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Zarif: U.S. after blowing up Iran's food, medicine payment channels

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the United States is seeking to blow up Iran's remaining channels to pay for food and medicine. "Amid Covid19 pandemic, U.S. regime wants to blow up our remaining channels to pay for food & medicine," Zarif tweeted on Thursday. "Iranians WILL survive this latest of cruelties." He described conspiring to starve the Iranian population as a "crime against humanity", adding, "Culprits & enablers—

who block our money—WILL face justice." The remarks came after the Trump administration announced it had imposed new sanctions on Iran's financial sector in defiance of Washington's European allies who warned of the humanitarian consequences of the sanctions on Iran's fight against the coronavirus. The new sanctions target the few remaining Iranian banks which were not subject to secondary sanctions. **->2**

Armed forces support health sector in battling COVID-19



Tire output rises 26% in six months on year

TEHRAN — Production of tire in Iran has risen 26 percent during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year. As reported by IRNA, 129,660 tons of tires have been produced during the six-month period of this year. In terms of number, 12.143 million tires

have been produced, showing a 25-percent growth year on year. Of the mentioned figure, 76,740 tons were the passenger car tires, which shows a 29-percent rise. Some 11,691 tons of van tires were manufactured, indicating a 17-percent growth. Also, 26,537 tons of bus tires were manufactured, showing a 17-percent rise. **->4**

TEHRAN — As the COVID-19 pandemic is ravaging the whole country, fifty-six hospitals belonging to the armed forces have been equipped to exclusively admit patients infected with the coronavirus. Hassan Araqizadeh, the head of the healthcare department of the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces, told IRIB on Thursday that the department is ready to establish field hospitals at every place, even at border points. "Some 70 percent of the beds of the

hospitals of the Armed Forces had been allocated to COVID-19 patients, but we are ready to boost the capacities," he said. Iran registered unprecedented 4,142 new cases of coronavirus over the past 24 hours. During the past 24 hours, 210 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 28,098. Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari said on Friday, adding that the total number of infections rose to 492,378. **->7**

By M.A.Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

Mad sanctions

On Thursday, the Trump administration introduced sweeping new sanctions targeting Iran's remaining financial sector. Sanctions target eighteen Iranian banks. These are the latest move in Washington's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran. U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement that the sanctions show "our commitment to stop" what he called Iran's "illicit access to U.S. dollars." Mnuchin claimed that "sanctions show we continue to allow for humanitarian transactions to support the Iranian people". Secretary of State Pompeo also claimed the sanctions "do not affect existing authorizations and exceptions for humanitarian exports to Iran."

Iranian central banker Abdolnaser Hemmati said a number of these 18 banks "had the duty for transfer of resources for buying medicine and food." Even before such sweeping sanctions, foreign banks and companies were reluctant to do permitted humanitarian transactions with Iran, fearing secondary sanctions.

Such comprehensive sanctions come as Iran is one of the hardest-hit countries by the coronavirus pandemic. With just 80 million population, the number of Covid-19 fatalities has reached more than 200 per day. At such a critical moment that sweeping financial bans were declared it was ridiculous that Pompeo issued a statement claiming that "the United States continues to stand with the Iranian people."

Experts have warned the sanctions will make it harder to get humanitarian goods into Iran. "It's going to make it even harder for Iran to get ahold of food and medicine unless the Europeans do something gutsy," said Barbara Slavin, the director of the Future of Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council. "It's going to hurt a lot more people. It certainly will bring a lot of people to their knees, but it will not bring down the Islamic Republic, it will just intensify their hatred for the United States."

Slavin told CNN that imposing the new sanctions amid rising coronavirus cases in Iran is "particularly cruel," calling it "sadism masquerading as sanctions."

New sanctions are so brutal and merciless, that according to CNN, even some officials at the State Department have acknowledged that the sanctions could have unintended consequences. **->2**

Tehran eyes strategic partnership with Beijing as Zarif visits China

TEHRAN — As Iran's chief diplomat arrives in China, Tehran and Beijing are expected to hold talks on a strategic partnership plan that its draft has already been approved by the Iranian government but is still under consideration in China. "Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who has traveled to China at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, arrived in the southern province of Yunnan at the head of a high-ranking delegation," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Friday. The statement also said, "Upon arrival on Friday, Foreign Minister Zarif was welcomed by Chinese officials. He will meet and hold talks with his Chinese counterpart on Saturday, October 10, 2020."

Earlier on Thursday, spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic

of Iran Saeed Khatibzadeh said Zarif's two-day visit is "in line with close consultations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and China." The spokesman said Zarif will hold talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, adding that the two diplomats will exchange views on the regional and international developments and the expansion of bilateral relations between Tehran and Beijing. He pointed out, "The two countries share views on important spheres such as the fight against the U.S. unilateralism and interference in the internal affairs of countries." The statement did not give further details about Zarif's discussions in China but he is likely to hold talks on the strategic partnership plan that has been under negotiation since last year. If finalized, the 25-year plan will raise the co-operation between Tehran and Beijing to unprecedented levels. **->3**

U.S. protests: Video of police kneeling on back of pregnant woman sparks protests

Protesters upset by social media videos of U.S. police arresting a pregnant Black woman have now occupied the lawn in front of Kansas City Hall for more than five days. The footage shows an officer kneeling on the back of pregnant woman Deja Stallings during an arrest after a gathering at a gas station. However, her lawyer disputes the police account of the events leading to her arrest. The Kansas City Police Department said in a statement that police were called to the location on September 30 at 10.49pm by a security officer at the gas station and convenience store who said there were "15-20 individuals fighting on the business's property". When officers arrived minutes later, the owner told officers that "he wanted everyone off the property who wasn't buying anything," according to the statement. Security camera video released by the police

of the incident shows as many as a dozen people gathered at the business some points, some pushing each other. According to the statement, a man physically interfered with the officers' investigation and refused to leave. Officers attempted to arrest him but the crowd physically prevented the officer from arresting the man, who then took off running, the statement said. He tripped, and officers attempted to get him in custody. "At that time, a woman (seen in the video) and man tried to pull the suspect away from officers," the statement said. **■ A pregnant woman is arrested** Chanel Le'Yoshe, who saw the arrests and shot some of the videos posted online, told CNN there was no fighting or issues before police arrived.

Persepolis beat Al Nassr for second time in a week

By Farrokhesab

TEHRAN — Persepolis defeated Al Nassr of Saudi Arabia for the second time in a week, this time in a legal case in the Asian Football Confederation. The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on Friday rejected the complaint filed by Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr Football Club after the semi-final match of the AFC Champions League. Al Nassr, who lost to Persepolis in the 2020 AFC Champions League semi-final match on Saturday, claimed that the Iranian club had committed

blatant violations of FIFA rules by using "several illegal players" in their squad during the AFC's Champions League (ACL) semi-final. However, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Disciplinary and Ethics Committee dismissed the protest lodged by Al Nassr, according to Article 59 of the AFC Champions League 2020 Competition Regulations. What prompted Al Nassr to lodge a complaint with AFC over Persepolis' players was the news and information published from inside Iran, es-

pecially in social media against Persepolis. This information, most of which were false and fake, was published in the social media in Iran and then sent to the Saudi club through comments on the Instagram page or twitter of Al Nassr club and the AFC's. Ultimately, Persepolis won the lodge because they had signed their players in legal time and before the club being banned from signing new players for the next transfer window because of failing to pay the salary of former coach Branko Ivanovic. **->3**



14 Million pilgrims take part in Arbaeen processions in Karbala

This year's Arbaeen processions were held in the holy city of Karbala, Iraq, with the participation of more than 14 million pilgrims. According to Iqna, this is according to a statement by the Astan (custodianship) of Hazrat Abbas (AS) holy shrine released on Thursday night. It added that there were no security issues during the processions, al-Kafeel website reported. It said the processions this year were organized with special and unprecedented measures taken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. **->5**

Arbaeen: To become more than the objects of tyrants' desire

By Catherine Shakkdam

I did in fact partake in the Arbaeen Pilgrimage several years ago and I can still recall the impact it had on me - both spiritually and intellectually. It is not often that one is confronted with History in such a vivid and powerful way. I wonder still how so very few people outside the immediate Shia community have come to appreciate the powerful message that lies between Najaf and Karbala. While it would be easy to blame those who still view Shia Islam as both a threat and a stain on their belief system, I would rather see communities take ownership of their stories so they could be told and thus become part of the world heritage. Maybe that is also one of the lessons of Karbala... that victimhood is neither a crown nor a poisoned chalice, that martyrdom is better served in one's empowerment and decision to overcome adversity. And if not all tyrants can be defeated, quiet acquiescence would equate to treachery, that against the sovereignty of oneself. Long ago, when Rome led over the known world unchallenged, a tribe hailing from what we call now Denmark, left its icy landscapes to find refuge under kinder climates. As they travelled ever closer to Rome, the Empire decided to teach those they view as barbarians a lesson. Trapped and betrayed somewhere in modern Northern Italy thousands of men, women, and children were slaughtered. Those who could escape Rome's swords decided to commit suicide - so unwilling they were to become Rome's slaves. **->5**

Leader attends Arbaeen mourning ceremony

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Thursday attended the Arbaeen mourning ceremony, which arrives 40 days after the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS).

According to Fars, this year, the Arbaeen ceremony was held without public participation in order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The ceremony was broadcast live on national television and social media networks.

The martyrdom of Imam Hossein (AS) remains an inspirational example of sacrifice to Shia Muslims, who make up a majority of the Muslim population in Iran, Pakistan, Iraq and Bahrain.

Imam Hossein is the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad (S), who was martyred in the Battle of Karbala nearly 14 centuries ago.

Trump's new Iran sanctions raise alarm over humanitarian access

(Excerpt from The Hill) — The Trump administration on Thursday announced sweeping new sanctions on Iran's financial sector, targeting at least 18 banks in a move that critics say will hamper humanitarian assistance during the pandemic.

The fresh round of sanctions is part of the administration's "maximum pressure campaign" that aims to push the Islamic republic toward negotiations over its nuclear program and prevent the country from financing military actions throughout the Middle East.

"Today's action to identify the financial sector and sanction eighteen major Iranian banks reflects our commitment to stop illicit access to U.S. dollars," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement.

"Our sanctions programs will continue until Iran stops its support of terrorist activities and ends its nuclear programs. Today's actions will continue to allow for humanitarian transactions to support the Iranian people."

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday said the sanctions are directed at "the regime and its corrupt officials."

He accused Iranian leaders of depriving funds for the Health Ministry needed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and instead diverting it to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, which the U.S. designated a terrorist organization in 2019.

Despite assurances from the Trump administration that processes are in place to ensure delivery of needed humanitarian assistance to the people of Iran, European officials and experts have expressed alarm at the wide-ranging sanctions.

The Washington Post reported Thursday that European officials were expressing alarm at the new sanctions, saying they would effectively freeze Tehran's access to any foreign assets and rob it of foreign currency to pay for humanitarian imports.

