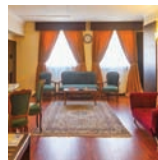




Muslims to never accept humiliation of compromising with Zionist regime **2**



FFIRI's Statutes on verge of being approved by FIFA **3**



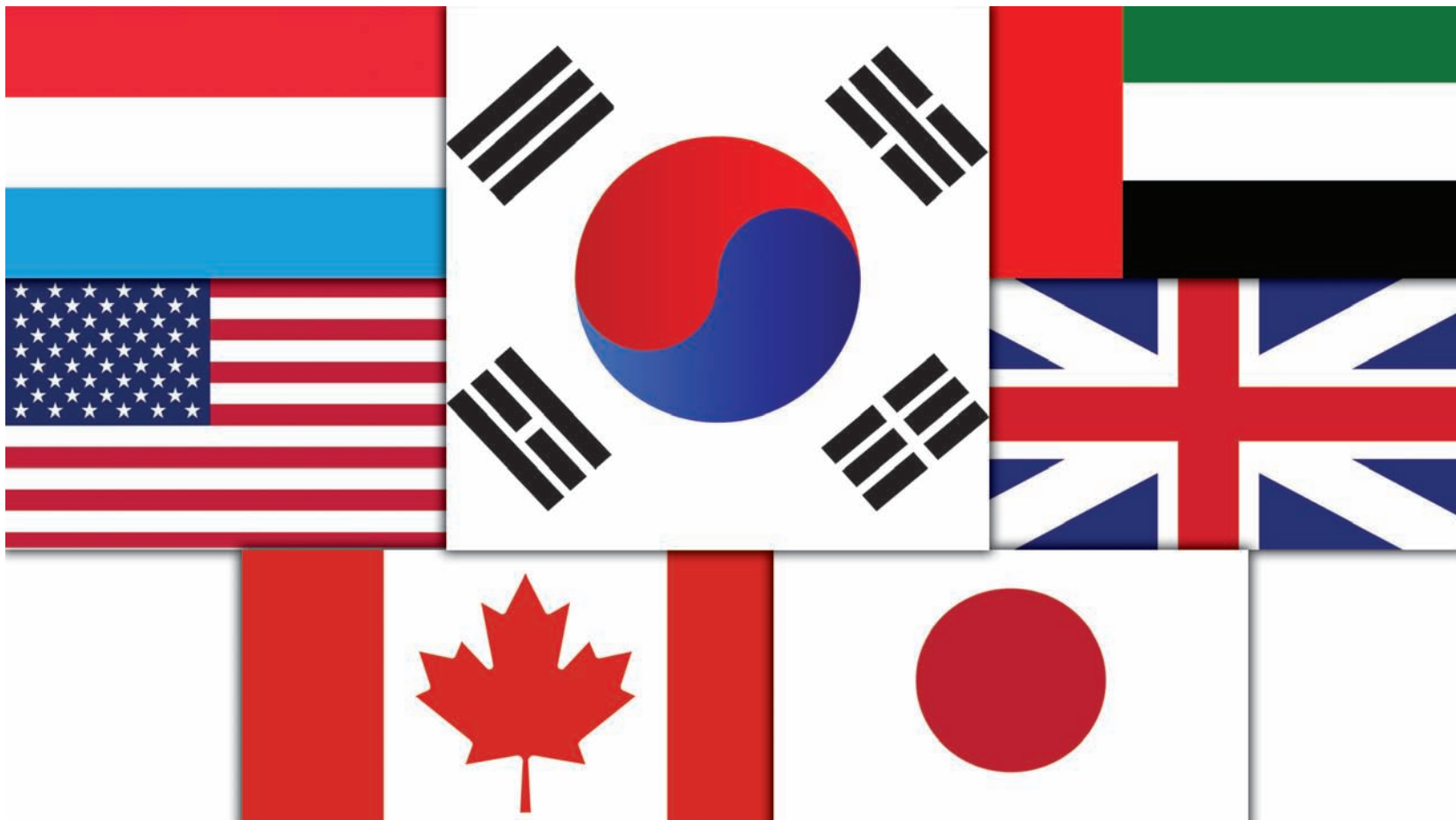
Hotels allowed to raise prices up to 30% **6**

The Tehran Times offers condolences on the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hassan Askari (AS)

Fly-by-night countries

Tehran Times analytical report on main countries that have frozen Iranian assets

See page 5



By Ebrahim Fallahi
Tehran Times journalist

Iran's daily gas refining capacity on verge of breaking 1bcm record

Despite all the external challenges like the coronavirus pandemic and the U.S. sanctions, the Iranian gas industry is developing at a fast pace and the country is passing new milestones in this industry every day.

Various sectors of Iran's gas industry including exploration, production, processing, and distribution are all among the world's top charts and the country is taking new steps to develop the industry even further.

Among the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s latest achievements the significant increase in the gas refining and processing capacity is one that has been under the spotlight in recent years.

With the new developments in the country's giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, and the increase in the gas production from this field, the Oil Ministry has been taking serious measures for the development of the country's gas refineries to process the extracted gas.

In line with the mentioned programs, this year, the daily processing capacity of Iranian gas refineries is planned to increase 10 percent following the inauguration of the processing units of phases 13, 22, and 24 of the South Pars field, an official with the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said.

"With the gas sweetening units of phases 13, 22 and 24 of South Pars going operational, the gas processing capacity in this complex will increase by 10 percent," Head of NIGC's Production Coordination and Supervision Directorate Masoud Zardovian said.

According to the official, considering the mentioned increase, the country's gas refining capacity will exceed one billion cubic meters per day.

The feedstock received by the refineries is almost the same as their processing capacity, he said.

Mentioning NIGC's complete readiness for sustainable gas supply throughout the country during winter, Zardovian said "With the steps taken in the country's gas refining sector, we will have no problem regarding the production of natural gas in the winter." **→4**

Expanding JCPOA on other issues is not productive: ex-UK ambassador to IAEA

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Peter Jenkins, the former UK ambassador to the IAEA, says Democratic presidential contender Joe Biden seems to be setting out a very ambitious agenda for negotiations with Iran if he wins the November 3 presidential elections which will not be productive.

"I can imagine Biden's approach yielding a revival of the JCPOA, if he can bring himself not to insist on unreasonable linkages, and subsequent negotiations on other issues – but I doubt that those subsequent negotiations will be productive, because I doubt that Iran has anything to gain from them," Jenkins tells the Tehran Times.

Jenkins also says some of Biden's advisors on Iran "seem to share the current U.S. administration's belief that Iran should engage in unilateral disarmament by reducing or eliminating its missile forces, and should cut or

scale back ties to friendly forces in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Writing an article on the CNN website on September 13, Joe Biden unveiled the details of his three-stage plan against Iran. In the first phase, there would be talks on reviving the nuclear deal, and in the later stages, issues of human rights, Iran's regional policy, and its missile program would be raised. That is, would the results of the talks on the nuclear deal be linked to Iran's regional policies and missile program?

