in any way and the pressure should not be reduced, and many measures have been taken to ensure this.”

Nearly \$544m paid to SMEs, semi-finished projects in 4 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade's data show that 22.878 trillion rials (about \$544.7 million) has been paid to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished industrial projects with an over 60 percent physical progress during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19-July 21).

The mentioned payments were made 963 semi-finished projects and production units, IRNA reported.

As reported, over 2,974 loan requests were registered in the mentioned four months, of which 1,630 were accepted and introduced to various banks to be paid the facilities.

The highest payment was made to SMEs and projects based in Semnan Province with 153 facilities amounted to 4.639 trillion rials (over \$110 million) and the lowest was related to the south of Kerman, Kermanshah, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad Provinces with zero loans.

Following a major program for developing the



country's production under the frameworks of the resilient economy, the government has defined several projects that are going to create 1,032,962 job opportunities.

In this regard, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has

defined supporting production as its major plan in the previous Iranian calendar year, which was named the Year of Pickup in Production.

CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati has constantly stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country's banking system.

Industry Ministry had previously announced that over 335.77 trillion rials (nearly \$7.99 billion) was paid to SMEs and semi-finished industrial projects during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

The mentioned payments were made in the form of 20,930 bank loans to various projects and production units, IRNA reported.

The highest payment was made to SMEs and projects based in Tehran Province with 1,434 facilities amounted to 67.44 trillion rials (about \$1.6 billion) and the lowest was related to the south of Kerman Province with only three loans amounting to 14.5 billion rials (about \$345,230).

Weekly growth returns to stock market

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), which had witnessed drop of its main index, TEDPIX, in five consecutive weeks, experienced growth in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

TEDPIX closed at 1,704 million points, gaining 148,000 points in the previous week, coming back to the rising trend, which it was experiencing since the last months of the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

The indices of Tejarat Bank, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Ghadir Investment Company, Bank Saderat, Mobarakeh Steel Company, Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, and Iran Khodro Investment Development Company were the major contributors to the weekly growth of TEDPIX.

The index had dropped four percent in the last week, while it had also experienced a five-percent decrease in the week ended on September 4, a two-percent fall in the week ended on August 28, an 11.3-percent

drop in the week ended on August 21, and a two-percent fall in the week ended on August 14.

TEDPIX had hit the record high of two million points on August 2, and while it had been experiencing an unprecedented trend of rising over the recent months, it witnessed several days of drop in the past three weeks.

While Iran's stock market has not received any external shocks such as those form the foreign currency exchange rate, inflation, parallel markets, and international issues, some internal factors have caused the recent drops in this market.

One of the major factors was canceling the offering of shares through the second exchange traded fund (ETF) on due time.

The second ETF (named Dara II), is to offer shares of four refineries of Tehran, Tabriz, Bandar-Abbas and Isfahan, and with the cancellation of Dara II offering, a drastic fall occurred in the stock market.

Liberalization of “Justice Shares”, so that trading them in the stock market would be possible, was another contributing factor



for the drop in the market.

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 government's plan named “Economic Breakthrough” was the other issue affecting the stock market, as no details were announced about this plan.

A sudden drop in Shasta's index was another reason.

On April 15, Iran's stock market witnessed its largest-ever initial public offering, as Social Security Investment Company (SSIC, also known by its Persian acronym Shasta) offered eight billion shares, which account for 10 percent of its stakes, for sales in Tehran Stock Exchange.

Shasta's index, which experienced a sharp decline after being closed for three days, has been another contributor to the TEDPIX's recent fall.

There were also some other factors leading to the recent drops in the stock market, of them it could be referred to reducing the value of brokerage credit, and conducting trades in two shifts per day at the TSE.

Then the government and Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) took a number of measures to tackle the mentioned factors which had put the stock market in a decline status.

The measures have apparently brought the expected results.

News

UAE cracking down hard on anti-Israel sentiment with 10-year prison sentences: dissident

1 → The UAE dissident, who currently resides in Turkey, called on the country's highest authority, the Federal Supreme Council (FSC), to step in and counter the agreement.

He added that while the FSC has a constitutional duty to approve or annul all of Abu Dhabi's agreements, the body has been gradually sidelined and neglected in recent years.

"The country's future generation will pressure the FSC on how such an agreement was signed without its approval," he said.

Al-Shamesi added that the country once had a long-standing government-affiliated association focused on challenging the legitimization of Israel.

The association gradually eroded after having much of its members thrown in jail and was ultimately disbanded in 2013, he noted.

Last month, al-Shamesi was among a handful of the UAE dissident activists who set up an initiative named the "UAE Resistance Union Against Normalization".

Speaking to the Arabic-language Arabi 21 online newspaper, the dissident Emirati activist expressed hope that the group can one day install itself in the Persian Gulf country.

"We hope to soon become an obstacle to the normalization of ties with Israel," Al-Shamesi said.

U.S. military police "sought use of heat ray" to disperse White House protesters

Whistleblower testifies to House committee investigating the use of force against BLM demonstrators.

A military whistleblower has said federal officials sought to use some controversial crowd control devices, including a so-called heat ray, to disperse protesters outside the White House in June.

In written responses to questions from a House committee, the national guard major Adam DeMarco said the defense department's lead military police officer for the national capital region sent an email asking if the Washington DC national guard possessed a long-range acoustic device used to transmit loud noises or an Active Denial System (ADS), the heat ray.

DeMarco said he responded that the guard was not in possession of either device. National Public Radio and the Washington Post first reported DeMarco's testimony. (Source: The Guardian)

Resistance News

Palestinians protest UAE, Bahrain 'betrayal' agreement in al-Quds

INTERNATIONAL d e s k Palestinians in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds have staged a protest against the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain over the normalization of ties with the Israeli regime.

The demonstration took place next to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound following Friday prayers, Palestine's al-Shehab News Agency reported.

Prayer-goers could be seen standing and shouting slogans on the premises of the mosque.

"States normalizing relations [with Israel] are traitors!" read a large banner held by protesters.

Bahrain and the UAE signed controversial and US-brokered normalization agreements with Israel during a Washington ceremony on Tuesday.

Many Arab and Muslim figures slammed the event as a blatant betrayal of the Palestinian cause.

Also on Friday, a 54-year-old Palestinian doctor was killed in the occupied northern West Bank city of Jenin after Israeli troops threw a flash grenade towards him, triggering a fatal heart attack.

Charter for Palestine garners over 2 million signatures

As of Friday, more than two million signatures have been gathered for the "Charter for Palestine," a petition launched by Emirati activists in rejection of any Arab normalization with Israel.

The Charter has been endorsed by many pro-Palestine organizations, including the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, the Persian Gulf Coalition Against Normalization, and the Emirati League Against Normalization.

The petition had about one million signatures a day earlier.