The Trump administration in October 2019 worked to set up a humanitarian channel through Switzerland to deliver goods and services to Iran; the first transfer of cancer drugs and transplant medication occurred in January, and the terms of the channel were finalized in February.

"These sanctions will neither crush Iran's political will nor bring it back to negotiations on U.S. terms. These appear to be messaging sanctions, with the U.S. domestic audience the principal target," said Daniel Fried, former coordinator for sanctions policy at the State Department and the Weiser Family Distinguished Fellow with the Atlantic Council.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif condemned the new sanctions in a post on Twitter, even though the social media platform is blocked in his country.

"Amid Covid19 pandemic, U.S. regime wants to blow up our remaining channels to pay for food & medicine. Iranians WILL survive this latest of cruelties. But conspiring to starve a population is a crime against humanity. Culprits & enablers—who block our money—WILL face justice," he tweeted.

Supporters of the Trump administration's efforts say the latest round of penalties are in line with its maximum pressure push.

Behnam Ben Taleblu, senior fellow with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, praised the new sanctions and downplayed concerns over access to humanitarian assistance.

"Fears of this impacting existing general licenses or the existing Swiss humanitarian channel are overblown. There is no better example in U.S. history where Washington has used non-kinetic tools of punishment, and so often, with such attention paid to keeping channels open for humanitarian trade," he said.

"As a reminder, these sanctions could go away, just like the others, if Tehran decided to act like a normal nation and put national interest and the welfare of its own people over the revolutionary priorities of the regime."

The new sanctions are likely to further isolate the U.S. from the international community's engagement with Iran. Trump in 2018 withdrew the U.S. from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Obama-era nuclear deal signed between Iran and the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China and Germany.

All five world powers and Iran have criticized Trump for leaving the deal and have further rejected the move by the administration in September to unilaterally impose snapback sanctions on Iran.

Mad sanctions

1 → There are some reasons for such thoughtless anti-human measures. The most important reason is that the U.S. administration is disappointed and angry that even Washington's European allies at the UN Security Council rebuffed as illegal a desperate move by Trump and his "secretary of hate" to return the UN sanctions against Iran.

Another reason is that Trump and his most die-hard minions may be feeling that they are losing the battle against Joe Biden in the November 3 elections and therefore in the remaining time they should do the last blow to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

However, neither rebuff of UN sanctions nor a possible loss in the presidential elections will justify starving Iranians and making it impossible for them to buy medicine.

Trump and his team have already committed economic and medical crimes against Iranians to please hawks in the U.S., criminals in Israel, and some subservient rulers in Riyadh.

Even when Iraq was subject to sanctions in the 1990s and early 2000s, a clear mechanism was ironed out by the United Nations to allow Iraq to sell oil to buy food and medicine.

But now Trump and his team are going wild in their illegal sanctions regime against Iran. They are imposing mad sanctions on the entire Iranian population. They want collective punishment.

Iran slams U.S. maximum pressure as 'state terrorism'

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has denounced Washington's "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran as an example of "state terrorism" with the aim of fomenting unrest in Iran.

"The policy of maximum pressure by the U.S. on Iran is designed to deliberately and indiscriminately target innocent civilians with the aim of creating suffering and hardship, as well as stoking social unrest in accordance with the flawed policy of regime change," Takht-Ravanchi said at a meeting of the UN General Assembly's sixth committee on counter-terrorism on Thursday evening.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms, including state terrorism and economic and medical terrorism, which are carried out through unilateral coercive measures," he said, according to Press TV.

Earlier in the day, the U.S. government imposed a new round of sanctions that virtually blacklists Iran's entire financial sector — raising global concerns it will undermine Iran's ability to import food and medicine.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement that the sanctions, which target 18 banks and punish foreign institutions that do business with them, are part of efforts to cut down on "illicit access to U.S. dollars" and won't stifle humanitarian efforts.

European diplomats have asserted that the sanctions will have dire humanitarian consequences on a country hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

Takht-Ravanchi said terrorizing nations has long been a major challenge for



the international community, as it leads to instability in the targeted nations.

He pointed to the coronavirus pandemic, saying the imposition of U.S. laws and regulations with an extraterritorial impact

on Iran and other countries is tantamount to terrorism.

"Coercive measures are a manifestation of structural violence that violates human rights, the right to peace, the right to de-

"The new sanctions against almost all Iranian banking and financial institutions aim to limit Iran's ability to import essential items against Covid-19 and therefore (they are) crime against humanity," Iran's Ambassador to Britain Hamid Baeidinejad regrets.

velopment, the right to health and, above all, the right to life," the ambassador added.

Other diplomats also reacted to the new U.S. sanctions.

Iran's Ambassador to the UK Hamid Baeidinejad said the move aims to limit Iran's ability to import essential items against the coronavirus.

"The new sanctions against almost all Iranian banking and financial institutions aim to limit Iran's ability to import essential items against Covid-19 and therefore crime against humanity. This abhorrent U.S. regime knows no bounds for crimes against its own people and others," Baeidinejad said via Twitter on Thursday.

In his remarks, Takht-Ravanchi also pointed to the U.S. assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who was Iran's top anti-terror commander, saying the cowardly act was a clear example of state terrorism.

He said the killing was a gift to Daesh (ISIS) and other terrorist groups in the region, adding that the Islamic Republic has been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism.

"It is a proven fact that the United States is spreading terrorism not only in our region but almost everywhere in the world," he remarked.

"The United States has contributed to the creation of terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and Daesh through its interventionist policies in our region," the envoy said, adding, "The country continues to train and supply weapons and explosives to its terrorist agents and partners, including PJAK, Tondar and Jaish ul-Adl, to carry out terrorist attacks in Iran."

EU's Borrell: JCPOA continues to deliver

POLITICAL TEHRAN — European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has reiterated his support for the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), saying the agreement continues to deliver in spite of the U.S. withdrawal.

"I want to be clear: As Coordinator — because the High Representative acts as coordinator of the JCPOA — I will continue to do everything possible to ensure the preservation and full implementation of the nuclear deal by all parties," Borrell said on Wednesday at the European Parliament plenary debate on Iran.

"I think that this achievement of the European Diplomacy, which took a lot (of) efforts from a lot of people, from Javier Solana (former High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary General of the Council of the European Union) to Ms. Federica Mogherini (former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission), deserves to be preserved,"

"Here I want to be very clear also, once more: bringing back these (UN) sanctions would have meant the end of the JCPOA. 13 members of the Security Council, including all European members, rejected this approach and underlined the importance to keep the agreement in place — this way supporting the understanding that the U.S. is no longer part of the JCPOA because they freely decided to withdraw from it," Borrell stated.

he insisted.

Borrell also underlined that the Islamic Republic is the most monitored country in the world by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with now almost 400 inspections per year.

Pointing to the United States' efforts to bring back UN sanctions against Iran, he said such approach was rejected by almost all UN Security Council member states and thus all sanctions lifting commitments under the agreement remain in place.

"Here I want to be very clear also, once more: bringing back these sanctions would have meant the end of the JCPOA. 13 members of the Security Council, including all European members, rejected this approach and underlined the importance to keep the agreement in place — this way supporting the understanding that the U.S. is no longer part of the JCPOA because they freely decided to withdraw from it," he said.



"They were also very clear that — after leaving the agreement in 2018 — the United States was not in a position to initiate the so-called 'snap back' process of bringing back United Nations sanctions under the UN Security Council resolution 2231. As JCPOA Coordinator, I thus want to reiterate that all sanctions lifting commitments under the agreement remain in place," he added.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the JCPOA in May 2018, and imposed the "toughest ever sanctions" on Iran.

In recent months, the Trump administration has tightened its illegal sanctions on Iran, defying warning from other countries across the world who said the bans are severely hampering Iran's fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

EU must resist U.S. bullying: MEP

POLITICAL TEHRAN — A member of the European Parliament has called on the European Union (EU) to resist U.S. bullying and take an independent stance on the sanctions Washington exerts on other nations such as Iran and Syria.

In a Thursday interview with Press TV, Mick Wallace said most U.S. measures are illegal and against international law — whether they are on Iran, Venezuela, Syria, or Nicaragua.

"The European Union and countries within the European Union have a genuine desire to have better relations with Iran,"

Wallace said.

He added that the EU members' submission to Washington "has shown them to be weak and have failed to stand up to U.S. bullying."

He also pointed out that during the past twenty years or so the U.S. has increasingly shown "less and less respect for international law."

Wallace said Iran remains in the focus of Washington because of "Israel's obsession with Iran."

The United States on Thursday announced a new round of sanctions on Iran which includes targeting 18 banks with sanctions.

In July 2015, Iran signed the JCPOA with China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany and the European Union. The deal required Iran to scale back its nuclear program and severely downgrade its uranium reserves in exchange for termination of sanctions, including lifting the arms embargo five years after the deal's adoption.

In May 2018, however, the United States unilaterally abandoned the JCPOA and implemented hardline policies against Tehran, which Washington has described as the "maximum pressure" policy.

Iran waited an entire year for the oth-

er parties to the deal, especially the three European countries, to protect its interests under the historic accord. But after they failed to do so, Tehran began to gradually reduce its commitments under the JCPOA.

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

Zarif: U.S. after blowing up Iran's food, medicine payment channels

1 → In a tweet, U.S. State Secretary Mike Pompeo announced that the United States is sanctioning 18 major Iranian banks and identifying Iran's financial sector.

The move will further deprive "the Islamic Republic of Iran of funds to carry out its support for terrorist activities and nuclear extortion that threatens the world," Pompeo alleged.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the designation of 18 Iranian banks "reflects our commitment to stop illicit access to U.S. dollars" and that "today's actions will continue to allow for humanitarian transactions to support the Iranian people."

Barbara Slavin, director of the Future of Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council, described the sanctions as "sadism masquerading as foreign policy."

"They won't bring the Iranian government to its knees but will hurt ordinary people,



encourage more smuggling and in the long run, undermine dollar-based sanctions," she wrote on Twitter.

The new U.S. move is part of the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran, which Trump adopted after he unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of the 2015 nuclear agreement in May 2018.

Trump is also hoping to clinch a foreign policy victory before the U.S. presidential election, which is scheduled for November

3. In recent weeks his chances of defeating Democratic rival Joe Biden have gone down significantly.

Ever since the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal, which is formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Tehran has ramped up its nuclear program and now has more than 10 times the amount of enriched uranium agreed under the JCPOA.

"Frustrated by humiliating failures & futility of 'maximum pressure', Bibi-Firsters lure Trump into doubling down on inhumane targeting of ordinary Iranians," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh tweeted on Thursday.

"The same gang has carelessly gambled with America's interests & reputation for past 4 years," Khatibzadeh wrote. "Once again, they'll lose."

Esfandyar Batmanghelidj, founder of

Bourse and Bazaar, a news and analysis source on Iran's economy, wrote on Twitter that pharmaceutical exports to Iran through the Swiss had declined sharply since January.

"Pharma exports to Iran were already lower after Trump reimposed sanctions in Nov 2018 *and* have yet to recover after COVID-19 halted normal trade flows," he wrote.