A: Vice-President Biden seems to be setting out a very ambitious agenda for negotiations with Iran during a Biden Presidency. The degree of linkage between the various issues is not clear to me at this stage. It would be characteristic of the U.S. approach to international negotiation for Biden and his advisors on Iran to envisage a high degree of linkage. **→2**

Envoy highlights Iran's ownership of three Persian Gulf islands

TEHRAN — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has reiterated Iran's position that the three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs have always been part of Iran.

"Since the issue related to Iranian islands has been mentioned here, I have to say that Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs islands have always been part of Iran. These islands are Iranian and will remain so," Takht-Ravanchi said, IRNA reported.

He made the remarks at a virtual meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday.

It came after Secretary General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf claimed that the three islands have been "occupied" by Iran and Iran has to stand accountable at an international criminal court for the move.

Over the years, Iran has repeatedly declared its sovereignty over Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and

the Lesser Tunb in the Persian Gulf, and warned the UAE against making claims on the islands.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran does not take permission from anyone to do anything at its borders and territories on the three islands. The three islands of Iran in the Persian Gulf have undoubtedly always belonged to Iran, and these statements do not entitle anyone to any rights and do not affect the exercise of Iranian sovereignty," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on October 5. **→2**

Zarif calls on neighbors to choose peace over tension

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called on neighboring countries to choose peace, security, stability and prosperity for all instead of remaining prisoners of the past and perpetuate instability and tension in the region.

Zarif made the remarks in an address to a virtual debate of the United Nations Security Council under the title "Maintenance of International

Peace and Security: Comprehensive Review of the Situation in the Persian Gulf" on Tuesday.

Pointing to the Hormuz Peace Endeavor—or HOPE—that was proposed by President Rouhani in his address to the UN General Assembly last year, Zarif said Iran stands by that initiative which is the culmination of various Iranian proposals for security and confidence building in the Persian Gulf region. **→2**

TCCIMA to hold Iran-India online business forum next week

TEHRAN — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA) will hold an Iran-India online business forum on October 27.

The forum titled "Iran-India Trade Expansion, Challenges and Opportunities" will be held in collaboration with India's PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The event will be a platform for the B2B talks in the fields of medical and phar-

maceutical products, plastic, electrical appliances, home appliances, foodstuffs, chemical products, ceramic, weaving products, paint and resin, paper and cardboard, health products, and vehicles.

Economic and political relations between Iran and India date back to centuries ago and the two countries have kept their ties throughout many turbulences and ups and downs. **→4**

New book on moral principles of Commander Qassem Soleimani published

TEHRAN — A new book studying the moral principles of Commander Qassem Soleimani has recently been published by the University of Imam Hussein (AS) in Tehran.

Entitled "Let Us Be This Way: Principles of Soleimani's School", the book has been written by Mohammad-Baqer Babai.

IRGC Quds Force chief Soleimani was martyred during a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.

The book contains five chapters including a brief glance at the life of Soleimani, his school of thought and people's viewpoints about him. **→8**

U.S. protests: Teargas used on Portland protesters risks 'grave health hazards', says lawsuit

A new lawsuit filed by environmental and human rights groups in Oregon alleges that federal agencies' use of chemical crowd control weapons in Portland, like CS gas, has created "potentially grave health and environmental hazards", and that the use of such weapons should be subject to assessments of its environmental impact.

The complaint filed Tuesday by Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticide (NCAP), Willamette Riverkeeper, Cascadia Widlands, Neighbors for Clean Air (NCA), 350 Portland and the ACLU of Oregon names the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its Acting Secretary Chad Wolf as defendants. It seeks remedies for what it calls "months of sustained, repeated, high-volume use of teargas and other chemical munitions" in response to demonstrations in Portland, Guardian reported.

The suit, which if successful may open up a new way of limiting the use of such munitions by law

enforcement, cites the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), which it says "obligates Defendants to prepare an Environmental Assessment ("EA"), an Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS"), to adhere to its own emergency protocols".

In the complaint, the plaintiffs allege the DHS's use of gas weapons has been "so excessive and substantial that visible munitions residue and sediment have accumulated in and on Portland's streets, sidewalks, curbs, bioswales, stormwater system, buildings, standing water, and [have] been transported and conveyed to the Willamette River banks and waters".

The complaint cites EPA standards on airborne gases and human health, saying that there "is no level of CS gas exposure" that meets the EPA's "no effect" standard, or the definition for effects which are "not disabling and are transient and reversible", saying that exposure may increase the risks, for human and animals, of ailments including cancer, organ damage, serious eye damage and suffocation.

Iranian researchers produce nano-mask with 99.9% lethality to coronavirus

TEHRAN — Researchers at the Institute of Materials and Energy affiliated with the Ministry of Science, produced nano face masks that can kill coronavirus by 99.9 percent.

According to ISNA, Abuzar Masoudi, a faculty member of the Materials and Energy Research Institute, said that since the fibers of the fabric are hydrophilic. Therefore, the behavior of the virus is different, so different masks have been offered, including the FFP1 mask, which prevents up to 95 percent of the virus and up to 80 percent of the bacteria. While the N95 mask resists the virus up to 95 percent, and up to 100 percent of the bacteria. This is while sponge and cloth masks prevent up to 50 percent of bacteria from entering the body, and are not able to fight the virus.

According to Masoudi, this project is planned to enter the industrial production phase.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki said on Tuesday that Iran will start testing its homegrown coronavirus vaccine on humans in early November.

If the disease and the vaccine do not undergo fundamental changes and transformations, we have developed good methods for making the vaccine and informed the World Health Organization about this, he stated.

Ismael Ghaderifar, head of the center for strategic technologies development of the vice presidency of science and technology, has said that under sanctions in the most difficult conditions, Iran combatted the pandemic and knowledge-based companies could make the country independent. Moreover, they managed to produce pharmaceutical items required by the country's health system. **→7**



Iran launches large-scale electronic aerial drills

Iran's Armed Forces have launched large-scale aerial drills involving electronic warfare units and featuring the country's domestically-built air defense systems and equipment, Press TV reported.

Air defense divisions of the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) are participating in the joint aerial maneuvers, codenamed Modafean Aseman Velayat 99.

On the first day of the war games, the troops practiced a wide range of electronic warfare tactics. **→2**

Leader: Muslims to never accept humiliation of compromising with Zionist regime

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Muslim nations will never accept the humiliation of compromising with the Zionist regime, according to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

“If the US thinks they can solve the region’s problem in this way, they are wrong,” the Twitter account of the Leader, which is run by his office, wrote on Tuesday night.

“The status of any regime that negotiates with the usurping Zionist regime will be shaken before its nation,” it added.

Last month, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain signed controversial deals to normalize ties with Israel at the White House.

The agreements were signed between the Emirati and Bahraini foreign ministers, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, and Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. U.S. President Donald Trump also penned his blessing into the accords.