Lebanon boiling over its harbor hot tin

By Abir Bassam

What is being cooked in Beirut's harbor? It seems that there are urgent needs to keep Lebanon on guard. The country is barely picking itself up after the blast on the 4th of August. Now, it is going through another dilemma as the fire burst on the 10th of September. The two major accidents suggest that the time has not yet come for Beirut to write its closure.

The Beirut blast came at a time when the region is preoccupied with finding settlements for its internal critical wars, which extend from Syria to Iraq, Libya and Yemen. With Algeria alienated and Egypt preoccupied with the Ethiopian dam, the main Arab countries that constituted the Arab League's core are now marginalized. It also came at a time in which U.S. President Donald Trump is pushing towards implementing the "deal of the century". He needs to prove himself as a worthy president.

Since the 4th of August, Beirut has been invaded by diplomats who are coming from different countries. They have brought their expertise to assist in investigating the causes of the explosion. They have come with supportive generous humanitarian aid for the disadvantaged of the blast. In addition, different battleships were about to reach the harbor in the name of protecting the Lebanese people.

However, three days after the blast, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Mohammad Jawad Zarif, visited Beirut. After meeting with the Lebanese officials, he declared, amongst many other things, that the battleships reaching Beirut are considered to be a great threat to the Lebanese people.

Zarif's visit must have played an essential role in the departure or the non-arrival of other battleships. No one was ready for any kind of confrontation, even military, in the region, which might empower the axes of resistance in Lebanon and the region.

Oddly, the indictments of corruption were escalating; it became deceptively redirected towards the resistance movement and its allies in Lebanon. However, this was not out of the ordinary. Shortly after the 17th of November's protests in Beirut, it was clear that there was a hidden agenda behind it.

The eruptions turned into shouting choirs



against the resistance movement's weapons and at Diab's government, which was accused of being corrupt. Finally, the hidden weapons were out in the open, trying to light out the streets.

The Beirut blast opened a new era of international struggle over the east Mediterranean. It moved Lebanon to a serious ferocity stage. The siege over the dollar slightly released, and its price went down, but the prices of the goods soared higher.

After the siege imposed on Syria, Beirut's harbor became the only competitor to Haifa's harbor in Palestine. Lebanese economists emphasized its important role in rebuilding Syria. However, the harbor today is partially dysfunctional.

When the fires started on the 10th of September, it brought disturbing concerns to the Lebanese citizens, even the pro-resistance audience. One of them tweeted on Facebook: "My greatest concern if we were to import goods from Israel now!" He was one of many.

The fire of the "the 10th of September, in fact, has not any political aims. However, it revealed facts concerning stored smuggled and rotten goods. Given that, whoever has a part in igniting the fire, they must have been attempting to escape the responsibility of smuggled or stolen goods. It is a means to escape

taxes and claiming insurance. The harbor's situation reveals that not only politicians are corrupt but merchants importing goods are also corrupt.

The fire destroyed the aid the Red Cross has received, which was stored in containers near the fireplace. Hence, it is fair at least to doubt if other international aid commodities have been destroyed as well, or if someone is trying to cover up the true size of the aid.

Consequently, many of the aid found their way to the stores. In our neighborhood shop, I was offered to buy French sugar that came as aid within a reasonable low price, 3000 L.L. for every kg! The same scenario was played in 2006 with the Arab and international aid that came after the Israeli war on Lebanon.

Even though the harbor today is under the supervision of the UNIFIL and the Lebanese army, no one was able to protect it from another fire. However, relating every fire in the harbor to welding iron is ridiculous. Through the years, the harbor witnessed repairs that needed soldering, which did not cause any fires. In all scenarios, the fire ended with digging in the wounds caused by the explosion and in recreating chaos.

The aftermath of the Beirut blast resounded in Lebanon as much as the Rafik Al-Hariri assassination did. We need to learn to reread

UAE, Bahrain seeking ties with Tel Aviv to ensure U.S. support: Prof. Entessar

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — A renowned university professor and the political analyst believes that the UAE and Bahrain rulers consider relations with the Israeli regime as a guarantee for the United States' long-lasting support for their regimes.

In a disgraceful move, Bahrain agreed to normalize relations with the Israeli regime on September 11. The announcement came roughly a month after a similar agreement between the UAE and the Israeli regime was revealed.

The normalizations are part of a broader diplomatic push by U.S. President Donald Trump and his administration to ease the Israeli regime's relative isolation in West Asia (Middle East).

Following the announcements, Palestinian officials have condemned the deal as another "stab in the back" by the two Arab states.

Iran has also strongly condemned the normalization agreements, saying such moves have sacrificed the Palestinian cause against the occupation for the upcoming U.S. presidential election.

To shed light on the issue, Mehr News has reached out to Nader Entessar, professor emeritus of political science from the University of South Alabama.

Here is the full text of the interview:

■ Why have the rulers of these countries agreed with

normalization despite oppositions from their nations?

A: The UAE and Bahrain's ruling families have been working discretely with Israel for at least three decades. For a number of reasons, including the role Israel plays in shaping America's Middle East policies, the UAE and Bahrain rulers view close ties with Israel as a guarantee for Washington's long-lasting support for their regimes.

They also view establishing ties with Israel as an important step toward solidifying the US-Israel-Arab axis against Iran and Tehran's national interests.

■ Will these normalizations be long-lasting?

A: Until and unless the Palestinian issue is resolved in an equitable and just manner, the UAE-Bahrain ties with Israel are not going to achieve with their proponents' hope for.

All we need to do is to look at the trajectory of Egypt-Israel relations since Cairo normalized its relations with Israel and established full diplomatic ties with that country. The same can be said of the ties between Jordan and Israel. In both cases, the main beneficiary of such normalization has been Israel.

■ Why are these agreements being revealed near the U.S. Presidential election?

A: Donald Trump does not have a signature foreign policy achievement to boast about. By claiming victory for taking concrete steps towards normalizing Israeli-Arab, Trump can claim a foreign policy victory to boost both his giant ego and sell the UAE-Bahrain-Israel agreements



as a "giant step toward peace" in the region. Even some Trump supporters are pushing for him to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

But I doubt if Israel-UAE-Bahrain ties will matter that much to the vast majority of the American electorate who will be voting in the upcoming U.S. presidential election. The United States is facing monumental challenges that are far more important to the American public than the shenanigans of Trump and his son-in-law Jared Kushner in the Middle East.

U.S. sanctions bring Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran together: Russian academic

1 → But will this initiative lead to the emergence of a military-political Alliance "Russia-Iran-China" is premature, but we record a noticeable change in the Middle East (West Asia) and Southeast Asia's power balance.

■ Economic and scientific ties between Iran and Russia are not commensurate to their political ties. This is despite the fact that the two countries are immediate neighbors with rather large populations and great untapped potential. What are the impediments?