On Friday, Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi referred to the new sanctions as a manifestation of a U.S. foreign policy failure toward Iran.

Vaezi said the sanctions show the desperation of the heads of the White House in not reaching their dreams with regard to Iran.

"The Trump administration used all its power in the last three years to harm the Iranian nation," he said, according to IRNA. "From the Warsaw conference to that country's recent efforts in the [UN] Security Council — all of their efforts led to failures."

Tehran eyes strategic partnership with Beijing as Zarif visits China

1 → Neither Iran nor China did formally give many details about the plan. However, some details of the 25-year partnership have been leaked to the press. According to the leaks, China will invest a whopping \$400 billion in various Iranian sectors including oil and gas. In exchange, Iran will ensure steady energy supplies to China for a period of 25 years at a discounted rate.

The 25-year plan between Iran and China, officially known as "Comprehensive Cooperation Plan between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran," is still under negotiation although Iran has approved a draft of the plan on June 21.

At a cabinet session in June, the government of Hassan Rouhani approved the draft and asked Zarif to negotiate with the Chinese side over finalizing the plan.

During the session, Rouhani said, "This cooperation is a ground for Iran and China's participation in basic projects and development of infrastructure, including the large 'Belt and Road Initiative', and an opportunity to attract investment in various economic fields, including industry, tourism, information technology, and communication."

Soon after the session, Zarif held talks with his Chinese counterpart. During the talks, Iran's chief diplomat expressed hope that the 25-year cooperation would be signed soon.

In recent weeks, Iranian officials accelerated talks with their Chinese counterparts in an apparent effort to finalize the partnership plan.



On September 29, Zarif wished a broader strategic comprehensive partnership between Iran and China, while praising China for bringing Covid-19 under control and reviving its economy. A few days later, President Rouhani sent a message to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on the 71st anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

"The comprehensive strategic partnership of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China, which stems from common cultural grounds, long-term historical relations and the two countries' view of international developments and

their determination to fight unilateralism, has provided a great groundwork for developing bilateral relations in various fields," said Rouhani in the message.

In light of these contacts, Zarif is going to discuss several issues, including the partnership plan, according to an assistant to Zarif.

The assistant, Reza Zabib, told the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) news agency that the Iranian foreign minister will discuss at least three issues in China.

"We will pursue three issues. The first is the facilitation of trade between the two countries," Zabib said, adding that facilitating

trade for the Iranian private sector is high on Zarif's agenda.

He said "Unfortunately, the [U.S.] sanctions are putting pressures everywhere but fortunately we are in a very good position to do business with China."

The second issue is the coronavirus, the assistant said.

According to Zabib, Iran has received medical aid from China and it can cooperate with China in terms of producing the Covid-19 vaccine.

Zabib said the third issue is the talks on the 25-year cooperation plan.

"We hope that Mr. Zarif's visit to China will be a major step toward institutionalizing the 25-year cooperation document between the two countries, which will be a good basis for boosting economic relations," said Zabib, adding, "Concerning the 25-year cooperation plan between Iran and China, there have been continuous contacts between the experts of the two countries since last year."

It remains to be seen whether China will approve the draft of the cooperation plan during Zarif's visit. But some analysts believe that China may be in the final stage of studying the plan and that it could approve it in the coming months. If China does so, the economic cooperation between Tehran and Beijing will reach a level that is not seen before. This maybe the reason why some Iranian analysts and diplomats described the plan as a "turning point" in Iran-China relations.

Senior MP says Iran not caring about U.S. election

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Hossein Noushabadi, the head of the Parliament's International Diplomacy and National Interests faction, has said Iran does not care about the outcome of the U.S. presidential election.

"The U.S. has indicated to the world that it will have a tense election and Iran does not care about the outcome of this election," Noushabadi told the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) news agency.

He said there is no difference between the Republicans and the Democrats because they both seek to dominate others.

"In nature, we see no difference between the Democrats and Republicans. The hegemonic system is the system of domination over others, and they have been tested," said the lawmaker. "Over the past years, various U.S. administrations have demonstrated that their goals are the same and they only pursue different methods toward Iran. We should not wait and see what will happen during the [U.S.] election. The U.S. policy is being made by other people behind the scene. But their methods are different."

The lawmaker has alluded to the U.S. presidential debate, saying the people of the U.S. and the world have seen a pointless discourse in the debate.

He said, "It's demeaning to the U.S. that someone who introduces himself as a construction contractor becomes a president. The Americans understood that they were deceived."

The U.S. presidential election will be held on November



3. The two main candidates have held the first presidential debate amid the coronavirus pandemic, which killed more than 200,000 people in the U.S. and infected 7.64 million others including President Donald Trump himself who is struggling to secure a reelection victory.

Noushabadi pointed out that the U.S. will face a tough election while its people are doubtful.

"It's still under discussion whether Trump's infection was true or not in these circumstances. Anyway, they will face a tough election while the people are doubtful because the two main candidates of this country are accusing each other of rigging [the election] and committing hypocritical

behavior," noted the Iranian lawmaker, adding that the U.S. election has shown that America is void of civilization, culture, and ethics.

He also said the positions of Iran and the U.S. are clear. "Iran's policies toward the U.S. are clear and the U.S. colonial and aggressive policies are also clear. The fake power of the Americans will be questioned," Noushabadi asserted.

In addition to Noushabadi, several other Iranian officials and analysts have said, regardless of who will win the U.S. election, the White House policy toward Iran is unlikely to change fundamentally.

"Wasn't [President Barack] Obama a Democrat? What Obama did wasn't better than Trump. The only [difference] is that he [President Obama] worked quietly while Trump works vociferously. These sanctions have been imposed by the Democrats especially under Obama," Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on international affairs, told the Tasnim news agency on September 19.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the Parliament speaker, also echoed the same assessment in September, saying Trump and his Democratic rival Joe Biden are both determined to harm the Iranian people.

"Whether Trump or Biden becomes president, there will be no difference in the main policy of harming the Iranian nation. Therefore, we need to concentrate on empowering the Iranian nation," the speaker said.

Rouhani dismisses U.S. sanctions as internal 'political propaganda'

POLITICAL TEHRAN — In his first response to the new sanctions the U.S. imposed on Iran on Thursday, President Hassan Rouhani said these sanctions were imposed to serve political goals in the United States.

"The measures of the U.S. administration are taken within the purview of propaganda and political efforts which are meant to serve their internal goals," the president was quoted by the presidential website as saying on Friday, adding that the Americans cannot break the resistance of the Iranian people through making troubles in the path of medicines and food supply.

Rouhani made the remarks in a conversation with Abdolnasser Hemmati, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran.

On Friday, the U.S. Treasury Department slapped new sanctions on Iran, targeting "eighteen major Iranian banks."

Under the new sanctions, "all property and interests in property of designated targets that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons must be blocked and reported to OFAC. OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within the United States (including transactions transiting the United States) that involve any property or interests in property of blocked or designated persons," according to a Treasury statement.

U.S. Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin said the restrictions were meant to sever Iran's ties with the global financial system.

"Today, U.S. Treasury took further action to isolate the Iranian economy from the global financial system as the regime uses the financial sector to advance its malign agenda," tweeted Mnuchin.

Rouhani described these sanctions as "cruel, terrorist and inhumane," saying the

Americans cannot break the resistance of the Iranian people.

According to Rouhani, the new sanctions came in continuation of the U.S. "strategic mistake" in withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"The U.S. administration mistakenly believed that these sanctions will break the resistance of Iran and get us into trouble. But as time passed it became clear that this analysis was very far from reality and thus didn't work," he stated.

The president pointed out that the U.S. will face defeat every time they repeat their strategic mistakes.

Rouhani added, "All countries see that these U.S. measures are in full violation of the law and international regulations. These Washington measures are completely inhumane given the coronavirus circumstances.

Human rights advocates in the world should condemn these measures."

For his part, the CBI governor said the new U.S. sanctions didn't affect the existing exemptions for medicines and basic goods.

"The banks that were designated under secondary sanctions are still using SWIFT and will continue financing the basic goods," the CBI governor said.

However, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the fresh U.S. sanctions are meant to cut off Iran's remaining channels to pay for humanitarian goods.

"Amid Covid-19 pandemic, U.S. regime wants to blow up our remaining channels to pay for food & medicine. Iranians WILL survive this latest of cruelties. But conspiring to starve a population is a crime against humanity. Culprits & enablers—who block our money—WILL face justice," Zarif tweeted on Thursday.

IAEA likely spying on Iran's nuclear program: MP

Zohreh Elahian says IAEA's continued inspections in Iran is unacceptable to Parliament

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Zohreh Elahian, a member of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said the "unrestricted inspections" of Iran's nuclear facilities are unacceptable to the Parliament given the continuation of sanctions on the country.

"The International Atomic Energy Agency's inspections and inspections of nuclear facilities have been conducted in the past and every time the Agency's inspectors conduct inspections they raise new issues and claims," Elahian told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA).

The lawmaker also implied that the IAEA is likely to spy on Iran's nuclear program, saying after every round of

inspections, IAEA inspectors raise new "excuses." "We can raise the possibility of providing and leaking this information during inspections at the Natanz facility," she said.

In early July, a mysterious explosion shook the facility. In August, Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic

IAEA inspectors raise new "excuses" after every round of inspections, the female lawmaker says.

Energy Agency Organization of Iran (AEOD), announced that the explosion that occurred at the Natanz nuclear facility on July 2 was an "act of sabotage".

"Security investigations confirm the sabotage [nature] of this action and what is certain is that an explosion took place in Natanz," Kamalvandi said.

Elahian said IAEA's continued access to Iran's nuclear facilities is unacceptable and should be reconsidered.

"Unrestricted and continuous access of the International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to our nuclear facilities is an issue that is not accepted by the Parliament at all," noted the female lawmaker, adding that there is a need to reconsider the access Iran gives to the IAEA inspectors.

SPORTS

Persepolis beat Al Nassr for second time in a week

1 → The Al Nassr club had started their attempt to hit Persepolis before the game. The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee decided last Saturday to ban Persepolis forward Issa Alekassir just hours before he was due to lead his club against Al Nassr in the semi-final ACL match. This decision was also provoked by the Saudi club.

The player was banned from taking part in any football-related activity for six months because of his slant-eyed gesture after scoring against Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor in the ACL quarterfinals.

The Iranian giants were shocked by the decision since it seems to be a non-sport decision. However, they could beat the Saudi side Al Nassr in penalty shootouts.

They will face the East Asian champions in the final match on December 19.

Al Nassr failed, but delivering fake news from inside the country was very shameful and upsetting for Iranian football.

AFC dismisses protest lodged by Al Nassr

SPORTS TEHRAN — The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Disciplinary and Ethics Committee dismissed a protest lodged by Al Nassr of Saudi Arabia in connection with the Semi-final match of the AFC Champions League (West) pursuant to Article 59 of the AFC Champions League 2020 Competition Regulations.

The AFC will not make any further comment on the matter. Al Nassr had filed a complaint with AFC over what it called "obvious violations of the International Football Federation's (FIFA) regulations by Iran's Persepolis."