All Palestinian factions have censured the peace deal as a stab in the back of the oppressed nation. The agreement has also drawn angry reactions from Muslim countries and other supporters of the Palestinian cause against the Israeli occupation.

Iran has also condemned in the strongest terms the normalization deals between the two Arab countries and Israel. Following the normalization of ties between Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv, President Hassan Rouhani warned the UAE against giving Israel a foothold in the region.

“The rulers of the United Arab Emirates should know that they have gone in the wrong direction if they think that they can buy security for themselves by getting closer to the enemies of Islam and Iran,” the president said, warning that “unfortunately, the United Arab Emirates has made a big mistake and we hope it would change its wrong tack. We warn them against giving Israel a foothold in the region, then they will be treated differently.”

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said the move was just an election show for the U.S. president.

“This was a show, for God’s sake,” Zarif told Fareed Zakaria last month at a virtual event sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations. “We all know that the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have had relations with Israel for the past fifteen years.”

“So let’s not joke with each other. This was—this was just a photo op for President Trump to get his vote up in certain states where he was in trouble,” he said.

Zarif added that the agreements did not serve any other purpose, so “let’s not put more meat into something that didn’t have much meat other than a photo.”

Iranian embassy slams Riyadh for turning West Asia into powder keg

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – The Iranian embassy in Belgium has denounced Riyadh for turning West Asia into a powder keg through its purchases of American weapons.

“It is a bitter irony though that a country that spends billions of dollars on weapons tramps around and sheds crocodile tears over the termination of UN arms restriction on 18 October,” the embassy said in a post on its Twitter account on Tuesday.

“In fact, Saudi Arabia is among the largest military spenders in the world and has its hands soaked in innocent Yemeni blood. The enormous Saudi military expenditure in West Asia has turned the region into an arsenal ready to blow up,” it added.

Envoy highlights Iran’s ownership of three Persian Gulf islands

1 → He also condemned Israel for hatching plots against regional countries, saying, “The Zionist regime is in a low and is trying to drown everyone else while it is drowning. I hope that the Emirates and its current government will not be submerged by this regime.”

Opening his Tuesday remarks, Takht-Ravanchi said his “delegation did not intend to ask for the floor again. However, since some baseless allegations have been made against my country this morning which I categorically reject, I have no choice but to respond.”

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has played an incontestable role in ensuring energy security, commercial navigation and stability in the Persian Gulf region and we will continue to contribute to the promotion of peace and security in this sensitive region,” he pointed out.

The envoy also said Iran’s defensive requirements including its missile program stem from geostrategic calculations and a significant historical experience, adding that during Saddam Hussein’s eight-year aggression against Iran that was supported through different means by the U.S. and a number of PGCC countries, Iranian cities were showered by Iraqi missiles and Iranian people were fallen victim to chemical and other lethal weapons provided to Saddam mainly by the West.

“Simultaneously, unjust sanctions and restrictions deprived us of rudimentary means of self-defense. It is our responsibility now to prevent the recurrence of such appalling situation,” he stated.

“It should be borne in mind that security must originate from within and cannot be purchased from outside. Those in our region who spend hundreds of billions of dollars on sophisticated armaments annually should realize that huge military expenditures neither create legitimacy nor long-lasting security,” he added.

The Iranian ambassador warned that huge military expenditures have only turned the region into a powder keg and the only beneficiaries are the exporters of these deadly weapons.

Some PGCC forces are using these sophisticated armaments against the innocent people of Yemen who are experiencing the worst man-made humanitarian catastrophe of contemporary history, a clear case of war crime, he stated.

“There is a long list of internationally wrongful acts attributable to those who make unsubstantiated accusations against Iran,” the envoy said.

Nonetheless, he continued, “We are not here to delve into the past. Our first and foremost priority should be to build mutual trust and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and no interference in their internal affairs, and promote cooperation on an equal footing in order to create a better and safer region.”

Saving JCPOA harder than its 2015 conclusion: Iran’s Vaezi

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi says preserving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, is more difficult than its formation in 2015 due to the destructive measures taken by the Trump administration.

During a meeting with German Ambassador to Tehran Hans-Udo Muzel on Tuesday afternoon, Vaezi said Iran will abide by its obligations under the JCPOA if the other parties also abide by their obligations.

He also referred to Germany’s involvement in the nuclear talks, saying the JCPOA has been preserved until this moment due to the help of the remaining parties to the deal and the support of the international community.

The JCPOA, endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, was signed between Iran, the United States, Britain, Germany, France, the European Union, Russia, and China on July 14, 2015. However, U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the deal on May 8, 2018, and returned sanctions and imposed new harsh ones.



The sanctions are in line with the “maximum pressure” campaign that Trump imposed on Iran in 2018 after it withdrew from the JCPOA.

Meanwhile, in an official statement on

Sunday, Iran’s Foreign Ministry announced the termination of a UN arms embargo on Iran in defiance of the United States’ failed efforts to extend the embargo.

The U.S. had made tremendous efforts,

Zarif calls on neighbors to choose peace over tension Iran not intending to engage in arms race, says Zarif

1 → He said in the past couple of decades, the region has been the scene of several wars, massive foreign military buildups, ensuing nightmare of extremism and terrorism, dangerous accumulation of the most sophisticated weaponry, and aggression and power projection by various actors.

The foreign minister added, “The disparities in power, geographic size, and natural and human resources are very real. Historical anxieties and rivalries among many regional countries cannot be overlooked.”

He named three flawed prescriptions that have caused catastrophic consequences, saying, “First, that you can purchase security from others: Be it from Saddam Hussein invading Iran on some of our neighbor’s behalf; or from the U.S. coming to rescue our neighbors from the monster that they had together created; or through unprecedented purchase of military hardware.”

According to Zarif, the second flawed prescription is that “you can have security at the expense of the insecurity of your neighbors: Be it Iran, Kuwait or Qatar at one time or another.”

The third, he continued, is that “you can establish regional hegemony: Be it in Yemen, North Africa or the Horn of Africa.”

He condemned extra-regional actors for looking at the

regional disparities, unending rivalries, and new hegemonic illusions as opportunities to expand their military presence and to sell more weapons.

The U.S. has deployed nearly 50,000 troops in the Persian Gulf region in 29 military installations with more than 300 combat aircraft, he said, adding that the U.S. has “at least one aircraft carrier patrolling our waters at any given time, as well as tens of destroyers and other vessels with four Central Command Headquarters for its Army and its Special Forces, Air Force, and Navy.”

■ Iran not intending to engage in arms race, says Zarif

Zarif also voiced Tehran’s appreciation to the overwhelming majority of Security Council members for rejecting U.S. efforts to kill the JCPOA and Security Council Resolution 2231.

Iran does not intend to engage in an arms race in the region and start a buying spree in spite of the end of Security Council restrictions, the foreign minister highlighted.