A: Russia, China, and Iran are expanding economic and political ties. One of the forces that bring these countries together is U.S. sanctions pressure, which affects Iran, Russia, and China. These countries already do not use U.S. dollars in mutual trade, but their national currencies. And they create special mechanisms to circumvent U.S. sanctions. In addition, Iran is preparing new agreements on long-term cooperation with China and Russia. The Iran-Russia cooperation agreement expires in March, so the newly updated treaty is likely to develop a long-term comprehensive strategic agreement.

At the same time, Iran continues negotiations with China on a 25-year partnership, which many Iranian officials called a "turning

point" in relations between Tehran and Beijing.

■ What is your analysis of the course of action that the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has taken? What steps are needed to make the EAEU effective like other economic blocs such as ASEAN?

The recent establishment of a free trade zone between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Indonesia is a decisive step towards creating a full-fledged trade zone with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Recently the volume of mutual trade between the EAEU and the ASEAN is not high enough. Integration associations need to expand trade, economic, and investment cooperation, including the development of the initiative of the large Eurasian economic partnership.

■ Is it technically and geographically possible that China also join the club like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which includes countries from Europe and Asia?

A: In October 2019, the agreement on trade and economic cooperation of the Eurasian Economic Union with China came into force. Although this agreement is "only" a framework agreement, it creates a platform

where representatives of the EAEU member states and China can discuss existing barriers to mutual trade and ways to overcome them. The next step could be the creation of a free trade zone between the EAEU and China. But this is not a short-term prospect.

■ The U.S. intelligence agencies have claimed that Russia, China, and Iran are seeking to influence the result of the November elections in America. Please give your answer?

A: This is mostly a conspiracy theory that is popular in the U.S. But all these media and political commotions are supported only by public speculation about hacker attacks.

■ Please give your view of the U.S. failure at the UN Security Council to extend an arms embargo against Iran.

A: Even though Washington has withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal, it still uses its mechanisms. However, at the UN, no one except the Dominican Republic supported the U.S.-proposed extension of the arms embargo against Iran. In any case, the whole issue of the Iranian arms embargo still looks rather symbolic. Tehran could already acquire some types of weapons — such as air defense systems.

In October 2019, the agreement on trade and economic cooperation of the Eurasian Economic Union with China came into force. Although this agreement is "only" a framework agreement, it creates a platform where representatives of the EAEU member states and China can discuss existing barriers to mutual trade and ways to overcome them. The next step could be the creation of a free trade zone between the EAEU and China. But this is not a short-term prospect.

State Printing Office of Iran (SPOI) Renewed (Second stage)

Tender of purchasing 8/5 tons transparent white laser polycarbonate in sheet

Tender NO : 2099001065000033

State printing office of Iran intends to purchase the aforementioned polycarbonates through a public tender. Therefore, participants in the tender should first receive their tender documents from Sep. 15-2020 to 12:00 hours on Sep.21-2020 in the Governmental portal address at : www.setadiran.ir and after register needed documents in mentioned address, physically submit envelopes A,B and C to the secretariat of the company before the end of administrative hour(12:00 PM) on Oct.03-2020. Tender documents presented after the stated deadline will not be accepted.

The guaranteed amount for participating in the tender is 2/750/000/000 Rials(11/000 Euro) and should be presented in the form of a bank guarantee in envelope A.

All stages of bid, including receiving tender documents, submitting price proposal of tenders and opening the envelopes, will be done through the portal of Government's electronic procurement system at the following address : www.setadiran.ir.

It is necessary that tenders, if not taken membership previously, should carry out the registration stages in the mentioned website and receive the signed and sealed electronic certificate for participating in the tender. For more information, please contact the governmental portal phone numbers at 41934, registration office Tel: 88969737 and 85193768. Envelopes opening date is on Sunday Oct.04-2020 at 10:00 AM in Transactions Commission Room of State Printing Office of Iran.

Meanwhile, the cost for publishing the advertisement shall be borne by the tender winner. Address : State Printing Office of Iran, No: 29, Next to Khayyam Park, Iqbal Lahouri St., Imam Husein Square, Tehran, Iran, Postal code : 1714744153, Tel : 02133349079

Three millennia-old sites discovered in southeast Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Three millennia-old have been discovered on the outskirts of the UNESCO-registered Burnt City, which is situated in Sistan-Baluchestan province, southeast Iran.

“Three archaeological sites have been found on the outskirts of Shahr-e Sukhteh (Burnt City) in the northern part of the province and their antiquity dates back to 5th millennium BC and the 3rd millennium BC,” provincial tourism director Alireza Jalalzai announced on Wednesday.



The sites were found during a gas-pipeline laying project and no (ruined) structures have been identified there so far, he explained.

A demarcation plan will be operated soon to define historical boundaries for the sites before the pipeline operation resumes, he said.

Founded around 3200 BC, the Burnt City was populated during four main periods up to 1800 BC. Previous rounds of excavations showed that its residents had great skills in weaving, creating fine arts such as decorative objects, stone carving, and pottery painting.

Known as Shahr-e Sukhteh in Persian, the Burnt City is situated in Sistan-Baluchestan province that was once a junction of Bronze-Age trade routes crossing the Iranian plateau. Shahr-e Sukhteh is associated with four rounds of civilization, all burnt down by catastrophic sets of fire.

National library purchases exquisite Khamseh manuscript

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – An exquisite manuscript copy of Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi's Khamseh has been recently purchased by the National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI).

The version was inscribed in the 15th century in the present-day Afghanistan and bears several magnificent miniatures, NLAI announced on Thursday.



Medallion patterns are painted on the red cover of the 550-year-old manuscript along with arabesque motifs. Religious inscriptions and colorful patterns can also be seen on its opening page.

Nezami's reputation rests on his Khamseh, which is a pentology of poems written in Masnavi verse form (rhymed couplets) and totaling 30,000 couplets.

These five poems include the didactic work Makhzan ol-Asrar (The Treasury of Mysteries), three traditional love stories of Khosrow and Shirin, Leili and Majnun, and Haft Paykar, and the Eskandarnamih, which records the adventures of Alexander the Great.

There are various versions of the Khamseh in Iranian libraries, but the two versions kept at the Central Library of the University of Tehran and the library of the Shahid Motahhari School and Mosque in Tehran were inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register list in 2011.

Iron-Age relics seized near Tehran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** – Iranian authorities have recently confiscated 67 prehistoric objects, which were kept unlawfully at home of a smuggler in Malard, Alborz province, some 35 km west of Tehran.

The relics, estimated to date back to the Iron Age, included a pitcher, stone utensil, bowl, bronze plate, and a box, as well as some ornamental stones, IRNA quoted senior police officer Abbas-Ali Mohammadian as saying on Thursday.



A metal detector and some 821 fake coins were also seized and the smuggler surrendered to the judicial system for further investigation, the police official noted.

The Iron Age is an archaeological era, referring to a period in the prehistory and protohistory of the Old World (Afro-Eurasia) when the dominant toolmaking material was iron.