Al Nassr Club had claimed that Persepolis football club committed blatant violations of FIFA rules by using "several illegal players" in their squad during the AFC's championship semifinal.

Persepolis denied any wrongdoing or violations of international rules.

In the AFC's championship semifinal in an empty stadium in Doha, Qatar on Saturday, Persepolis drew 1-1 with Al Nassr after 120 minutes of breathtaking game.

Ultimately, Persepolis won 3-5 in penalty shootouts.

The Iranian side, crowned as the West Asian champions, will face the East Asian champions in the final match on December 19.

Iran beat Uzbekistan in friendly

SPORTS TEHRAN — Iran national football team defeated Uzbekistan 2-1 in a friendly match on Thursday.

Sardar Azmoun gave the visiting team the lead in the 43rd minute at the Paxtakor Markaziy Stadion in Tashkent.

Five minutes into the second half, Mehdi Taremi was brought down in the Uzbekistan area and converted his penalty to give Iran a 2-0 lead.

Uzbekistan forward Eldor Shomurodov halved the deficit just two minutes later with a shot from outside the box.

It was Dragan Skocic's first match in charge as Iran coach.

Iran will play Mali in Antalya, Turkey on Oct. 13.

Iran prepare for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers, where the 'Persian leopards' sit third in Group C behind Iraq and Bahrain.

The 2022 World Cup qualifiers scheduled this year were postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Uzbekistan a good test for us: Dragan Skocic

SPORTS TEHRAN — Iran national football team coach Dragan Skocic believes that they have benefited from playing Uzbekistan in a friendly match.

Iran defeated Uzbekistan 2-1 in a warm-up match on Thursday in Tashkent as part of preparation for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers, where Iran sit third in Group C behind Iraq and Bahrain.

"First of all, I would like to congratulate my players due to their win in the match since it was not an easy win. Many of our players had played in the 2020 AFC Champions League and were exhausted but joined us to play against Uzbekistan," Skocic said.

"We had short time for preparation and participated just in one training session and found out there was problem in our team in the first half. So, we made six changes in the second half and I am satisfied with my substitutes," Skocic said.

"We could field some young players and I am sure that they can take a lot of positives from the game. Uzbekistan are a strong team and it was a good test for us," the Croat added.

"It was a friendly match and we will change our style in the official matches," Skocic concluded.

Iran will also play a warm-up match against Mali on Tuesday in Antalya, Turkey.

Rouzbeh Cheshmi signs for Umm Salal

SPORTS TEHRAN — Qatar Stars League side Umm Salal have completed signing of Iranian defender Rouzbeh Cheshmi.

Cheshmi was part of Iran's Esteghlal in the 2020 AFC Champions League in Doha and didn't return to Tehran after his team's elimination from the campaign.

Cheshmi, who represented Iran nation football team in the 2018 FIFA World Cup, spent five years as Esteghlal player.

The 27-year-old center back has joined the Qatari club for a reported fee of \$900,000.

Mehdi Torabi handed Al Arabi No.99

SPORTS TEHRAN — Iranian international attacking midfielder Mehdi Torabi has been handed No.99 shirt at Qatari club Al Arabi.

The 26-year-old player reached an agreement with Al Arabi in early September but penned a contract with team on Oct. 9.

Torabi helped Persepolis win two Iran Professional League titles as well as a Hazfi Cup and a Super Cup.

He was part of Iran national football team at the 2018 FIFA World Cup and 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Senior Pakistani senator invites Iranian Parliament speaker to visit Islamabad

POLITICAL TEHRAN — During a meeting with Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan, Senator Mushahid Hussein Sayed, the chairman of Pakistan's Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, has invited Iran's Parliament speaker to pay a visit to Pakistan.

Hosseini and Sayed reiterated the need to strengthen cooperation and parliamentary

consultations between the parliaments of the two countries, according to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

The two sides also discussed the latest developments in Iran-Pakistan relations and bilateral cooperation.

Ambassador Hosseini expressed Iran's readiness to increase parliamentary cooperation with the "friendly and brotherly"

country of Pakistan.

For his part, Senator Sayed extended an invitation to the speaker of the Iranian parliament to visit Pakistan to strengthen the cooperation between Tehran and Islamabad.

According to IRNA, the two sides expressed satisfaction with the friendly and brotherly relations between Iran and Pakistan while holding talks to increase the regional and parliamentary

cooperation between the two countries.

Iran and Pakistan enjoy good relations and have sought to further boost their ties over the past years. Furthermore, Pakistan has made efforts to deescalate tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and the United States as well. To this end, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has undertaken shuttle diplomacy between the three countries.

Annual production of sturgeon meat expected to surge by March 2021

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran is anticipated to experience a surge in the annual production of sturgeon meat in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), according to the deputy head of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO).

Hossein Abdolhay put the country's sturgeon meat output at 2,500 tons in the past year.

Iranian Agriculture Minister Kazem Khavazi said last month that his ministry supports the cage culture plans.

The minister also said that the Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute helps those active in the implementation of these plans.

Referring to the request of the units active in the cage culture for the development of this sector, Khavazi said, "This sector was unknown in the country at the time of its establishment; related issues and the probable problems were unclear, but now we do not have any limitation for the development of this sector and entrance of new investors in this area."

Fishery production has increased noticeably in Iran in recent years.

IFO Head Nabiollah Khoum-Mirzaei has put the country's annual fishery output at 1.28 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), and said the figure is anticipated to reach 1.37 million tons in this year, and surpass 1.5 million tons in the next year.

Khoum-Mirzaei has announced that the country's fishery export stood at 146,000 tons worth \$538.9 million in the past Iranian year, while the import was 29,000 tons valued at \$98.9 million, so Iran's fishery trade balance was \$440 million in the previous year.

He has also said that 233,059 persons are currently working in the country's fishery sector.

Putting Iran's fishery output at 1.28 million tons in the past year, the official said it is while the planned figure was 1.25 million tons, and underscored that this amount of output was achieved despite the sanctions and related difficulties in the previous year.

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

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

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

"New markets including China, South Korea, and the Eurasian Union nations have opened up for Iranian fishery products in this year", Khoum-Mirzaei said at the time.

"Based on the negotiations and agreements signed between Iran and China by the minister of agriculture, the Chinese fishery market has been opened to Iranian products. The Eurasian nations and South Korean markets have also welcomed Iranian fishery products and have the potential for exports," the official explained.

According to the IFO Deputy Head Hossein Abdolhay, some 12 aquatic species are already bred in Iran and the figure is planned to reach 17 by the end of the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (March 2021).

CNG 80% more cost-efficient compared to gasoline

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The acting operator of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC)'s CNG projects said using Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as fuel in the public transportation fleet is going to save over 80 percent of the fuel costs compared to gasoline.

According to Mohammad-Hossein Bagheri, each cubic meter of CNG is equivalent to one liter of gasoline in the fuel basket of cars, and since the consumption of public transport vehicles is high, using CNG would be much more cost-efficient.



CNG prices are much lower than gasoline in Iran and while one cubic meter of CNG is about 4,530 rials, one liter of gasoline is 15,000 rials, which means gasoline is over three times more expensive than gas, Baqeri said.

Iranian Oil Ministry considers CNG as the national fuel, therefore, the ministry has it on the agenda to increase the share of this fuel in the country's energy basket.

Back in December 2019, NIORDC and Iran's state-owned Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to add new dual-fuel vehicles to the country's public transportation fleet.

The number of dual-fuel cars in Iran has increased to 3,908,604 vehicles following the implementation of the mentioned program to turn public vehicles into dual-fuel cars, according to the data released by National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC).

The MOU was aimed to add 1.46 million dual-fuel vehicles to the public transportation fleet, of which so far 25,000 cars have been converted.

Back in November 2019, Iran also started a program for the rationing of subsidized gasoline and increased fuel prices to reduce the energy subsidies and to use the revenue for supporting underprivileged families.

The implementation of the rationing plan has led to the reduction of gasoline consumption while promoting CNG consumption in the country.

Iran's CNG consumption stood at 19 mcm per day before the implementation of the fuel rationing scheme, however, in mid-September, an official with NIORDC announced that the daily consumption of CNG has reached 25 million cubic meters in Iran.

There are currently 2,495 CNG stations across Iran that supply 22 percent of the country's fuel basket.

Tire output rises 26% in six months on year

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Manufacturing of the tires of light agricultural machinery experienced a growth of 99 percent to stand at 2,560 tons, and that of the heavy ones rose 32 percent to stand at 9,219 tons.

Meanwhile, 2,914 tons of road building machinery tires were manufactured, with a 17-percent growth compared to the first six months of the past year.

The bicycle tire output stood at 986 tons, indicating 99 percent growth.

In early August, an official with Iran's Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry said that increasing the amount of investment making for the production of tire in the country is a necessity.

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

"Now the ground is properly prepared for the production of light and heavy vehicles tires in the country, and investment



making will play a significant role both for the establishment of new production units and for launching development projects", the official noted.

Having the annual production capacity

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

Ministry.

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

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

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

In a bid to nullify the U.S. sanctions, Iran is determined to strengthen its domestic production to achieve self-reliance.

Selecting the motto of "Pickup in Production" for the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020), and the slogan of "Surge in Production" for the current year indicates the Islamic Republic's determination to achieve this goal.

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

PSEEZ enjoys great potential for investment

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Managing Director of Pars Special Economic Energy Zone (PSEEZ) said great potentials have been created in the zone for investment making, Shana reported.

In a statement on the occasion of the zone's establishment anniversary, Iraj Khorramdel wrote: "Today, while most of the South Pars gas phases have been officially completed and put into operation, there is significant capacity for investment in the region."

"Pars Energy Special Economic Zone, as an energy hub on the Persian Gulf coast, is always proud to play its part in the efforts for achieving the ideals of the founder of the Islamic Republic," Khorramdel said in the statement.

"The energy and economic capital of the country, as one of the symbols of success after the revolution, has witnessed significant changes in the last two decades," the text read.



According to the official, proper planning, resource management and prioritization of development projects have

led to the maximum production of the South Pars gas field as one of the PSEEZ's missions.

Located in the port city of Assaluyeh, PSEEZ is home to several petrochemical complexes that receive gas and gas condensate feedstock from the giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

The zone is the hub of Iran's exports of major non-oil commodities that are gas condensate and petrochemicals. Back in August, Khorramdel had announced the establishment of a new research and technology center in the southwestern city of Assaluyeh, where the zone is based.

"Growth and technology centers are an important necessity for the country to achieve development, and this region is the best place to set up such a center due to its high capacities as well as the existence of upstream and downstream industries in the oil industry," Khorramdel said.

242m tons of goods transported across Iran in H1

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Some 242 million tons of goods were transported across Iran during the first six half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), data released by Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) showed.

Based on the data, over 49.3 million tons or 20 percent of the mentioned commodities were agricultural, livestock, and food products which was eight percent more than the figure for the same period in the previous year, IRNA reported.

As reported, a significant amount of the mentioned basic goods was transported from the country's ports.