Zarif called on regional countries to envisage a broad spectrum of cooperation and confidence-building measures that include water management, environmental protection, nuclear safety, energy security, education, tourism, economic cooperation, trade, investment, poverty eradication and



people empowerment.

“We know that most of our neighbors prefer peace and dialogue,” he stated. “That cannot be achieved if one or two pursue confrontation and wishfully wait for alien vampires to ‘cut their neighbor’s head’. That delusion will never be realized.”

“We all have anxieties and grievances. Certainly, Iranians will never forget 8 years of an imposed war: the aggressor fully financed by our neighbors,” Zarif reminded the regional countries.

“So, we can choose to remain prisoners of the past and perpetuate instability and tension. Or, all of us—and I stress all—can choose peace, security, stability and prosperity for all. The choice, surely, should be obvious to everyone,” the chief Iranian diplomat concluded.

“We know that most of our neighbors prefer peace and dialogue... That cannot be achieved if one or two pursue confrontation and wishfully wait for alien vampires to ‘cut their neighbor’s head’. That delusion will never be realized.”

Iran launches large-scale electronic aerial drills

1 → The performance and capabilities of domestic air defense systems were evaluated by simulating real electronic warfare conditions and exposing them to jamming generated by drones equipped with jammer devices.

Meanwhile, air defense units carried out jamming operations against mock hostile drones and successfully took control of them, preventing them from reaching the drill zone, which covers more than half of the country.

The maneuvers featured different types of homegrown missiles, radar systems, reconnaissance, electronic warfare and communication systems as well as an optical surveillance network.

During the first stage, the deployment of defense systems, including missile and radar systems, was drilled with an emphasis on mobility and rapid response, said Second Brigadier General Abbas Farajpour, the spokesman for the maneuvers.

Also during the first stage passive defense strategy and deception techniques were exercised.

Farajpour further explained that cohesive and effective coordination, direction and control of air defense systems within the framework of an integrated network are among the key objectives of the drills.

The senior military official highlighted that Army and IRGC officers will jointly exercise

actual combat and defense tactics against aerial system threats at Special Operations Commands (SOCs), which are controlled and monitored by the national integrated air defense system and Khatam-al Anbiya (PBUH) Central Headquarter.

Farajpour also pointed to surveillance and reconnaissance flights by unmanned aircraft over the area where the drills are being staged, noting, “Tactical and defensive measures were also employed by ground-based reconnaissance and combat systems against strike aircraft. Moreover, all air defense measures, including detection, interception, combat and electronic warfare methods were exercised.”

Domestically-built Fakour (Thoughtful) and Ashura Tactical Command and Control Systems (ATCCSS), besides homegrown Moraqeb (Vigilant), Fath-2 (Conquest-2) and Bashir radar systems, tactical reconnaissance systems, electro-optical systems, electronic warfare systems and the visual monitoring network of the Army were tapped as well, according to the spokesman for the maneuvers.

“New defense systems and hardware will be tested and evaluated operationally during the exercise. They will be showcased in the future, and their capabilities will be used to boost our deterrence and defense might,” Farajpour explained.

Expanding JCPOA on other issues is not productive: ex-UK ambassador to IAEA

1 → But it may prove to be the case that they are capable of attaching sufficient priority to obtaining a resumption of full implementation of the 2015 JCPOA to settle for nothing more than an Iranian undertaking to embark on negotiation of these other issues once the United States has re-joined the JCPOA and lifted all JCPOA-inconsistent U.S. sanctions.

■ The difference between Biden and Trump regarding Iran is a matter of timing. In other words, all the issues raised by Trump, namely regional issues and missile program, are also being raised by Biden. Biden is pursuing a dialogue on non-nuclear issues in later stages. What is your assessment?

A: I would not say that the difference between Biden and Trump is one of timing. Biden has expressed an intention to take the United States back into the JCPOA. There has been no indication that Trump has any such intention. Instead he clings to the belief that “maximum pressure” will induce the Iranian government to request a re-negotiation of the JCPOA and a negotiation on missiles and regional policy. I cannot imagine Trump’s approach yielding agreement on anything. I can imagine Biden’s approach yielding a revival of the JCPOA, if he can bring himself not to insist on unreasonable linkages, and subsequent negotiations on other issues – but I doubt that those subsequent negotiations will be productive, because I doubt that Iran has anything to gain from them.

“They (many of Biden’s advisors) seem to intend to be as open to Israeli, Saudi and Emirati influence on U.S. policy in the Middle East as the Trump administration has been.”



■ In his first step, Biden says that with the full return of Iran to its nuclear obligations, the United States will also return to its obligations. However, how can Biden lift sanctions since some of them require dialogue on non-nuclear issues?

A: Common sense suggests that there are people in Iran who have the thankless task of tracking U.S. sanctions on Iran and who are capable of pointing to sanctions that originated as JCPOA-inconsistent (i.e. nuclear-related) sanctions but have subsequently been re-designated. If that is the case, then Iran’s negotiators can reasonably demand the lifting of those sanction as one of the conditions which the United

States must fulfil to obtain Iran’s return to full implementation of the JCPOA.

■ In your opinion, what is Biden’s approach to Iran compared to Trump? What are the similarities and differences?

A: I have already touched on one crucial difference: Biden seems to be intent on obtaining a revival of the JCPOA. Related to that: Biden does not hate President Obama and does not seek to obliterate the JCPOA because it was one of President Obama’s outstanding diplomatic achievements. Biden does not think of himself as the world’s greatest deal-maker. Biden is not interested in making common cause with groups that seek regime change, i.e. the overthrow of the Islamic Republic.

On the other hand, Biden, or at least many of his advisers on Iran seem to share the current U.S. administration’s belief that Iran should engage in unilateral disarmament by reducing or eliminating its missile forces, and should cut or scale back ties to friendly forces in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, and to Shi’a communities in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. They seem to intend to be as open to Israeli, Saudi and Emirati influence on U.S. policy in the Middle East as the Trump administration has been. They will find the arrest and imprisonment of dual nationals or foreign citizens on questionable charges as unacceptable as the Trump administration has done. They will be as suspicious of the ultimate purpose of Iran’s nuclear program as the Trump administration has been. And they will be as ready to use force to defend or promote what they see as U.S. interests, with or without a prior decision by the UN Security Council.

Persian Gulf security entails inclusion of all

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Three world powers outside of the Persian Gulf region — China, Russia, and the United States — are competing to create new security and economic arrangements in the region that serve their interests and those of their allies in the region.

The efforts of these countries were on full display at the recent meeting of the UN Security Council on the situation in the Persian Gulf region, where China publicly proposed building up a multilateral dialogue platform for the region, and the U.S. roundly rejected a similar Russian offer to create collective security in the Persian Gulf region.

On Tuesday, the Security Council held a debate session at the level of ministers of foreign affairs to comprehensively examine the causes of increasing conflict potential in the Persian Gulf area and find ways to de-escalate the situation, foreign ministers of many countries, including Russia and China, along with officials from other countries, participated in the debate, which was held under the title Maintenance of international peace and security: Comprehensive review of the situation in the Persian Gulf region.