Alborz province is surrounded by Mazandaran, Tehran, Markazi, and Qazvin provinces. Its name is driven by the Alborz Mountains. The significant part of the mountains is located in the north part of the province.

Historical resources and documents as well as archeological studies indicate that Alborz has a rich culture dating back to prehistoric times.

Tabriz Blue Mosque, a masterpiece of Islamic architecture

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

As an ancient historical city, Tabriz, the capital of the northwestern province of East Azerbaijan, has many sights to offer to the tourists, the highlight of which is the Blue Mosque, known as Masjed-e Kabud in Farsi.

The mosque is one of the valuable historical monuments of Iran that its special architectural style has distinguished this magnificent building from other similar examples.

Covered in spectacular blue tiles, from which it derives its name, the Blue Mosque is also an example for Islamic designs and decorations as there are kufic, naskh and thulth scripts as well as various arabesque and geometric patterns inside.

Also called the turquoise of Islam due to its beautiful blue tiles, the mosque was completed in c. 1465 and is remarkable for its simplicity, brickwork, and great size as well.

The mosque survived a devastating earthquake in 1727. However, many parts of it caved in due to a quake struck later in the same century. Many parts of the



structure was rebuilt in 1973.

The missing tiles of the mosque's façade are also the reminder of the scars the mosque bears from the damage it suffered from the quakes. Some visitors say “From the

outside it looks first a bit disappointing but the interior is beautiful and worth the entrance price.”

In the southern part of the mosque lies a time-honored mausoleum, itself a source

‘Smart, responsible traveling’ should replace ‘do not travel’ recommendations: tourism minister

➔ **1** Even just before the coronavirus pandemic, the Iranian tourism industry was operating slowly and with great difficulty under international sanctions and political disputes, amongst other restrictions.

Mounesan has repeatedly announced that his ministry is in full coordination with the Ministry of Health for strictly implementing health protocols in travel destinations, hospitability centers, and museums, amongst others, underlining that “people's health is our first priority.”

“Protocols outlined by the [both] Ministry of Health, and National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control are being strictly implemented.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mounesan reminded guidelines and instructions formulated to ramp up the safety in hotels, guest houses, eco-lodge unites, tourist destinations, transport facilities, recreational centers, and restaurants.

“In a situation when the country is fighting against the coronavirus outbreak, we have never closed hotels but strict protocols have been declared to them..... However, many hotels did not have customers and shut due to high costs.”

He said that strict health protocols can be executed and monitored within package tours both for international or domestic ones.

“We want to open the way for foreign tourists to enter Iran in a way that neither we get them coronavirus nor catch the virus from them... We know that if the trips take place in the form of a tourist tour, hygiene can be controlled during the trip because the transport fleet now observe health protocols and regarding to hotel rooms, if used by one person, they would not be rented to another during the next 24 hours.”

The official attached great importance to jobs generated by tourism and hospitality sectors: “Tourism [industry] can bring many [public] benefits, even if it receives only a little support. It is possible to create a job [through little investment such as] 50 million toman (some \$11,900 based on a fixed official rate of 4,200 toman per U.S. dollar), but in the industrial sector, a job can be generated with at least 500 million toman.”

“Despite all the odd events happened in 1398 (the past Iranian year ended in March 2020), such as floods, fuel [price rises], the martyrdom of the [Commander of the IRGC Quds Force] Major General Qassem Soleimani,

“Despite all the odd events happened in 1398 (the past Iranian year ended in March 2020), such as floods, fuel [price rises], the martyrdom of the [Commander of the IRGC Quds Force] Major General Qassem Soleimani, regional conflicts and the crash of a Ukrainian airliner, we still witnessed an unprecedented growth under [U.S.-led] sanctions, and that is because employment in the field of tourism is potentially stable.”

regional conflicts and the crash of a Ukrainian airliner, we still witnessed an unprecedented growth under [U.S.-led] sanctions, and that is because employment in the field of tourism is potentially stable.”

“Revenues from tourism in Iran are not like oil revenues that go directly to the government treasury, but our foreign exchange earnings go directly to the market through tourism insiders; different currencies enter the country, which are spent in tourism markets and its different sectors, but these incomes are not visible.”

“With 32,000 works, relics, rituals and sites registered as national cultural heritage, and 24 [UNESCO] World Heritage sites, we (the ministry) have very little budget and we have to spend part of this budget to [maintain and conserve] historical monuments and sites... though we have been able to use people's capital to restore some of the monuments,” the minister explained.

He noted the boutique hotels are amongst victims of the pandemic fears. Boutique hotels are on the verge of being bankrupt.... In normal situations, boutique hotels are usually overbooked for the next six months, and the Iranians could hardly fit in.”

“Besides, many historical inns and caravanserais have been restored and repurposed to be guest houses. Moreover, many eco-lodge unites have been come on stream over the past couple of years.”

Last month, Mounesan announced the number of foreign travelers to Iran had drastically plunged due to the global coronavirus pandemic as the Islamic Republic registered only 74 visits during the spring season. “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.”

Tourism [industry of Iran] was growing before the corona [outbreak], its revenues reached \$11.7 billion in 2019, which accounted for 2.8% of GDP, near the average share of tourism in the world GDP, which was 3.2 percent, the minister explained.

He said 8.7 million foreign nationals visited Iran during the past [Iranian] year (1398), adding that Iran was ranked as the second fastest-growing country in tourism based on data compiled by the World Tourism Organization. “On the onset of coronavirus, tourism faced a



A combination photo compares, Hafezieh, the mouselim of illusterios Persian poet Hafez in Shiraz, southern Iran, in March 2019 (R) with one picture captured in March 2020. The major tourist destination is deserted over coronavirus fears.

sharp decline in the world including our country. So that in the first three months of the current [Iranian] year the number of foreign tourists dropped to 74 --- it was reached almost zero!”

The minister reminded that some 2.3 million foreign nationals visited the Islamic Republic during the spring last year that showed a 40.66 percent increase year on year. The country hosted 1,443,551 million travelers during the same period a year earlier. Talking about losses to the travel and hospitality industry of the country, the minister said that the virus decease has caused damage to many countries around the world, and our country's travel sector has so far suffered a loss of 12 trillion rials (some \$2.85 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

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

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

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

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 24 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Rooted in ancient Persian civilization, the nation that has survived numerous alien invasions and natural disasters over its rich history while maintaining its appeal to local and foreign tourists.

Visa waiver to improve balance of Tehran-Moscow tourism: official

TOURISM **TEHRAN** – Visa-free travel for group tours between Iran and Russia could proffer equal conditions for both nations, Mohammad Qasemi, the director for marketing and advertising at the ministry of tourism has said.

“This agreement provides equal conditions for both sides, now it is the private sector effort of the two countries as well as the approach of the nominated agencies, which determines which side will benefit from this exchange.”

In 2017, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin inked a visa-free agreement for tourist groups.