The acceleration of freight transportation, especially in border terminals and ports, has become one of the RMTO's main priorities and the organization's workforce and staff are taking all the necessary measures to keep the distribution of goods afloat during the coronavirus outbreak.

Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami had recently announced that the transportation of goods from the ports

is a priority of his ministry because the volume of warehouse capacities in the ports is not enough and there is a concern that basic goods will be deposited to such an extent that their distribution would become difficult.

Back in May, Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Mohammad Rastad said 4.1 million tons of basic goods were stored at the country's ports, waiting to be distributed across the country.

According to the official, over 14.3 million tons of basic goods were loaded and unloaded in the country's ports, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to May 10, 35 percent less than the figure for the last year's same period.

Currently, more than 90 percent of the country's freight and passenger transportation is carried out through roads, and 1.5 million people work in this sector.

Nearly 450 million tons of cargo is transported annually in the country by 340,000 trucks, while another 250 million tons is also transported by mini-trucks to shorter distances across the country, according to Deputy Transport Minister Abdolhashem Hassan-Nia.

Iran, Afghanistan discuss completion of Khaf-Herat railway

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami and his Afghan counterpart Mohammad Yama Shams discussed the details of completion and the inauguration of Khaf-Herat railway project.

In the meeting, which was held through video conference on Wednesday, the officials discussed several issues including the inauguration of the project, the financial issues, insurance services, manpower training, freight and passenger transportation, customs, technical and security issues, etc., the portal of Iran's Transport Ministry reported.

Speaking in the meeting, Eslami stressed the need to pay attention to the details and various aspects of the contracts for the operation of the Khaf-Herat railway, and said: "High goals can be established for this railway line."

"The work is not done with the construction and operation of this railway line... it is the starting point and the cornerstone for the development of strategic relations between the two friendly and neighboring nations," Eslami said.

Khaf-Herat railway which is part of the

Iran-Afghanistan rail corridor connects Iran's eastern city of Khaf to Afghanistan's western city of Ghoryan.

The construction of the 193-kilometer-long railway, which is underway in four parts began in 2007.

In a meeting with Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammad Hanef Atmar in Tehran on June 22, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said that the third section of Khaf-Herat railway project which connects the rail networks of Iran and Afghanistan will come on stream in the third quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (September 22-December 20).

In early July, Iranian and Afghan officials held a committee meeting to investigate the ways to complete Khaf-Herat railway.

Afghan official with Herat Governor's Office Jilani Farhad told IRNA that the joint committee was set up following the emphasis of the Afghan president to accelerate construction and completion of the project considering its significance to improve transit between Iran and Afghanistan.

Two parts of the railway (77 km), which is located in Iran, has been completed a long time ago but the two other parts (116 km), on the Afghan soil, are yet to be worked out.

Intl. water, electricity exhibits postponed due to coronavirus pandemic

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The 20th Iran International Electricity Exhibition (IEE 2020) and the 16th International Water and Wastewater Exhibition which were scheduled to be held at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds during October 29-November 1, are postponed due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

As IRNA reported, the new schedule for the mentioned exhibition will be announced in the near future.

Iran's International Water and Wastewater Exhibition, and the IEE exhibition, as the largest industrial and commercial events in Iran in their sectors, are held annually with the presence of a large number of capable domestic

and foreign companies in the field of electricity, as well as water and wastewater industries.

The exhibitions are a great opportunity for companies active in these industries, to showcase their achievements and products to the experts and people involved in the mentioned fields, and to direct their future activities and innovations by considering the market demand trends and the direction of growth of this industry.

Iran had previously postponed its famous Oil Show 2020 which was due to be held at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds during October 12-15, as the coronavirus outbreak grew once again in the capital Tehran.



TEDPIX up 2.5% in a week

ECONOMY TEHRAN — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 2.5 percent to stand at 1.54 million points during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IRNA reported.

The indices of Bank Mellat, Tejarat Bank, Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Company, Mobarakeh Steel Company, National Iranian Copper Industry Company, Ghadir Investment Company, Isfahan Oil Refinery, and Iranian Investment Petrochemical Group Company (IIPGC) were the most traded indices during the past week.

TEDPIX had dropped seven percent in the week ended on October 2.

Since the week ended on August 14, the TSE, which is Iran's major stock exchange,



witnessed drop of its main index every week, except for the week ended on September 18.

The index dropped 5.7 percent in the week ended on September 25, and four percent in the week ended on September 11, 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 five weeks.

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

Last week, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjpasand said that the government is going to continue implementing

development programs to help flourishing the capital market.

"The stock market situation is not measured only by the fluctuations of its index. The Iranian stock exchange is in the process of becoming a modern stock market," Dejjpasand said.

The Tehran Stock Exchange's main index has dropped nearly 600,000 points in less than two months and the shares of some companies have faced a loss of up to 70 percent.

Factors like the increase in the number of members, the growth of the value of transactions, and the expansion of instruments are also indicators of a deepening and growing trend in the market and the index should not be the only factor for evaluating a market, the minister said.

Arbaeen: To become more than the objects of tyrants' desire

Since the dawn of time Men have yearned to live free and sovereign ... for many, such freedom warrants the ultimate sacrifice: death. Such tales have populated our history books. However none has been more potent than that of Karbala. Maybe simply because there lies all of our tales, all of our struggles, all of our hopes of redemption and belief that should we be one day asked to do what is right we would.

Karbala and its commemorative pilgrimage are more than just tragic bravery before unjust tyranny. Karbala I have come to understand lately is not about martyrdom, but an understanding that we exist beyond ourselves, beyond the limitations we teach ourselves for we fear to think ourselves more than the objects of tyrants' desire.

Arbaeen is the one Story which, beyond all cultural difference and belief systems, speaks to us, and moves us all. Arbaeen encompasses so many archetypes, it echoes so much of our struggles and pretty much speaks of the very essence of our humanity. How we can in the same breath prove capable of the most noble of deeds and yet fall prey to the very worst of our nature.

If the Arbaeen Pilgrimage lies central to Shia Islam's faith and tenets, I have come to believe that it belongs to no one and should be shared with everyone. One needs not be religious to treasure its lessons or see beauty in the millions, who, every year come together to commemorate. It is rather humbling actually to witness how so many different communities successfully congregate to share in a moment of quiet unity.

If I could summarize the whole experience in a few words I would say that it still follows me - a spiritual haunting of sort to remind me that I am a lot more than my circumstances. I am my choices!

I think the message of the Arbaeen has always been the same, that before tyranny ought to resist. And yet I would argue that it is not an allegory of martyrdom. And though for a time I did think that martyrdom was in fact central to Karbala and Arbaeen I think that my visit to Iraq made me look at it from a perspective. Yes there was immense suffering and yes many brave men, women and children were



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martyred, but it is not their death which is mourned rather the ideals and morals they lived for, embodied, and defended to the bitter end. There is inspiration to be drawn from that.

It is also obviously a beautiful exercise

in tolerance, compassion and generosity. Iraqis have made a point to open up their land and their homes to cater to pilgrims' needs. I don't think that there is anything quite like it in the world today.

Well, evidently things are very different

Today I will say that beyond such organized silence, beyond this battle of ideologies and a call from Shiites to be seen and recognized lies Shia Islam's responsibility to take on that mantel.

this year. Many people have chosen to stay away for fear of contracting the virus and spreading it to their respective communities and families; but then others have decided to pay little heed to the pandemic to attend anyway. It is hard to say which is better. It very much depends on one's perspective and understanding of the disease.

Personally I think it could be a health gamble to many with Iraq at a time when state institutions and resources have been under a great deal of pressure. But then many will argue that faith and their need to worship by far outweigh the risks at hands.

I guess we will see. But in any case I don't think that geographical proximity is necessary to feel part of this greater whole which is the Arbaeen Pilgrimage. Whether from home or in Karbala, people can still experience a sense of communion.

I would never be as bold as to advise people on what they ought to do this year. I am not a doctor and the knowledge I have of the virus is that gained from the media. Needless to say that it amounts to very little ...

The last point is functions of mainstream media in Arbaeen coverage. If I intended to talk about this a few years ago, I would have told that such media silence speaks of the prejudice and bias both the Western world and Sunni Islam harbour against Shia Islam. I would have told you about Wahhabism and its war against all those who chose to defy its tenets and how for centuries Shiites have embodied all which Wahhabism wishes to destroy.

Today I will say that beyond such organized silence, beyond this battle of ideologies and a call from Shiites to be seen and recognized lies Shia Islam's responsibility to take on that mantel.

To sit in victimhood waiting for vindication only serves our nihilistic tendencies. The Onus is on Shia Islam and its people to speak of their faith, their culture and their beliefs.

It is not so much that the world ought to pay attention but rather that the world be given a reason to pay attention. I think the lack of awareness is a reflection of a collective failure to connect. This is not meant as a criticism, merely an observation.

Professor doubtful a Biden administration could undo the damage caused by Trump

By Mohammad Mazhari

TEHRAN — An American professor of politics is doubtful that a Joe Biden administration would be able to “undo the damage” caused by four years of Donald Trump's presidency.

Lipschutz, also a president and co-director of Sustainable Systems Research Foundation, says “a Biden administration will try to ‘reset’ foreign policy to where it was in 2017 and continue from there.”

Professor Ronnie Lipschutz tells the Tehran Times that “a Biden administration will try to ‘reset’ foreign policy to where it was in 2017 and continue from there.”

Lipschutz, who is also a president and co-director of Sustainable Systems Research Foundation, also says “there are plenty of Democratic Iran hawks who support sanctions and pressure of some sort.”

The following is the text of the interview:

■ Why do Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region try to reach an agreement with Israel at such a time?

A: It would appear that the normalization of relations between Israel and Sunni Arab countries represents an effort to address the balance of power in the Middle East (West Asia) and create an anti-Shi'a/anti-Iran coalition with nuclear weapons. Until now, Israel's strategies towards Iran and other Shi'a forces and allies were largely “go-it-alone”; now Israel can begin to legitimate its strategies and practices as having regional significance. In all of this, the Palestinians are expendable. Sunni governments are more interested in their own survival.

■ Is the U.S. serious in its decision to reduce its forces in West Asia (Middle East)? Does Israel's normalization

“I don't see his policies (Trump's policies) or U.S. policies more generally as having had much effect on Iran.”



deal with certain Persian Gulf Arab states help the process?

A: For the past 60 years (at least), the United States has tacitly offered a “nuclear umbrella” to its Middle East (West Asian) allies (Israel & Arabs), especially during the Cold War. Israel's nuclear weapons were deployed for the sole purpose of deterring an attack on Israel. Now, the Israel nuclear force becomes a nuclear umbrella for the Sunni countries--which should also limit their efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. Whether this represents an intention to reduce the U.S. presence in the region is less clear, although the Trump administration clearly wants to reduce boots on the ground. There are still U.S. air and naval forces deployed around the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, but planes and ships don't vote. Also, under Trump, the United States is losing interest in Persian Gulf oil and its European allies.