■ **From China's 'oasis of security' to Russian 'collective security'**

During the debate, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi proposed building up a multilateral dialogue platform for the Persian Gulf region to inject impetus to easing tensions under the premise of safeguarding the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, according to a Xinhua report.

The chief Chinese diplomat said mounting tensions in the region have severely undermined the regional and even international peace and security, urging UNSC members and countries in the region to seek for the key to peace with sincerity and goodwill, and actively respond to the aspirations of the international community.

He put forward three proposals: adhering to the rule of law to build a Gulf of peace, upholding good neighborliness to build a Gulf of security, and championing fairness and justice to build a Gulf of stability, Xinhua reported.

Wang described the Persian Gulf countries as "China's good friends and partners," expressing willingness to work with all countries in the region and the international community to continue contributing to the region's security and stability, and jointly build an "oasis of security" for the Persian Gulf region.

Wang's proposal to build a new platform in the region was first made during his recent meeting with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif, who paid a two-day visit to China on October 9. During the meeting with Zarif, Wang proposed to build a regional multilateral dialogue platform with equal participation of all stakeholders. The



platform would "enhance mutual understanding through dialogue and explore political and diplomatic solutions to security issues in the Middle East [West Asia]", according to a statement issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry following the meeting.

China's proposal was coincidentally made with the country's efforts to build comprehensive strategic partnerships with at least two Persian Gulf countries, namely Iran and the United Arab Emirates. On October 10, a special representative of the Chinese president delivered a message from President Xi Jinping to Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Zayed calling for building a strategic partnership between Beijing and Abu Dhabi. On the same day, Zarif and Wang were holding talks on building a similar partnership between Tehran and Beijing.

In addition, China is dependent on energy supplies from the Persian Gulf region and it has made massive investments in almost all countries in the region, a move that explains why China increasingly makes efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region.

In addition to China, Russia has also offered to establish collective security in the Persian Gulf region. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at the UN Security Council debate that Russia submitted a collective security concept for this region, based on a constructive, unifying agenda targeting the creation of mechanisms for the collective response to many threats and challenges with the involvement of the Persian Gulf countries, including Iran.

"We propose that practical steps be taken to implement this idea involving neighboring states and the permanent members of the Security Council, the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other interested parties," the chief Russian

diplomat said.

Lavrov pointed out that a worst case scenario was avoided earlier this year following the U.S. assassination of Iran's top general, Qassem Soleimani, adding that the situation in the Persian Gulf "remains fragile and could become dangerous and unpredictable again."

But the top Russian diplomat added that he believes that "if we work together openly and impartially, and if we pool our political will and our creative potential, we will be able to help the states of the Persian Gulf overcome this difficult historic period and create an effective system of collective security."

Lavrov also reiterated Russian President Vladimir Putin's initiative to hold an online summit of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council along with Germany to discuss ways to establish peace in the region.

■ **U.S. presses ahead with its maverick agenda**

The Russian proposal to prevent a large-scale war in the Persian Gulf region won the support of all Security Council members except the U.S., which blamed Iran for instability in the region.

U.S. Ambassador Kelly Craft rejected the Russian idea of collective security for the Persian Gulf region, touting instead the Trump administration's new approach to the Western Asia region, including its key role in promoting diplomatic relations between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain, according to an Associated Press report.

Responding to Russia's promotion of security for the Persian Gulf, Craft said: "Respectfully, I think the solution is much easier: This council must simply muster the courage to hold Iran accountable to its existing international obligations."

She added, "The United States recognizes that Iran is the single greatest threat to peace

and security in the Middle East [West Asia]."

Craft underlined that the U.S. "will continue to hold Iran accountable, even if it means we must act alone."

The U.S. opposition to other proposals may derives from its own plan to create a new "security construct" in the region that both serves its interests and prevents other world powers from having a role in building long-lasting partnerships in the Persian Gulf region.

Russia, China, and the United States are trying to establish new security arrangements in the Persian Gulf. While China and Russia want to build these arrangements with the participation of all stakeholders in the region that through creating a level of consensus among all Persian Gulf's littoral countries, the United States insists on forming these arrangements without the participation of Iran and creating a new security construct that is centered around confronting Iran. To this end, the U.S. brokered normalization of ties deals between Israel and some Arab countries such as the UAE and Bahrain.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper has said these peace deals aim to build a "security construct" against Iran, the Jerusalem Post reported.

In remarks at the Atlantic Council in Washington, Esper claimed that "so many of the countries in the region recognize that the biggest concern they have — [and that] we have — is Iran and its malign behavior through that region for four decades. It spans all the way from Africa across the Middle East into Afghanistan."

So we see the common threat of Iran — and how do we stand together against that?" he asked, adding, "The vision would be to have some type of security construct where countries on the peninsula, Israel, and others are working together to deter conflict with Iran. We orchestrate much of that now through CENTCOM, if you will, but all those countries have an interest and certainly have concerns: freedom of navigation through the Persian Gulf, freedom of commerce, threats to the sovereignty of countries."

Some analysts believe that any security constructs in the region not based on a collective nature would be doomed to fail because security cannot be bought from outside the region. Besides, the U.S. influence in the region is declining particularly in the Persian Gulf where the U.S. has already begun withdrawing its troops and military equipment. Therefore, countries relying on the U.S. security umbrella may soon find themselves exposed to grave security threats if they choose to go along with the U.S. push to create a security construct aimed at confronting Iran. At the end of the day, as former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak once famously said, he who is covered by the Americans is in fact uncovered.

Azerbaijan lauds Iran support, accuses Armenia of firing on Iranian borders

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Bunyad Huseynov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Tehran, has appreciated Iran's support for his country, underlining that Iran's role in establishing peace in the Nagorno-Karabakh should be highlighted.

"We appreciate the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in support of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the liberation of the occupied territories," Huseynov said in an interview with the Iran Daily published on Wednesday.

He added, "Over the past few days, the Leader's international relations adviser, some members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Leader's representatives in the northwestern provinces of Iran, the governors, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, the government spokesman, all of them, have supported the positions of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This was also covered in our media. The government of the Republic of Azerbaijan appreciates these rightful positions of Iran."

The ambassador said Iran's request to establish peace in

Nagorno-Karabakh has been discussed during the phone conversations that were held between the presidents and foreign ministers of Iran and Azerbaijan, and the Azerbaijani side has officially announced that the role of the region's countries in establishing peace and mediating should be highlighted.

Huseynov noted, "The Republic of Azerbaijan did not see any results from the Minsk Group. Because its members are countries that are far from the region and this issue is not a priority for them. Look at the cooperation of the Republic of Azerbaijan with Iran, Turkey, Russia, and others in terms of customs statistics. The Republic of Azerbaijan has no problem cooperating with any country except Armenia. I am also sure that after the liberation of the occupied territories, trade between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan will expand. Because if you look at the import and export statistics of the two countries, you will see that most of the items that are exported from Iran to the Republic of Azerbaijan are construction materials."