The agreement, which emphasizes on visas waiver for tourist groups could bring more money to the country financially than tourists who travel individually, the official added, CHTN reported on Friday.

“Tourism is a two-way street...in this trade, one cannot act spontaneously and one-sidedly.”

Certainly, the result will not be entirely in one side's favor if the agencies focus only

on sending tourists to the other country instead of attracting them.

He also noted that this agreement could build trust both among the people of the other country as well as in the minds of citizens of the countries around the world.

Referring to Russia as a neighboring country, which has high trade, economic and political relations with Iran, he mentioned that as Russian-speaking countries in Iran's neighborhood are part of the country's target markets, they might trust and follow Russia in its tourism policies.

The action plan for the previously-reached visa-free travel for group tours between the two countries was finalized after Iranian, Russian experts exchanged views in a virtual meeting earlier last week.

Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts also announced that an Iranian delegation will soon visit Russia to ink the action plan.

Last February, Iran's tourism ministry announced that it would follow up on the agreement at the [27th edition] Moscow



International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (MITT), which was scheduled to be held from March 17 to 19.

Based on the 2017 agreement tour groups of 5 to 50 people heading to [easternmost parts of] Russia from Iran or vice versa are granted a visa-free stay of up to 15 days.

Maya Lomidze, executive director of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia, had told Sputnik that the visa agreement may significantly surge the tourist flows between the two countries, just like it happened when

a similar deal was signed between Russia and China. The flow of Iranian tourists to Russia increased by 50-70 percent following the operation of direct flights that connect Iran to St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Sochi, she said.

Head of the Iranian Tour Operators Association Ibrahim Pourfaraj said last year that a majority of potential Russian travelers are unaware of vast tourist attractions that exist in every corner of Iran. “The fact is that Iran's political and economic relations with Russia are considered as good, but this has nothing to do with attracting tourists because it is directly connected with the Russian people. It is the Russian people who must choose Iran as their destination,” he explained.

Iran is taking proactive measures in line with the long-term goal of 20 million tourists by 2025. However, some officials believe the country is nowhere close to the point of reaching its full tourism potential and lagging far behind neighboring countries like Turkey.

Specific COVID-19 mutations identified in Iran

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iranian researchers have identified some genetic mutations of COVID-19 that are specifically occurring in the country.

An article by researchers of Royan Institute for Reproductive Biomedicine recently published entitled “Profiling of initial available SARS-CoV-2 sequences from Iranian related COVID-19 patients”.

The bioinformatics analysis, published in the Cell Journal, showed 44 different nucleotide mutations that caused 26 nonsynonymous mutations in protein sequences with regard to the reference full genome of the SARS-CoV-2 sequence.

The etiologic agent SARS-CoV-2 has caused the outbreak of COVID-19 which is spread widely around the world. It is vital to uncover and investigate the full genome sequence of SARS-CoV-2 throughout the world to track changes in this virus.

All living viruses and cells have a genetic structure that ensures their survival. The novel coronavirus also has an RNA-like genetic structure, the virus multiplies as soon as it enters the human cell, producing hundreds or more of the same virus as the original one, and then each virus attacks another cell.

The virus performs its own simulation through a genetic sequence in its genetic material, its RNA, and it is important to know its genetic code for treatment, or making vaccines, and diagnostic kits, as well as controlling the virus.

To this purpose, SARS-CoV-2 full genome sequence profiling of 20 patients in Iran and different countries that already had a travel



history to Iran or contacts with Iranian cases were provided in the research.

It showed that some of the detected mutations only were found in Iranian data in comparison with all the available sequences of SARS-CoV-2, as a six-nucleotide and two-amino-acid insertions were detected in the full genome sequence of SARS-CoV-2 with Iran's location.

The position of S protein mutations showed they were far from the binding site of this protein with angiotensin-converting enzyme-2 (ACE2) as the host cell receptor.

These results can be helpful to design specific diagnostic tests, trace the SARS-CoV-2 sequence changes in Iran, and explore therapeutic drugs and vaccines.

Mehdi Tutunchi, Najmeh Salehi, Amir Amiri Yekta and their colleagues conducted this research.

■ Coronavirus more infectious
Earlier in July, global researches showed that a specific change in the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus genome has caused it to be more infectious by 3-9 times compared to the onset of the pandemic.

Research, published in the journal Cell, indicated the variant in question, D614G, makes a small but effective change in the virus's ‘Spike’ protein, which the virus uses to enter human cells.

Bette Korber, a theoretical biologist at Los Alamos National Laboratory and lead author of the study, noted that “These findings suggest that the newer form of the virus may be even more readily transmitted than the original form – whether or not that conclusion is ultimately confirmed, it highlights the value of what were already good ideas: to wear masks and to maintain social distancing.”

The study, entitled “Tracking changes in SARS-CoV-2 Spike: evidence that D614G increases infectivity of the COVID-19 virus”, suggests that viruses with D614G change in Spike out-compete original strain, but may not make patients sicker.

■ COVID-19 mortality in Iran
In the press briefing on Friday, Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 3,049 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 416,198. She added that 355,505 patients have so far recovered, but 3,869 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

In the past 24 hours, 144 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 23,952.

Lari added that so far 3,691,399 COVID-19 tests have been conducted across the country.

She said the high-risk “red” zones include Tehran, Mazandaran, Gilan, Qom, Isfahan, Khorasan Razavi, East Azerbaijan, Kerman, North Khorasan, Semnan, Yazd, Zanjan and Qazvin provinces.

Gov. allocates \$40m for waste management

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The government has earmarked \$40 million for waste management to prevent waste generation with priority given to the country's coastal provinces, Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy chief of the Department of Environment (DOE) for the marine environment, said.

He made the remarks during the second International Conference on Oceanography in West Asia held virtually in Tehran on September 16 to 17.

The main purpose of this fund allocation is preventing waste generation, followed by reuse, recycling, recovery and as a last resort, safe disposal with the priority of the coastal provinces, he stated.

He went on to note that according to the United Nations Environment Program, 300 million tons of plastic waste is generated each year, of which, about 8 million tons enter the oceans. In 2015, the estimated damage caused by marine pollution to the fishing and aquaculture, maritime transport, shipbuilding and maritime tourism industries in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, was \$11.2 billion.

In recent years, plastics have accumulated in the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans, with 80 percent of the waste entering the ocean from land. Some 15 percent floating at sea surface, 15 percent goes under the sea and 70 percent is buried under the sea bed, so a small part of the sea waste is seen, and that is a real catastrophe.

Many actions against waste is underway worldwide, but given the \$180 billion investment in the plastics industry over the past decade and the increasing consumption of disposable plastic products due to the coronavirus epidemic, we need to work even harder and more accurately, he added.

Being the center of the world's main energy storage, and having huge resources of oil and gas and related industries, coastal parts of Iran is exposed to domestic sewage, industrial wastewater, oil spills and oil extraction that have caused serious pollution in maritime environment, he explained.