■ It is possible that Trump take a military adventure in the Middle East (West Asia) to promote his chances in the upcoming elections?

A: No. If there is a “military adventure,” I would expect it to be elsewhere. But I can't imagine the Pentagon going along at this point.

■ The Trump administration says it has activated a “snapback” mechanism to return the UN sanctions on Iran. Do you think it has a legal standing to do so?

A: The United States could do this unilaterally and put economic pressure on other countries, but I'm doubtful Russia or China would go along. I don't think Trump really understands what snapback involves; to him, sanctions are tools for domestic political gain.

■ What have been the achievements of Donald Trump's “maximum pressure” strategy against Iran?

A: Obviously, his policies have put great strain on Iran and its people by denying access to various goods and vital necessities. But I don't see his policies (such as they are) or U.S. policies more generally as having had much effect on Iran. The JCPOA was largely an effort to kick the can down the road and hope Iran would decide not to pursue nuclear weapons research and development.

But it was the product of consultation and negotiation, which is far better than maximum pressure. Given what I suggest above, the whole thing may become moot if the anti-Iran coalition starts to wane nuclear threats.

■ Would a Biden victory lead to an immediate change in U.S. foreign policy?

A: Unlikely. A Biden administration would spend months or more reviewing the situation and whether to restore the status quo ante-Trump. But don't forget that there are plenty of Democratic Iran hawks who support sanctions and pressure of some sort. A Biden administration will try to “reset” foreign policy to where it was in 2017 and continue from there. Could it undo the damage of four years of Trump? And why should anyone trust the United States, anyway?

“The United States is losing interest in Persian Gulf oil and its European allies.”

Russia slams EU for “acting as judge, jury” in Navalny case

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has slammed the European Union (EU) for “acting as judge and jury” in the case of Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny, who is alleged to have been poisoned.

Speaking at a press conference with his Danish counterpart in Moscow on Friday, Lavrov said the EU had failed to provide Moscow with vital information that would allow it to investigate the allegations that Navalny was poisoned.

He said Germany's failure to share that information with Russia constituted a breach of its international obligations.

Russia's top diplomat said that relations between Moscow and Brussels were rapidly deteriorating over the case.

He made the remarks in response to a question about possible EU sanctions against Moscow in relation to the allegations of poisoning.

Navalny, 44, collapsed during a domestic Russian flight on August 20 and was taken to a local hospital before being airlifted to Germany on August 22. Navalny's aides claimed he had been poisoned after drinking a water bottle at a hotel before the flight.

On September 2, Germany said the Russian opposition figure had been poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent. But the Russian doctors who tested his blood for poisoning before he was moved to Germany said the tests were negative.

Western governments have been attacking Russia with accusations that it poisoned Navalny, saying Moscow must help investigate the case or face the consequences.

Russian prosecutors have asked Germany to provide Navalny's medical records for a comparative study of his condition,



but Germany has refused to produce that information.

The Russian government has denied any involvement in Navalny's attack, who was discharged from Charite Hospital in Berlin more than two weeks ago.

In a joint statement on Wednesday,

Germany and France declared that they were submitting a proposal to European partners targeting individuals they deemed responsible for Navalny's alleged poisoning, as well as entities involved in Russia's Novichok program.

The joint statement came a day after the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) claimed the presence of a substance similar to Novichok in Navalny's blood, a move denounced by Moscow as the continuation of “pre-planned conspiracy.”

OPCW experts had taken samples from Navalny in mid-September to examine whether traces of Novichok could be found in his blood. Moscow had said at the time that it had no doubt that the OPCW would confirm the allegations that Navalny was poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent, given the body's bias against Russia.

FBI busts militia ‘plot’ to abduct Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer

The FBI says it has thwarted a plot to abduct and overthrow Michigan's Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

Mrs. Whitmer has become a target for coronavirus sceptics after enacting strict measures that were overturned by a judge last week.

Officials say the kidnapping plot involved six men who planned to hold a “treason trial” for her, BBC reported.

“Hatred, bigotry and violence have no place” in Michigan, Mrs Whitmer said, describing the accused as “depraved”.

■ **What were they allegedly planning?**

According to a sworn FBI affidavit, an undercover law enforcement source attended a June meeting in Dublin, Ohio, where a group of Michigan-based militia members discussed overthrowing state governments “that they believed were violating the U.S. Constitution”.

“Several members talked about murdering ‘tyrants’ or ‘taking’ a sitting governor,” the charging document states. In one video, a suspect denounced the state's role in deciding when to reopen gyms during the coronavirus lockdown.

The men met in a basement that was accessed by a trapdoor hidden under a rug, investigators say. Their phones were gathered and placed in another room to avoid secret recordings, but the undercover FBI source was wearing a separate recording device.

Thirteen people were arrested by investigators.

Six men - five from Michigan and one from Delaware - are accused in federal court of plotting the kidnap. They allegedly planned to hold a “treason trial” against Mrs Whitmer.

Nobel Peace Prize awarded to World Food Programme

The World Food Programme praised its staff after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, saying they “put their lives on the line every day.”

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director of the World Health Organization which had itself been a frontrunner for the award, praised the decision on Twitter.

“Huge admiration and respect for the life-saving work you do for people in need everywhere,” he wrote.

Tunisian actress Hend Sabry, an ambassador for the agency, wrote that the WFP “is mainly a web of wonderful people from all around the world, doing their best to fight hunger.”

EU urged to skip Saudi G20 summit over human rights violations

The European Parliament strongly urges the European Union to skip an upcoming Saudi-hosted virtual summit of the Group of 20 countries in light of Riyadh's human rights abuses.

On Thursday, the parliament voted overwhelmingly in favor of a relevant resolution that could prompt European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and President of the European Council Charles Michel to forgo the meeting that is slated for November, Deutsche Welle reported.

According to the legislature's website, the resolution was adopted with 413 votes in favor, 49 against, and 233 abstentions.

The measure ticked off a long list of Saudi abuses, including the violations that have been carried out during the 2015-present war by Riyadh and its allies against its southern neighbor Yemen. The war has killed tens of thousands of Yemenis and forced entire Yemen close to the brink of outright famine.

The resolution also made mention of the 2018 murder and dismemberment of prominent dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul.

Last month too, the parliament had called on the EU to impose an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia over the war on Yemen and Khashoggi's gruesome killing.

Baku, Yerevan confirm participation in Moscow consultations

Azerbaijan and Armenia have confirmed their foreign ministers' participation in the consultations scheduled to be held in Moscow on Friday; the preparations are underway, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told TASS.

“Baku and Yerevan have confirmed their participation in the Moscow consultations. Intense preparations are underway,” she noted, adding that the meeting would be held at the foreign ministers' level.

Renewed clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia erupted on September 27, with intense battles raging in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh. The area experienced flare-ups of violence in the summer of 2014, in April 2016 and this past July. Azerbaijan and Armenia have imposed martial law and launched mobilization efforts. Both parties to the conflict have reported casualties, among them civilians.

Resistance News

More than 1,000 worshipers perform Friday prayer at Al-Aqsa Mosque

INTERNATIONAL DESK TEHRAN— Around 1,200 worshipers performed Friday prayer at the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque while the Israeli police continued to prevent Palestinian citizens other than residents of the Old City from praying there under the pretext of the complete closure imposed due to the Jewish holidays and the measures of the corona pandemic.

For the third Friday in a row, the Israeli police forces closed the roads leading to the Old City and the Damascus Gate and prevented worshipers from other areas from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Israeli police forces also set up dozens of roadblocks, conducted extensive searches and checks on Palestinians' ID cards, and prevented them from reaching the holy Islamic site.

These Israeli violations forced citizens to perform Friday prayer far from the Al-Aqsa Mosque while the Israeli police issued dozens of fines against Jerusalemites in the Al-Misrara neighborhood for their insistence on holding prayers near the Damascus Gate.

Tehran, Caracas discuss ways to expand tourism ties

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran and Venezuela have explored avenues to deepen tourism relations, especially through simplifying visa rules, launching fam tours, and setting up exhibits.

Iranian Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan exchanged views with Venezuelan Minister for Tourism and Foreign Trade, Felix Plasencia, in a video conference on Thursday, reaching agreement to sign a memorandum of understanding in a bid to broaden bilateral ties.



Ali-Asghar Mounesan (R) joins an on-line discussion with his Venezuelan counterpart Felix Plasencia on October 8, 2020.

“The biggest problem is that the travel agencies of Iran and Venezuela are not familiar with the capacities of the two countries, Mounesan said, adding, “My suggestion is to hold B2B meetings with the presence of the agencies of the two sides on the sidelines of the signing of the memorandum, and in the continuation of this route, we will plan to hold introductory tours to introduce the capacities and attractions of the two nations.”

He said over 8.8 million foreign travelers arrived in the Islamic Republic during the past [Iranian calendar] year (March 2019-March 2020), so that the country was named the world's second fastest-growing tourist destination by the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Iran's earnings from tourism contributed \$11.8b to its gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019, Mounesan added.

Plasencia, for his part, said “Through exchanging experience, and signing a bilateral memorandum, we can strengthen tourism between the two countries based on our common strategies and goals.”

“Also, the cooperation of the private sector of the two countries can bring good results in this field.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mounesan said that Iran has previously waived visas for Omani and Chinese passport holders, adding that Iran and Venezuela can consider mutual visa simplification rules to deepen travel exchange.

“I will be arriving in Russia in the next few days to [sign an agreement] for waive visas for group travel tours.... and the same can be worked out between Tehran and Caracas.... I am sure that with the help of the ambassadors of the two countries and the introduction of the tourism capacities of the two, tourism between Iran and Venezuela will flourish.”

Rare postal stamps, envelopes and postcards on show at Mashhad museum

HERITAGE TEHRAN — An exhibition of rare postal stamps, envelopes and postcards from around the world has opened its doors to the public at the Astan Quds Razavi Museum in Mashhad, northeast Iran.



A wide collection of Iran's historical stamps and related objects along with hundreds of others issued in 240 countries and former colonies over the past 180 years are on show at the exhibit to mark the World Post Day, which is marked globally on October 9.

The Penny Black, the world's first adhesive postage stamp used in a public postal system, is one of the highlights of the exhibit.

According To Encyclopedia Iranica, both a utensil to indicate a paid postage fee on mail matters and a medium of official self-representation, stamps have been used in Iran since the 19th century. The introduction of postage stamps took place during the Qajar era in connection with the establishment of a modern postal system initiated by Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir and continued by Amin-al-Dawla.

The stamps of the Qajar era constitute a special case as the genuine stamp emissions are outnumbered by a great number of reprints and forgeries. For that reason, the early stamps of Iran form one of the most challenging collecting fields in philately.

Ilam province exports over \$1m of handicrafts to Iraq

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Various handicraft products worth around \$1.1 million have been exported to Iraq through the Mehran border, western Ilam province, during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20).

In addition to kilim, which is the most prominent handicraft of this province, wooden handicrafts, pottery, ceramics, traditional glassware, and traditional blankets called zilou, woolen rugs called Jajim, copper products, and felt were the main items exported to the neighboring country, provincial tourism chief Abdelmalek Shanbezadeh said.