With respect to the rockets and mortar shells that have

landed inside the Iranian territories, the Azerbaijani ambassador said that he "fully understands Iran's concerns" in this regard while expressing sympathy with the affected people.

The Azerbaijani diplomat accused Armenia of firing projectiles toward Iranian borders in an effort to undermine the Iran-Azerbaijan relations.

"The target of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan is located on the right and front side. The mortars that hit the Islamic Republic of Iran came from the left side or from behind the armed forces of Azerbaijan. It was the Armenians who did that," Huseynov pointed out.

He added, "Our embassy in Tehran even issued a statement saying that the bullets and mortars that hit the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran had targeted our relations. As far as you know, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan even issued a statement in this regard. We consider the Iranian-Azerbaijani border as an opportunity and we do not pose a security threat. If this happened or could have happened on the part of Azerbaijan, we could talk to the Iranian brothers and say what the reason was."

Leader has given three heads of govt. branches 'full authority' to overcome problems: official

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has given the heads of the three branches of government a "full authorization" to do what is needed to be done to overcome the current difficulties, according to Mohsen Rezaee, the secretary of the Expediency Discernment Council.

"The Leader of the Revolution has created a good opportunity in this circumstances, giving the heads of the three branches a permission to make decisions at their joint meetings with full authorization to overcome the current circumstances in the country," Rezaee was quoted by Tasnim news agency as saying in an interview with the national TV.

Rezaee expressed regret over the failure of the heads of the three branches of government in taking advantage of the opportunity that the Leader provided them with.

"If the heads of the branches take their joint meeting seriously, strengthen their secretariat, and make use of the economists' views, they will soon succeed in running the country and the capital and stock market

will be saved," Rezaee pointed out.

He went further to say, "The heads of the branches should hire at least seven economists in the secretariat because the heads of branches lack the necessary expertise in economics, and even if they had the expertise, they would disagree. The heads of the branches should take the joint meeting seriously and hold more of these meetings."

Armenia PM says welcomes any Iranian initiative to end Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has welcomed any Iranian initiative to help end the ongoing war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The prime minister's remarks came nearly two weeks after Iran announced that it has prepared an initiative to help resolve the conflict over the disputed region.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Pashinyan said Iran, as an important country in the region, can play a key role in stopping the conflict between Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

"This role can now be concentrated on ending military operations," said Pashinyan, adding that Armenia "welcomes any constructive step by Iran to bring peace and tranquility to the region".

He also expressed regret over the rockets and mortar shells that have landed inside Iran's territory over the past weeks, saying they were not fired by Armenia.

"I can give assurances that the Armenian side is doing its utmost so that no harm is inflicted on its friendly country Iran," the prime minister said.

However, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Iran, Bunyad Huseynov, accused Armenia of firing on the Iranian borders. He said he fully understands Iran's concerns about the projectiles that have landed inside Iran.

"The target of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan is located on the right and front side. The mortars that hit the Islamic Republic of Iran came from the left side or from behind the armed forces of Azerbaijan. It was the Armenians who did that," Huseynov pointed out in an interview with the Iran daily.

Prime Minister Pashinyan accused Turkey of "transferring terrorist mercenaries" from Syria to Nagorno-Karabakh to fight for Azerbaijan. "This has been internationally proven," he said.

According to the Armenian prime minister, there are

"many documents" that indicate militants from Syria are being deployed to the conflict zone to fight for Azerbaijan.

Pashinyan said these militants pose a "grave threat to the region," calling on regional countries "to deal with this issue more seriously."

He also accused Turkey of "trying to constantly to prevent a cease-fire," saying that Turkey's push to expand its influence in Nagorno-Karabakh will have a direct impact on all countries.

"Turkey has extensive goals... Turkey seeks to secure its presence in the South Caucasus region to revive an empire through which Turkey wants to expand its influence to the east, north, south, and southeast of Nagorno-Karabakh," Pashinyan asserted.

He also stated that Azerbaijan is "extensively using Israeli drones" in its military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh, which "proves the foreign powers' intervention" in the region through various ways.

SPORTS

FFIRI's Statutes on verge of being approved by FIFA

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — After several months of controversies, the draft statutes of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) is on the verge of being approved by football's world governing body.



It started more than a year ago when FIFA ordered the Iranian federation to observe some requirements in its statutes.

The FFIRI tried to amend the statutes based on the observations made by Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA, as well as considering the country's law. The federation sent the amended statutes to FIFA after months of negotiations and discussion in the FFIRI's Executive Committee.

However, FIFA rejected the draft statutes several times and even in May 2020, it set a short deadline for the Iranian football federation to either amend its statutes or face global suspension.

The international governing body of football had objected to FFIRI's drafted statutes due to concerns over potential government interference in the federation's affairs. So, FIFA demanded the amendment of the FFIRI's statutes according to FIFA's rules.

On July 13, the Iranian football federation sent the final version of the statutes to FIFA after resolving all the disputes.

And now, after more than three months the football federation confirmed that the statutes are generally accepted by FIFA.

"The world's governing body of football, FIFA, announced its views on the latest amended version of the statutes of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran," reads the statement on the FFIRI's website.

"Accordingly, FIFA, while accepting the generalities and the majority of the articles mentioned in the draft statutes of the Iranian football federation, has referred minor cases to be addressed and amended regarding the electoral regulations. The Iranian football federation appreciates FIFA and the AFC for their response will observe the requirements in due time," it adds.

The final amendment of the statutes will be followed by the approval of the FFIRI assembly to approve it and then holding the FFIRI's elections immediately.

Bosnia to cancel match with Ireland to play Iran

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Bosnia and Herzegovina football federation have asked UEFA to scrap that game with Ireland, with an opportunity to play Iran on the cards instead.

Should the game be cancelled, Bosnia will arrange a friendly with Iran on Nov. 12.

It could be Iran's first match against Bosnia since the 2014 FIFA World Cup, where Carlos Queiroz's side lost to the Dragons 3-1. The 'Persian Leopards' defeated Uzbekistan 2-1 on Oct. 8 in Tashkent in a friendly match and were scheduled to meet Mali in Antalya five days later but the match was called off after two Malian players tested positive for COVID-19.

Iran prepare for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers, where they 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.

Davarzani remains at AVC board of administration

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — Iran's Mohammadreza Davarzani received the vote of confidence to remain at Central Asian Zonal Volleyball Association board of administration on Wednesday.

The five zones separately held their meetings via video conference due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Central Asian Zonal Volleyball Association, is the governing body for the sports of indoor, beach and grass volleyball in Central Asia and South Asia with 14 member associations.

FIVB official Hitesh Malhotra (Sports Development & Training Department) also attended the webinar.