Among the various fishing methods, trawl fishing and other types of non-selective fishing equipment, hurt the sea bed and overfishing cause serious damage to other aquatic animals and the marine environment, he stated, noting, its destructive effects on the marine environment have been



widely discussed, so that we have completely restricted and almost banned this type of fishing.

Emphasizing the need for more investment in research and monitoring in order to provide comprehensive information on the characteristics of marine and coastal environments, he said that for example, we can refer to research programs in physical, chemical and biological systems and processes.

This data set provides the basis for the assessment, as preserving biodiversity in waters requires effective rules and regulations based on coherent scientific research programs, he also added.

In this regard, we need to implement a priority program for mapping and studying marine species and habitats, the DOE signed a contract with the National Institute of Oceanography and Atmospheric Sciences, as well as the Fisheries Organization for continuous physical and chemical monitoring of the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Caspian Sea, he highlighted.

We can benefit from its various advantages while strengthening the marine and coastal environment as well as economic activities in order to achieve sustainable development, he concluded.

■ 7,000 tons of waste generated daily in northern provinces

Sirous Vatankeh, secretary of energy technologies development headquarters at Science and Technology Vice-presidency, has said that the amount of waste generated in the northern provinces of the country, neighboring the Caspian Sea, is snowballing at a rate of over 7,000 tons

a day, accounting for 14 percent of the total daily 50,000 tons of waste production in the country.

There is a significant relationship between the prevalence of various diseases and the amount of waste generation, which must be considered a “danger sign” that needs urgent measures to contain the issue, he highlighted.

■ Waste generation per capita in Iran
In Iran, over 1 million tons of plastic bags are produced annually, while its shelf life is less than 10 minutes, but they remain in nature for hundreds of years. Recently, the Department of Environment has drafted a bill and sent it to the government for approval to reduce the consumption of plastic bags.

Sadr-o-din Alipour, the director of the environment and sustainable development department of Tehran Municipality, has said that over 3,000 tons of plastic waste is generated per day in the country, which reaches 1 million tons in a year.

Ali Moridi, head of soil and water office at the DOE, said in October 2018 that while reduction of waste generation and separation of waste at source are the two major processes in waste management, in Iran the focus is mainly on the last phase of waste management which is waste disposal, which will slow down the path to waste minimization and waste sorting at source.

Although proper waste management could solve the country's environmental problems, the budget requested by the DOE for waste management has not been approved by the Majlis [Iranian parliament], he lamented.

According to a report published by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in October 2016, waste generation per capita in Iran's urban areas is about 658 grams per day while Iranian waste generation per capita in rural areas is about 220-340 grams per day. Average Iranian waste generation per capita amounts to some 240 kilograms per year.

The report continues that unfortunately only 7 percent of the waste is separated at the source, 13 percent is recycled and only 2.5 percent of them end up in formal or sanitary landfills and some 77.5 percent of the waste will be burnt or buried in informal landfills located in the countryside or deserts near cities.

Police seized over 3.7 tons of narcotics in Sistan-Balouchestan

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Anti-narcotics police forces have dismantled a drug-trafficking gang and confiscated nearly 3.7 tons of narcotics in Sistan-Balouchestan province, the provincial police chief has said.

The anti-narcotics police officers traced the haul of narcotics through extensive operations, arresting members of the drug-trafficking cell while trafficking opium and hashish in Iranshahr city, Brigadier General Mohammad Ghanbari said on Friday.

He went on to say that 3.5 tons of opium and 202 kilograms of hashish, were seized along with a handgun and some ammunition. The police force is actively present working to fight drugs, he further highlighted.

Iran, which has a 900-kilometer border with Afghanistan, has been used as the main conduit for smuggling Afghan drugs to narcotics kingpins in Europe.

Despite high economic and human costs, Iran has been actively fighting drug-trafficking over the past decades.

The country has spent more than \$700 million on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab and Central Asian countries.

Iran seized some 1,000 tons of narcotics in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), putting the country in the first place in the world, Momeni said in July.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has praised Iran's efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking on the occasion of International Day Against Drug

Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The organization also officially announced that the world's first place in the discovery of opium, heroin, and morphine belongs to Iran.

UNODC World Drug Report 2020 estimates that in 2018, 91 percent of world opium, 48 percent of the world morphine, and 26 percent of the world heroin were seized by Iran.

Iran's drug control efforts led to the seizure of 266 tons of different types of drugs during the period of April-June 2020, a 20 percent increase compared to the same period in 2019.

Aging Iran: one develops dementia every 7 minutes

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — According to global statistics, it is estimated that each 7 minutes one person develops dementia in Iran, the figure will raise considerably in next three decades due to Iran's aging population, director of Iran Alzheimer's Association said on Friday.

Dementia is a syndrome in which there is deterioration in memory, thinking, behavior and the ability to perform everyday activities and Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia and may contribute to 60–70 percent of cases.

Estimates indicate that over 750,000 individuals are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in Iran so the disease should be taken seriously, Masoumeh Salehi stated.

If there is no shame in expressing the disease, we can diagnose the disease sooner; each year of early diagnosis delays Alzheimer's disease process by five years, which leads to a better quality of life, she noted, adding, recent scientific articles have emphasized that the prevention of Alzheimer can reduce the disease by up to 40 percent.

Dementia is a reversible memory disorder that occurs for a variety of reasons, such as hypothyroidism, depression, or drug use. Early diagnosis and treatment of dementia can help make the disease reversible, but the onset of Alzheimer's disease is irreversible and there is no definitive cure, but we can largely control it with early treatment, she explained.

Literacy is one of the most important factors in preventing Alzheimer's disease. Also, due to the increase in noise pollution, hearing impairment may occur in old age, and we strongly recommend the use of hearing aids for elderly people so that they can communicate with others and not be isolated, she said.

It is important to prevent head injuries in childhood; and diseases such as high blood pressure, hyperlipidemia, etc. after the age of 40 can be a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease, because leaving these chronic diseases untreated, can even damage the cerebrovascular vessels, she also explained.

In Iran, one person is diagnosed with dementia every 7 minutes. Due to the growth of the country's elderly population, this number is also growing, she warned.

With the onset of COVID-19, isolation is intensified, so that elderly should remain active and continue social communication, she highlighted.

Referring to the National Dementia Document, she stated that “with the implementation of this document, Alzheimer's disease will be addressed more than before, and training, screening and prevention will be given more priority.”

According to the Welfare Organization, out of 720 people studied, about 285 were elderly with depression, and we had between 8 and 10 people with dementia, which was close to the global statistics, she lamented.

■ World Alzheimer's Day: ‘Let's talk about dementia’

September 21st every year is World Alzheimer's Day around the world. This is an international campaign aimed at raising awareness and challenge the common stigma that surrounds Alzheimer related dementia.