Center for paleography established in Persepolis

TOURISM TEHRAN — A center for paleography and studying historical inscriptions has been launched in the UNESCO-registered site of Persepolis, southern Fars province.

Also known as Takht-e Jamshid, Persepolis was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC).

With the aim of continuing current studies and researches as well as obtaining important and effective information from the various historical eras, the center has been established, the director of the site Hamid Fadaei announced on Wednesday.

The most important cultural foundations of any civilization are languages, and the Achaemenid Empire is no exception to this rule, as the writing was one of the most important means of communication, issuing royal decrees and carrying out administrative affairs, the official added.

He also expressed hope that such researches in the field of historical



linguistics, inscriptions, and studies of historical manuscripts will lead to the unveiling of valuable information of the

historical era, while there are plenty of inscriptions and clay tablets in various languages from Aramaic to ancient Persian,

Elamite and Babylonian languages in different palaces of Persepolis.

Back in July, a documentation project was commenced on the inscriptions in Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam, aimed at documenting all the written works from the Achaemenid-era to the contemporary era, which are unique in terms of linguistics.

The experts expected that the documentation of the inscriptions would put the restoration projects of the sites on the right track and would help archeology studies and even the tourism in these areas.

The royal city of Persepolis, which ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art, was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as a revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

Iran definitely appeals to culture and taste of Turkish people, Turk photog, traveler says

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN — Turkish photographer Berke Arakli has said that Iran definitely appeals to the culture and taste of Turkish people when it comes to undiscovered beauties and tourism of the ancient land.

“Iranian people do care about their cultural legacy, which made me happy. This beautiful fact makes Iran a hidden treasure or I'd say the land of undiscovered beauty for professional photographers,” he told the Tehran Times in an e-mail interview in late September.

Arakli traveled to Iran for the first time in summer 2019, visited 27 cities in 47 days, of which Isfahan, Mashhad, and Shiraz were his favorites.

“Although I had made researches about Iran before hitting the road, there were many unexpected things which made me cheerful, especially the hospitality, culture and the architecture which fascinated me in the purest way, and the cities which each were incomparably beautiful in their own ways,” he explained.

He visited the country during Muharram, when Iranians, who are mostly Shia Muslims, hold special ceremonies during the first ten days of the lunar month to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and his 72 loyal companions.

“Ashura rituals in Iran are one of the most magnificent events, which I found amazing. Photographers could plan their trips to Iran according to that, which would help them to take awesome photos and see interesting things for sure.”

As two neighboring countries with a rich history in architecture and Islamic arts, Iran and Turkey have common

cultural habits; both are also top tourist destinations in the region.

“I fell in love with Iranian architecture. Their passion for art surely impresses me, while I felt the murals across the country refreshes the air they breathe. Iranian people are definitely the most hospitable people who live on earth. Also about Iranian music, I'm a big admirer of Homayoun Shajarian.”

Traveling to some other countries including Georgia and Azerbaijan for work, Arakli found Iran “better than expected in absolutely every single aspect.”

“I am absolutely sure that the tourists from Turkey will love this place. Especially the architecture and ambiance of mosques are fascinating. Iran definitely appeals to the culture and taste of Turkish people,” he said and added that Turkish people and Iranians are both in love for eating, “However the food was a little bit greasy for me, but the rice with saffron and Tabriz meatballs were tasty, while their fresh beverages were remarkably delicious.”

Noting that both nations are hospitable, he added that both countries are trying their best to adapt and preserve their costumes and cultural heritage.

“Iranian people were more truthful and cheerful than I've been told which I love and respect,” he mentioned.

Born in Istanbul, the 23-year-old photographer took his first steps in photography when he was 10. He started his career as an amateur photographer and now he is working with Skyroad Magazine, a Turkish monthly travel magazine.

“My photos of Iran were well received, absolutely much better than I have expected. I published interviews and papers. My photos got published in magazines and newspapers. I



came back with frames those carrying strong emotions and intriguing stories behind them.”

“Iran is a country that every person should see before their death. I would visit it again and again. Just go to Iran and stay as long as you can,” he concluded.

Anthropology museum opens in Masuleh

TOURISM TEHRAN — A Museum of anthropology was inaugurated in the tourist village of Masuleh, northern Gilan province, on Tuesday.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, deputy provincial tourism chief Vali Jahani, said that the museum displays objects and relics related to the culture of the people of Masuleh and its surroundings, some of which date back to four centuries ago.

The museum consists of three halls that showcase objects, weapons, artifacts, hunting, and agriculture tools made by the people of Masuleh over the centuries.

The history of Masuleh dates back to around one thousand years ago.

The city features earth-colored houses that are stacked photogenically on top of



one another like giant Lego blocks, clinging to a mountainside so steep that the roof of one house forms the pathway for the next.

In summer, local and foreign tourists swarm like ants across the village's rooftops and through its narrow passageways, according to the Lonely Planet.

Levelled by earthquake: restoration of giant UNESCO-tagged Bam Citadel 80% complete

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The overall restoration of the massive Bam Citadel, a massive mud-brick stronghold in southeast Iran, which was totally flattened by an earthquake in 2003, is now eighty percent complete.

“Some 80 percent of the reconstruction and rehabilitation work has been completed on Arg-e Bam (“Bam Citadel”) and the whole project is expected to be completed in about seven years,” IRNA quoted Mohsen Qasemi, a senior cultural heritage expert who leads the restoration project, as saying on Wednesday.

Bam and its Cultural Landscape is located on the southern edge of the Iranian high plateau in Kerman Province. It's highly regarded as an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement.



According to UNESCO, the origins of the citadel can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC) and even beyond. The ensemble was on crossroads of important trade routes as well in its heyday sometime between the 7th to 11th centuries.

Historical steam train ‘Mashin Doodi’ back on track in Tehran

TOURISM TEHRAN — Mashin Doodi, the first train that was put into operation in Iran, has been put on show on its main railway in the city of Rey, southern Tehran.

As the Qajar-era (1789–1925) locomotive could be considered as one of the tourist attractions of the region, it was decided to turn the historical locomotive, which was on the show on the entrance gate of Rey's subway station, back to its original railway,

Rey's cultural heritage department director Amir Mosayeb Rahimzadeh said on Thursday.

He also expressed hope that the locomotive and its railway will be added to the National Heritage list.

Parts of Mashin Doodi main railway were discovered during a construction project in Rey in 2018 and has undergone some rehabilitation works in recent months.

The restoration project aims at strengthening the rails and repairing and replacing



the worn traverses, which were built in 1883 during the rule of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (1848 – 1896).

Mashin Doodi, which means Smoking Machine, was Iran's first train operating between Tehran and Rey. The name was given by Iranian people because lots of steam and smoke came out of the train's exhaust.

Although the railroad was shut down in 1962, nowadays it is active in short distances as a tourist attraction in southern Tehran.

Khoranj: a village in northeast Iran

This renowned diplomat, painter and tourist was interested in archaeology. His record of historical discoveries includes the discovery of the tomb of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Achaemenid Empire. In 1820, he heard the story of Khoranj from an old man in Baghdad, which made him travel to Mahabad and then the Khoranj village.

Locals have legends about these rocks. Some attribute them to the story of the Prophet Lut. They say residents of the area committed a major sin (sodomy) at the time, and, suffered divine retribution whereby they themselves and their homes turned into rock. Some also believe the rocks were beasts who severely oppressed people, who, in turn, cursed them, and as a result, the beasts and their homes all turned into rock. There are other legends, too.

Sir Robert Ker Porter of Britain has, in his book, mentioned the legends about Khoranj.

In his book, Ker Porter says there are the remnants of a large city near a village called Khoranj. He says the area is covered with numerous humanoid pieces of rock, which bear traces of God Almighty's wrath and retribution. He says those people turned into rock for not having accepted the religion of Islam.

Iranian archaeologist Bahman Mirzakarimi also refers to this village in his travelogue. “In Kurdistan, we had heard stories about the legendary town of Khoranj everywhere. The town of Khoranj lies next to a mountain which is solid rock and not too high. However, very massive pieces of rock lie next to each other in a regular order as a queue of humans. More strange is that this natural mountain and the chambers and caves within along with the pieces of rock look like humans and their homes, which boggles the mind ...,” he writes.

Many archaeologists and tourists have travelled to this area and all of them have written statements about these rocks being so marvelous and impressive.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Only trust those who believe in Allah and are afraid of His questioning on the Day of Judgment.
Imam Hussein (AS)

Valladolid festival picks "The Wasteland", "180° Rule"

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — Iranian films "The Wasteland" by Ahmad Bahrami and "180° Rule" by Farnush Samadi will be competing in the 65th Valladolid International Film Festival running in the Spanish city from October 24 to 31.

"The Wasteland", which is an entry to the official section, is about an old brick manufacturing factory that is going to be shut down, and all that matters to the factory supervisor is to keep his lover unharmed.



A scene from "The Wasteland" by Ahmad Bahrami.

The film won the Orizzonti award for best film at the 77th Venice Film Festival in September, while it also received the Fai Persona Lavoro Ambiente Foundation Award of the festival.

Other films in the official sections include "It Snows in Benidorm" by Isabel Coixet from Spain, "The Disciple" by Chaitanya Tamhane from India, "Josep" by Aurel from France, Spain and Belgium, and "Nowhere Special" by Uberto Pasolini from Italy and Romania.

"180° Rule" will be screened in the Meeting Point section. The movie features a tragedy that strikes at the heart of a wedding in the mountains overlooking Tehran.

In "180° Rule", a teacher from Tehran makes a choice that changes her family's structure and puts her on a painful path to atonement.

Actress Sahar Dowlatshahi gives an extraordinary performance emphasizing the violence of the patriarchal strictures endured by mothers. Her silence speaks volumes and its impact is devastating.

The film's title is a cinematic principle for maintaining a spatial balance between two characters on the screen.

"The Best Is Yet to Come" by Jing Wang from China, "Eeb Allay Ooo" by Prateek Vats from India and "This Is My Desire" by Arie Esiri and Chuko Esiri from Nigeria are among other films competing in the Meeting Point section.

IRIB to review Majid Majidi's movies

TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) Channel 5 will be honoring the world-famous Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi by reviewing some of his films.

The collection that includes "Beyond the Clouds", "Baran", "Father", "The Color of Paradise", "Swimming in Winter", "Shooting" and "Up to the Visit" will be broadcasted for one week beginning on Saturday night.



A scene from "The Color of Paradise" by Majidi Majidi.

"Beyond the Clouds" tells the story of a young boy, Amir, and his sister, Tara, in Mumbai. While on the run from the cops, Amir finds his estranged sister, who lands in jail in a bid to protect her brother. Their entire lives are clouded by despair when, unexpectedly, the light shines on them from beyond the clouds.

"Father" depicts a young adult who moves to a town in the southern region of the country to make a living for his family after his father dies.

"Color of Paradise" depicts a visually-impaired boy who returns home to spend his holiday.

"Baran" shows how a little Afghan girl disguises herself in boys' clothing so she can go to work in place of her father who has been injured on the job.

Vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian to lay to rest in Ferdowsi mausoleum

By Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi Sabet

TEHRAN — Legendary vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian was transferred to the northeastern Iranian town of Tus on Friday to be buried in the mausoleum of the epic Persian poet Ferdowsi on Saturday.

Known as Iran's king of song who once called himself the "son of Iran", he died on Thursday at 80 at Tehran's Jam Hospital years after suffering from kidney cancer.

His death came as a great shock to his fans and the Iranian music community, a large group of which took to the streets near the hospital to mourn for the maestro.

His son, Humayun, appeared in the crowd in front of the hospital on Thursday night announcing that the funeral prayer for his father would be done in Tehran's Behesht Zahra Cemetery and he would be buried in Tus.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, he said, "I can neither ask you to attend nor not to attend the funeral."

However, a large number of people attended the funeral prayer in Tehran's Behesht Zahra Cemetery on Friday.

"I will never believe that father has gone," Humayun said after the prayer and added, "When I stand beside his coffin it is as if I've stood beside the grave of Molana [Rumi], because he is like Molana for me."

Social media exploded with messages from his fans, colleagues and cultural officials.

In his Instagram post, four-time Grammy Award nominee Kayhan Kalhor wrote, "The soul left the body of song."

In a video, legendary vocalist Shahram Nazeri sang part of Shajarian's hit "Morghe Sahar" and said, "Mohammadreza Shajarian is unforgettable, he is eternal and his memory lives on forever."

On its Twitter, the United Nations office in Tehran, wrote, "We are deeply saddened by the loss of Maestro Mohammadreza Shajarian. The UN Iran Family extends its deepest condolences to Mr. Shajarian's family and fans from Iran and all over the world."

President Hassan Rouhani also sent a message of condolences.

"The passing of the famous Iranian singer and artist Mohammadreza Shajarian caused a great deal of grief and sorrow," he said.

"This prominent artistic figure, and creator of the most enduring, pleasant melodies of Iran, and singer of the Rabbana track left a valuable and attractive legacy with his artistic taste and great efforts," he added.

Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi was also among the officials who expressed sympathy with Shajarian's family and fans.

Was Shajarian against the Islamic Republic?

After Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's victory in the presidential election in 2009, Shajarian adopted a tough stance on Ahmadinejad. His criticism of the president was viewed by some people as enmity to the Islamic Republic as a whole.

However, in an interview conducted by the Persian daily Iran at that time, Shajarian denied this view and said his criticism centered on Ahmadinejad and not the whole government.

Shajarian, Iran

It was deeply shocking for his fans and the Iranian music community when the icon of Persian traditional music appeared in a video in the early days of Noruz, the celebration of the Iranian New Year celebration, in March 2016, wishing a happy New Year for Iranians and announcing that he was suffering from chronic kidney cancer.

The two-time Grammy Award nominee called the disease "a 15-year-old guest" that is "friendly" with him and added that he would soon return to the stage, a dream that would never come true.

He soon left the country for Sacramento, California to receive treatment for the disease and returned home in September that year to resume his medical treatment in the country.

His fans were shocked several times over the past few years each time they heard that their beloved, highly popular artist was

admitted to the hospital. In post-revolution Iran, no other artist could capture the hearts and souls of his people as much as him.

His popularity was not just limited to his art. His strong affinity with the people over the course of his lifetime made Shajarian their beloved artist. He was never once apathetic about the pain and suffering they went through.



Vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian in an undated photo.

For example, shortly after the devastating 2003 earthquake in Bam, Kerman Province, which claimed tens of thousands of lives and flattened the town, Shajarian and his group, composed of his son Homayun, tar virtuoso Hossein Alizadeh and kamacheh master Kayhan Kalhor, organized benefit concerts titled "Compassion for Bam" to raise funds for the victims of the disaster.

The Bam Art Garden was born out of the rubble of the earthquake based on an initiative from Shajarian and his friends.

"I was like a drop that fell from the cloud, heading to the sea," Shajarian once said during a celebration to mark his 73rd birthday in September 2013 organized by his friends and a number of Iranian art elites, including vocalist Shahram Nazeri, filmmaker Masud Kimiai and writer Javad Mojabbi.

"For me, the people of Iran and the world are the sea. And from childhood, I learned from my parents to share my happiness with others... I follow the way that people are going and the people are my most important asset. Today, many people live inside me and I live for them. Because I believe that life finds its mean with 'you,' therefore, I have tried to do my art for humans and humanity.

"We should first abandon our evil ways and wickedness to enable ourselves to live with others and hold meetings with them; meetings with others have always been important for me and I have tried to ignore my personal pride for the sake of national pride and culture.

"Life is difficult when we are under others' steady gaze and spotlights, but today, the present the people give us is for having always loved them; I have tried to share my happiness with others and have regard for their concerns."

Born in the religious city of Mashhad, Shajarian began his vocal career from childhood with his father who taught him Quran recitation. His recitations of the Holy Quran were aired by Mashhad Radio when he was only 12.

At the same time, he was also pursuing a career in vocal music.

In his early twenties, he left his hometown to pursue his singing career in Tehran. His father wanted him to respect his family's

reputation for their affinity with religious figures, so his singing was aired by Tehran Radio under the alias Siavash Bidgani.

Tar virtuoso Ahmad Ebadi, who was one of Shajarian's close friends, met his father later, convincing him to allow Shajarian to sing using his true name.

His collaborations with Golha, a professional music program of

trend was highly inspiring for his pupils, helping save these unique systems.

In the 1980s, he pursued a teaching career in music courses, one of the outcomes of which was that his son, Homayun, is now a popular vocalist of the new generation.

His collaboration with Aref, which was led by eminent composer and santur virtuoso Parviz Meshkati, resulted in the creation

Tehran Radio that had many top musicians, in 1972 opened a window of opportunity for Shajarian. He started a friendship with many elites of Persian traditional music who played a key role in the development of his virtuosity.

As he was completing his education with the top maestros such as Framarza Payvar, Nurali Khan Borumand and Abdollah Davami, he also pursued his Quran recitations professionally. In 1978, he finished first in Iran's nationwide Quran competition. In summer 1979, he took second place in the recitation category of a Malaysian Quran contest.

He split from Golha, and consequently, radio in early 1978. "At that time, the program was not in harmony with my feelings. I felt that the radio's policy was being made by cabarets and cultural triviality."

His friends in the Sheida and Aref music ensembles also separated from the radio in protest at the killing of demonstrators on Black Friday on 8 September 1979. They teamed up to produce some protest songs, which were released in album series named Chavosh.

The epic song "Sepideh" ("Dawn") composed by Mohammadreza Lotfi with a poem by their close friend Hushang Ebtehaj, who is also known by his pseudonym "Sayeh", became a smash hit that Shajarian performed with the Sheida ensemble at National University in Tehran in 1980. "In Memory of Aref" and "The Soul of the Beloved" were among the albums Sheida recorded with Shajarian.

In 1980, a recitation of an invocation, known as "Shajarian's Rabbana", that he improvised for his students was recorded at Iran's national radio. The divine recitation, which is composed of four verses of the Holy Quran, opens with a prelude featuring verses of a mesmerizing Rumi poem promoting the fast during Ramadan.

In 2017, the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization registered "Rabbana" on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

In his works, he began to perform in dastaghs and gushes, the totality of melodies of the Persian traditional music system, which were sinking into oblivion at that time. This

of "Injustice", "At Presence of the Beloved", "The Dome of the Sky" and several other albums, which are considered an unparalleled treasury of Persian traditional music.

He worked with many musicians and finally in 2008, founded his own group Shahnaz named after his master and tar virtuoso Jalil Shahnaz. His daughter Mojgan and composer and tar virtuoso Majid Derakhshani were among the members of the ensemble, along with whom he embarked on a world tour in 2010, using his innovative instruments, including the sorahi, arghanun and barbad.

Shajarian was also quite agreeable to the innovations made by his son, Homayun, in the traditions of Persian song.

"Despite objections from those who are adherents of Persian traditional music, they [Homayun and his colleagues] are not in the least incorrect. However, they should beware of deviations. They should follow their own path based on the culture of their society; they should never go beyond due bounds in modernity, letting the next generation try their new items," he once said in an interview.

He was nominated for a Grammy Award in Best World Music 2004 and 2006, and was the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including a UNESCO Golden Picasso Medal in 1999. He was also decorated with France's Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in June 2014.

Shajarian was also known for his skills in Persian calligraphy, and showcased his works in several exhibitions.

Once in an interview, he called himself "son of Iran" and added, "My vice is among the ancient vices of Iranians who wanted to be remembered for the type of people they were; people of humanity, love, peace and purity."

"We have no other message for the world than that of friendship, love, life and happiness. And if we complain it is to rid ourselves of social problems so our people can live."

Shajarian married Farkhondeh Golafshan in 1961, but divorced her in 2000. He is survived by his widow, Katayun Khansari, and his sons Homayun, Farzaneh, Afshaneh and Mojgan from his first marriage, and Rayan, another son from his second marriage.

Tim Marshall's "Prisoners of Geography" appears in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of British author Tim Marshall's book "Prisoners of Geography, Ten Maps That Explain Everything about the World" has recently been published by Markaz Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Marjan Rezaei. In this New York Times bestseller, an award-winning journalist uses ten maps of crucial regions to explain the geo-political strategies of the world powers.

"Maps have a mysterious hold over us. Whether ancient, crumbling parchments or generated by Google, maps tell us things we want to know, not only about our current location or where we are going but about the world in general. And yet, when it comes to geo-politics, much of what we are told is generated by analysts and other experts who have neglected to refer to a map of the place in question," the book says.

All leaders of nations are constrained by geography. In "one of the best books about geopolitics" (The Evening Standard), now updated to include 2016 geopolitical developments, journalist Tim Marshall examines Russia, China, the U.S., Latin America, Africa, Europe, Japan, Korea, and Greenland



Front cover of the Persian translation of British author Tim Marshall's "Prisoners of Geography, Ten Maps That Explain Everything about the World".

and the Arctic, their weather, seas, mountains, rivers, deserts and borders, to provide a context often missing from our political reportage: how the physical characteristics of these

countries affect their strengths and vulnerabilities and the decisions made by their leaders.

Offering "a fresh way of looking at maps" to the readers, Marshall explains the complex geo-political strategies that shape the globe.

Why was the U.S. destined to become a global superpower? Why is Tibet destined to lose its autonomy? Why will Europe never be united? The answers are geographical. In an ever more complex, chaotic and interlinked world, "Prisoners of Geography" is a concise and useful primer on geopolitics and a critical guide to one of the major determining factors in world affairs.

Tim Marshall is a leading authority on foreign affairs with more than 30 years of reporting experience. He was a diplomatic editor at Sky News. He has reported from 40 countries and covered conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria. He is the author of five books including the no.1 Sunday Times bestseller "Prisoners of Geography", "Worth Dying For: The Power and Politics of Flags" and "Divided: Why We're Living in Age of Walls".