The theme for World Alzheimer's Month in 2020 is ‘Let's talk about dementia’.

Every 3 seconds someone in the world is affected by Alzheimer's. Worldwide there are some 50 million people who suffer from dementia, which includes Alzheimer's. This is more than the population of Spain and the number is steadily increasing.

Within the next 20 years the number of people affected by dementia will likely double. More than 130 million people will be afflicted by 2050. This is according to data from the latest World Alzheimer's Report published annually by Alzheimer's disease International (ADI), the worldwide federation of Alzheimer's associations in London.

More than \$1.1 trillion is now being spent on Alzheimer's disease worldwide.

LET'S LEARN PERSIAN

(Part 28)

(Source: saadifoundation.ir)

Vocabulary

they; those /ān'hā/ آنها = آن‌ها

name; noun /esm/ اسم

citizen, native /ahl/ أهل

big, large /bo'zorg/ بزرگ

boy; son /pe'sar/ پسر

exercise /tam'rin/ تمرین

in, at prep در : /tu/ [تو]

how (what + manner) /ce'towr/ چگونه

health; the present /hāl/ (پ) حال (أحوال)

girl; daughter /dox'tar/ دختر

language; tongue /za'bān/ زبان

number /somā're/ شماره

city /sahr/ شهر

correct, true (T) /sa'hih/ (ص) صحیح

photograph, picture /aks/ عکس

wrong, false (F); mistake adj, n (غ) غلط

only /fa'qat/ فقط

lovely, nice /qa'sang/ قشنگ

small /ku'ček/ کوچک

who /ke, ki/ کی



خانه



خانم نامدار



مهسا



مهدیس



مهدیس

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Iran to hold first national online project Olympiad

The first round of online project Olympiad will be held in Iran in the next Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), Fatemeh Mohajerani, an official with the Ministry of Education has said. The project Olympiad will focus on special subjects and is very much like Khwarizmi International Award the only difference is that the Olympiad will be carried out online, IRNA news agency quoted Mohajerani as saying on Sunday.

اولین المپیاد مجازی برگزار می شود

فاطمه مهاجرانی رئیس مرکز ملی پرورش استعدادهای درخشان و دانش‌پژوهان جوان گفت: سال آینده اولین المپیاد مجازی با عنوان «المپیاد پروژه ای» برگزار می شود.

فاطمه مهاجرانی روز یکشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: این المپیاد یک موضوع خاص را به عنوان یک مساله تعریف کرده و به آن می پردازد و در واقع شبیه جشنواره خوارزمی است با این تفاوت که نیازی به حضور افراد نیست بلکه به صورت مجازی برگزار می شود.

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■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

God will help the person who cares about other people's needs, both in this world and the hereafter.

Imam Hussein (AS)

“Love in Days of Coronavirus” goes on stage in Vahdat Hall

A R T TEHRAN — Celebrated Iranian writer and director Mohammad Rahmanian's play “Love in Days of Coronavirus” inspired by Gabriel Garcia Marquez's “Love in the Time of Cholera” went on stage at the courtyard of Vahdat Hall on Thursday.

The first performance was inaugurated by filmmaker Mohammad-Ali Najafi, whom Rahmanian called his master.

Addressing the audience, Rahmanian said that the first performance has always given him a sense of anxiety, and expressed thanks to his friends and cultural officials for their cooperation.

He called Najafi his master and said that he is happy to see him at the first performance. For his part Najafi said, “The audience here gives us hope that theater still exists in the country. Theater is the symbol of culture and thoughts, because it has more cultural influence on the society compared to cinema.”

As Rahmanian had already said, the play centers on love in its different forms during the coronavirus days.

The Colombian Nobel prize-winning author Marquez wrote “Love in the Time of Cholera” about Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza who fall passionately in love in their youth, however, Fermina eventually chooses to marry a wealthy, well-born doctor.

Resistance festival releases “Health Defenders” short documentaries

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — The 16th Resistance International Film Festival has released a lineup of Iranian and international short documentaries competing in the “Health Defenders” category.

“Amini Hospital of Langerud” by Mohammadreza Hosseinzadeh, “Jihadist Torchbearers” by Somayyeh Haji Ahmdai, “That Night” by Javad Yaqmuri and Mehdi Amini, “Special Operation” by Hojjatollah Edalatpanah and “All for Everyone” by Mohammad Rafiei are among the Iranian short documentaries of this section.

Also included are “Mask” by Leila Rostami Shokuhi, “Block 65” by Vahid Hosseini Nami, “School Children” by Mohammad Rafiei, “Corona in Heaven” by Mahbubeh Aqanuri, “Standing in the Dust” by Elnaz Qaderpur and “Nurse of Bani Hashem Hospital” by Farshid Faraji.

The international documentaries include “Social Distance” by Erkan Özcan (Turkey), “Portugal Coronavirus Documentary” by Carlos A. Costa (Portugal) and “Italy Lockdown: How the Coronavirus Has Forever Changed Our Lives” by Carla Falzone and Sacha Biazio (Italy).

“Learning in the Time of Corona” by Jasmine Ng Qian Yi (Malaysia), “Thanks the Heroes” by Syed Muhammad Hassan Zaidi (Pakistan), “So close, So Far” by Komeil Soheili (Iran) and “A Mask for Everyone” by Faroghi Anna Peretz Haim (Germany) are also included.

Abolfazl Jalili, Payam Fazlinejad, Abdolsattar Kakai, Masud Moinifar and



“A Mask for Everyone” by Faroghi Anna Peretz Haim.

Hadi Naiji are the jury members for the “Health Defenders” section.

In appreciation of the medical workers' efforts on the front lines of the campaign against COVID-19, the festival has initiated a category titled “Health Defenders” in collaboration with the Health Ministry.

Films focusing on the endeavors health workers have made during the pandemic will be competing in this section.

Over 20 short and feature documentary films will be screened in the documentary section.

The short documentaries include “A Letter from Damascus” by Mehdi Ebrahimkhani, “Imilia” by Ruhollah Akbari, “Lotus” Mohammadreza Vatandoost, “Persian Island” by Mohammad-Ali Sadrinia, “Saru” by Mohammad Abdollahi and “Noah's Ark” by Sudabeh Babagap.

Among the feature documentaries are “The Last Days of Winter” by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian, “Women with Gunpowder Earrings” by Reza Farahmand, “Life on High Altitude” by Azizollah Hamidnejad, “Zemnako” by Mehdi

Qorbanpur, “Bridge” by Amir-Hossein Noruzi and “Resurrection” by Mohammad-Ali Farsi.

A lineup of 12 films has also been selected to go on screen in the Festival of Festivals category.

The Festival of Festivals section plans to review movies produced over the past 40 years on the Islamic Revolution, resistance and the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, which is known as the Sacred Defense in Iran.

The lineup includes “The Glass Agency”, “From Karekheh to the Rhine” and “The Scout” by Ebrahim Hatamikia, “The Survivor” by Seifollah Daad, “Journey to Chazzebah” by Rasul Mollaqlipour and “Standing in the Dust” by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian.

“The Fateful Day” by Shahram Asadi, “Track 143” by Narges Abyar, “Kimia” by Ahmadreza Darvish, “Villa Dwellers” by Monir Qeidi, “Child of the Soil” by Mohammad-Ali Bashbeh Ahangar and “Hoor on Fire” by Azizollah Hamidnejad are also included.

The festival is organized every year to commemorate the anniversary of the Sacred Defense.

The 16th edition of the event will go online due to a spike in the coronavirus 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.

Prague Febiofest picks two films from Iran

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian dramas “Just 6.5”, “Son-Mother” will be competing in 27th Prague International Film Festival – Febiofest, which opened in the Czech capital on Friday.

“Son-Mother” directed by Mahnaz Mohammadi will compete in the Panorama section and “Just 6.5” by Saeid Rustai will be screened in the Planet Dark section.

“Just 6.5” is about Samad who works in a narcotics unit, trying to capture the drug lord Nasser Khakzad. After several raids, they finally manage to track him down and arrest him. In the subsequent trial, Nasser is sentenced to death,

and Samad starts to realize that neither the arrests nor the executions will change anything and the problem must be approached differently. Will he manage to cope with the fact that during his career, the number of drug addicts increased from one million to 6.5 million?

“Son-Mother” tells the story of Leila, a single mother who lives in the poverty of today's Iran. The factory where she works is facing a crisis and jobs are in danger. Kazem, the factory bus driver, proposes to Leila, but only under certain conditions. When Leila loses her job, she must face a difficult decision – whether to accept Kazem's proposal,

which would save her from poverty, but would also force her to abandon her son. In the end, it will be him who will have to decide.

The film is also competing for the Amnesty International Febiofest Award, which is handed out to best human rights film every year at the festival by the Czech branch of Amnesty International.

The Febiofest opened with a screening of “Karel” by Czech director Olga Malirova Spatova and will come to an end on September 25 with a screening of “The Truth”, a co-production between France and Japan by Hirokazu Kore-eda.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting



■ Sadaf Sabuhi is showcasing her latest painting collection named “Déjà Vu” in an exhibition currently underway at Golhay Davudi Gallery.

The exhibit runs until September 23 at the gallery that can be found at 263 near Nejatollahi St., Taleqani Ave.

■ An exhibition of digital paintings by Mehdi Mohammad-Zaheri is currently underway at Idea Gallery.

The exhibition titled “My Iran” will run until September 24 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ Shirin Gallery 1 is showcasing paintings by Katayun Moqaddam in an exhibition titled “Entanglement”.

Shirin Gallery 2 is also playing host to a group charity exhibition named “Dandelion and Wishes” by curator Mahnaz Karimi. Both exhibits will run until September 30 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

Watercolor

■ Atashzad Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Bita Qassambashi.

The exhibit entitled “Being” runs until September 22 at the gallery located at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

Sculpture

■ An exhibition of sculpture by Hossein Azadi is currently underway at Etemad Gallery 1.

Etemad Gallery 2 is also playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Sahar Safarian.

The exhibitions will be running until September 29 at the gallery located at 25 Shirudi Alley, Mofatteh St., near Haft-e Tir Square.

■ Aran Gallery is showcasing sculptures by Kusha Musavi in an exhibition named “Endless and Unclear”.

The exhibition will run until October at the gallery that can be found at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.

Drawing

■ Samaneh Yusefi is showcasing a collection of her latest drawings in an exhibition named “Atrium” at Vaali Gallery.

The exhibit will continue until September 29 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vanak Sq.

■ Caricature by Qasem Hajizadeh and Ardeshir Mohasses published in Iranian magazines from 1956 to 1976 are on display in an exhibition at CAMA – Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery.

The exhibition will run until September 23 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.

Multimedia

■ Artibition Gallery is displaying paintings and sculptures by Parvaneh Etemadi, Manuchehr Motabar, Mahmud Zende, Sadeq Tabrizi, Ali Nedai and some other prominent artists in an exhibition name “Collector Six”.

The exhibit will continue until October 6 at the gallery located at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Golestan St., off Shariati Ave.

■ An exhibition of artworks in various media by Mitra Rezai, Maryam Eshraqi, Ali Jabbari, Sahar Salehi, Mohammad Mohammadi, Aida Sadeqi and several other artists is currently underway at Entezami Gallery.

The exhibit named “Autumn Alley” will be running until September 23 at the gallery that can be found at 608 Shariati Ave. near Motahhari St.

Art and cultural officials watch “Uncle Hashem” in Sangelaj Hall

A R T TEHRAN — Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini, Visual Arts Office director Hadi Mozaffari and director of Iran's Dramatic Arts Center Qader Ashena were present to see “Uncle Hashem” at the Sangelaj Hall in Tehran on Wednesday.

Written by director and expert of Iranian traditional plays Davud Fat'hali-beigi, “Uncle Hashem” centers on the life of Fayyaz, an expert who mostly used to play the role of Shimir, the villain who beheaded Imam Hussain (AS) in the Battle of Karbala.



Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini signs an autograph on the poster of the play “Uncle Hashem” by director Davud Fat'hali-beigi at the Sangelaj Hall in Tehran on September 16, 2020. (Honaronline)

Born in 1921, he was one of the last tazieh performers of the Dowlat Tekyeh, a place for seasonal Islamic ceremonies that was built during the reign of Qajar king Nasser ad-Din Shah near the Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran.

Fayyaz was also a famous figure in the international arena, and some of his tazieh scripts sealed with his name are preserved at the Vatican Museums.

The expert also had several performances in international festivals across the world, and was praised by the English director and writer Peter Brook after his performance at the Avignon Theater Festival in 1991.

Fat'hali-beigi has called the play a tribute to the veteran tazieh performer who died in 2004.

“The play is actually a recreation of part of the memories of Hashem Fayyaz. In older times, tazieh troupes used to travel to remote places and on the way they used to stop in the villages and perform tazieh. Of course, they might have been through hard times but they had also helped promote the culture of tazieh and religious stories among those who were far from any facilities,” Fat'hali-beigi had earlier said.

“In this way, tazieh was kept alive over all these years, and even now despite social media, many still gather to watch tazieh, and this shows that this art is liked by many,” he added.

Fat'hali-beigi said that the play is based on one of Fayyaz's memories of his performances when he was invited by an elderly woman living in a remote region to perform a tazieh at her house for her and her husband, neither of whom had seen a tazieh performance previously.

Fayyaz said that he plays the role of Shimir, and the elderly man begins to quarrel with his wife as to why she invited him. Fayyaz then has to leave the house and spends the night in a mosque.

Manijeh Davari, Hamid Madankan and Amir Azadrusta are acting in the play.