Iranian middle blocker Mousavi on Piacenza's radar

SPORTS **TEHRAN** — The Iran volleyball middle blocker Seyed Mohammad Mousavi has been linked with a move to Italian club Piacenza.

Mousavi joined Iranian club Saipa in June from Polish volleyball team Indykpol AZS Olsztyn on a two-year contract but the Iranian league has been postponed due to coronavirus pandemic.

The SuperLega outfit will have to convince Saipa Alborz to free the 33-year-old player.

Mousavi was a member of the team who won the ticket to the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo in January.

Iranian karate athlete Askari tests positive for coronavirus

Tasnim — Iranian karate Athlete Bahman Askari Ghoncheh tested positive for COVID-19.

Askari secured his place at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo in February.

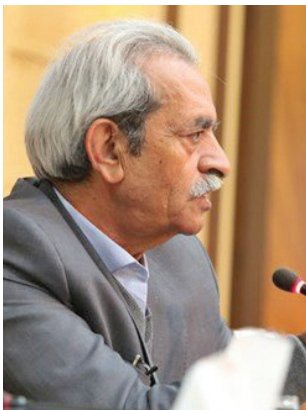
He earned a place at the Olympics after standing first at the -75kg weight class ranking with 7702 points.

The total number of people tested positive for COVID-19 in Iran rose to 539,670 on Tuesday following the detection of 5,039 new cases since Monday.

The Health Ministry's spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari put the death toll from COVID-19 in Iran at 31,034, saying the disease has taken the lives of 322 patients over the previous 24 hours.

ICCIMA criticizes CBI performance over export revenue

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie has criticized the Central Bank of Iran (CBI)’s policies regarding the issues pertaining to the returning of the export revenues into the country’s economy.



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie

Speaking in the 99th dialogue council of the government and the private sector which was held in Tehran on Monday, Shafeie said: “The CBI policies have induced people to believe that the exporters are to be blamed for all the country’s forex market problems, while Iran Chamber is looking for a joint solution with the Central Bank to solve these problems.”

Representatives of the Iranian private sector have repeatedly criticized the CBI’s strict policies on the return of the export revenues into the Integrated Forex Management System (locally known as NIMA).

They have constantly voiced concern over the central bank’s performance and its pressures on the private sector regarding the mentioned issue, calling it counterproductive.

“Despite the fact that the policy package of the Central Bank has recently been approved by the Article 2 Committee, it has obliged exporters to return 80 percent of their export income in the form of foreign currency remittances and 20 percent in the form of banknotes as of the beginning of this year, which is not practical,” ICCIMA Board Member Keyvan Kashefi said back in July.

According to the representatives of the private sector, the continuation of the CBI’s current policies will lead to the withdrawal of real economic actors from the country’s economic scene.

They believe that in the current situation, the confrontation between the private sector and the government is not in the interest of the economy, and the government should not blame the shortage of foreign currency on the private sector.

During the 99th meeting, too, the ICCIMA mentioned some of the problems that the exporters are currently facing in fulfilling their obligations regarding the re-injection of their foreign currency earnings into the country’s economy and offered some solutions for such problems.

Central Bank of Iran offers the country’s exporters and importers foreign currency with official rates and expects them to return the equal of the currency that they have received into the country’s economic cycle.

TEDPIX drops 7,000 points on Wednesday

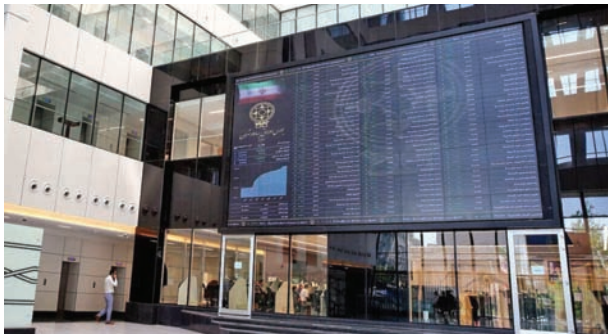
ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 7,005 points to 1.412 million on Wednesday.

Over 10.702 billion securities worth 92.302 trillion rials (about \$2.197 billion) were traded at the TSE on Wednesday.

The first market’s index dropped 5,508 points and the second market’s index fell 12,666 points.

TSE, which is Iran’s major stock exchange, witnessed a 1.3-percent rise in its main index, during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on October 16).

The index gained 21,000 points to 1.561 million during the previous week.



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

TEDPIX, which was experiencing consecutive weeks of falling since mid-August, has climbed in the past two weeks, as it also rose 2.5 percent to stand at 1.54 million in the week ended on October 9.

Since the week ended on August 14 until the week ended on October 9, the TSE 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 weekly drops since mid-August.

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

Two weeks ago, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand 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,” Dejpasand 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.

Iran’s daily gas refining capacity on verge of breaking 1bcm record

1 → Noting that with the outbreak of the coronavirus in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 19), special conditions were considered for the annual overhaul of the country’s gas refineries, the official noted that due to the pandemic this year’s annual overhaul operations began with a month delay.

He further noted that considering the increase in both the production and processing capacities of the gas sector, this year Iran will be able to fulfill all

its gas export obligations even during the cold season.

Back in December 2019, Zardovian had announced that the country’s daily gas processing capacity reached 900 million cubic meters.

Earlier this year, Head of National Iranian Gas Transmission Company (NIGTC) Mehdi Jamshidi Dana said that with the recent increases in South Pars gas field output and new lines and pressure boosting units going on stream



in the national gas network, NIGTC is ready for sustainable gas supply during the cold season.

As Iran’s major natural gas reserve, the South Pars Gas Field, which the country shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, is

currently divided into 24 standard phases on the Iranian side and is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world’s reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Non-oil trade with Arab partners exceeds \$9.5b in H1

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s non-oil trade with its Arab trade partners reached \$9.579 billion in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), the portal of the country’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) reported.

According to Farzad Piltan, the director-general of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)’s Office of Arabian and African Countries, in the mentioned six months Iran exported \$5.348 billion worth of commodities to its major Arab trade partners including Iraq, United Arab Emirate (UAE), Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar, while importing \$4.231 billion worth of non-oil goods from the mentioned neighboring countries.

According to the official, Iran’s total exports to its 15 neighboring countries stood at \$8.16 billion and the imports from the said countries reached \$16.783 billion in the said six months.

Among this group of countries, in terms of exports, Iraq and the UAE were in the first and second place, and Oman, Kuwait and Qatar were in the eighth to tenth places after Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Russia, and Azerbaijan, while Bahrain and Saudi Arabia with three million dollars and zero imports from Iran were ranked 14th and 15th after Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, respectively.

As for the imports, the UAE and Oman (after Turkey and Russia) ranked first and fourth, respectively, and Iraq with \$43 million (after Pakistan) stood at sixth place, while Kuwait with \$3 million and Qatar with \$2.4 million were ranked 11th and 12th, respectively after Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkmenistan.

Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, with \$0.1 million and zero exports to Iran, were ranked 14th and 15th, re-



spectively, after Afghanistan.

It is worth mentioning that Iran’s total exports in the mentioned six months reached 46.318 million tons valued at \$13.566 billion, of which \$12.799 billion, or about 94 percent were exported to the country’s major 20 trade partners all around the world.

According to Piltan, following a new approach and considering the international conditions and, of course, economic and trade variables, the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran has put the development of trade relations with neighboring countries, including the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, on its agenda.

Positive political relations with some of the mentioned countries, geographical proximity and proper port infrastructure and consequently low transportation costs, religious, cultural and linguistic commonalities and ease of communication between Iranian traders

TCCIMA to hold Iran-India online business forum next week

1 → India is the only foreign country that is currently participating in a major development project in Iran despite the U.S. sanctions.

The Chabahar Port development project, in southeastern Iran, is the anchor for the expansion of economic relations between the two nations.

In an interview conducted by the Tehran Times at the place of the daily in mid-July, Indian Ambassador to Tehran Gaddam Dharmendra said, “Iran is a very important trade partner for us, and this year, especially, is more significant since it marks the

70th anniversary of the beginning of the two countries’ political relations which was started after the signing of a treaty between the two sides.”

“Iran and India’s relationship is not something new, it is very robust and goes back to centuries. We have a very strong foundation to build upon and that is how the two sides’ leaders are stressing the need for expanding relationships in all areas”, the Indian envoy reiterated.

“We are also neighbors, we are maritime neighbors, and now with Chabahar port as the anchor of the two countries’ trade rela-



tions, we have become maritime partners as well”, he added.

Prime Minister Modi and President Rou-

hani have met four times this year and that is the indication of how important the relations are for both sides, Dharmendra said.

“As you see, our economic relations continue despite all the limitations and challenges”, the ambassador underlined.

India was the first country that put in place a banking mechanism to be able to trade with Iran in national currencies, he said, adding this rupee-rial channel is being facilitated by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It has helped the traders in both countries for the exchange of commodities.

Coal extraction stands at 911,600 tons in 6 month

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Some 911,600 tons of crude coal was extracted in Iran during the six-month period from March 20 to August 21, from which 350,000 tons of coal concentrate was produced, IRNA reported citing the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

Based on IMIDRO data, the mentioned amount of coal was produced in Central Alborz Province and Tabas County, in South Khorasan Province.

The production of coal concentrate reached 349,698 tons during the said time span.

The highest amount of coal concentrate production was done during the third Iranian calendar month of Khordad (May 21-June 20) in which the output stood at 69,665 tons.



According to IMIDRO data, a total of 1,585,531 tons of crude coal was extracted in the last Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19), from which 664,568 tons of coal concentrate was produced and the total amount of concentrate sent to steel production units reached 700,558 tons.

Iran extracted 1,749,599 tons of coal during the Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019). And the coal concentrate production in the mentioned year stood at 732,050 tons.

Due to the special conditions of coal mines in Iran, these mines are subject to tax exemption and any miners who need mining machinery can use the facility and tax exemption in this sector to import their necessary machinery.

Isfahan issues 817 permits for industrial units establishment since March 20

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The head of Isfahan Province’s Industry, Mining, and Trade Department announced that permits for the establishment of 817 industrial units in the province have been issued since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Iraj Movafaq said that these units will create jobs for 21,987 persons.

According to the latest data released by Iran’s Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), 18,766 permits have been issued for establishing new industrial units in the country, which mark a 47-percent increase year on year.

As previously announced by the ministry, the issuance of permits for setting up industrial units in the country increased 16 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019).

Most of the issued permits were related to the food industries; and Semnan, Qom, and Khorasan Razavi were the provinces receiving the highest number of permits.

Last month, the previous head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) announced that 670 idle industrial units had been revived throughout the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year.

Mohsen Salehinia, who was appointed as the new head of Industrial Development and

Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) on Sunday, said: “Despite all the limitations, we are currently witnessing an increase in production in some units, for example, those active in the field of home appliances; also, according to the plans made and by solving the problems in the way of the production and industrial units, we will realize the motto of “Surge in Production” by the end of this year.”

Strengthening domestic production to achieve self-reliance is the most important program that Iran is following up in its industry sector in a bid to nullify the effects of the U.S. sanctions on its economy.

To this end, the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20) has been



named the year of “Surge in Production”, and all governmental bodies as well as the private sector are moving in line with the materialization of this motto.

News

Global powers push to end Nagorno-Karabakh fighting

Armenia's president headed to Brussels for talks with the European Union and NATO military alliance on Wednesday in a renewed drive to end the heaviest fighting since the 1990s over the mountain enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

As part of a wide diplomatic push from major global powers, the Azeri and Armenian foreign ministers also flew to Moscow for talks with Russia, which has brokered two ceasefires but failed to end clashes killing hundreds of people in the last month, Reuters reported.

The warring sides' foreign ministers then go to Washington for talks on Friday involving U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, which has raised hopes of a breakthrough.

Taliban ambush kills at least 25 Afghan security personnel

At least 25 Afghan security force personnel were killed in an ambush blamed on the Taliban, officials said Wednesday, as spiraling violence imperils ongoing peace talks.

The ambush came despite assurances by the Taliban to Washington last week that they would reduce the bloodshed, AFP reported.

Security forces were attacked overnight Tuesday in Takhar province and fighting was still going on, said Jawad Hejri, a spokesman for the governor, who put the death toll so far at 25.

"The Taliban had taken positions in the houses around the area. They ambushed our forces who were there for an operation against the enemy," he said.

Takhar provincial health director Abdul Qayoum said 34 security personnel had been killed -- including the deputy police chief of the province.

The Taliban have so far not commented on the attack. Despite opening peace talks with the Afghan government in Qatar, the hardline group have only increased violence in Afghanistan in a bid to wield leverage in the negotiations.

Linking terrorism to Islam shows ignorance: Imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar

The grand imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar Islamic Center, Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayyeb, has blasted individuals who link terrorism to Islam, following Islamophobic remarks by French President Emmanuel Macron and the recent murder of a French teacher.

According to AhlulBayt News Agency (ABNA) on Wednesday, Tayyeb tweeted that linking terrorism to Islam was a sign of ignorance.

Tayyeb's statement comes following the beheading of French school teacher Samuel Paty on Friday after he showed his students blasphemous cartoon images of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Khashoggi's fiancée, human rights group sue Saudi crown prince in U.S. for murder

The fiancée of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi and a human rights group he founded have filed a lawsuit at a U.S. court against Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS), accusing him of ordering the dissident's murder at Riyadh's consulate in Turkey.

The lawsuit was filed in Washington DC on Tuesday on behalf of Hatice Cengiz and Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN) -- the human rights organization that Khashoggi founded shortly before his death, Press TV reported.

It singled out MbS, the de facto ruler of the conservative Persian Gulf kingdom, and over 20 other officials, accusing them of a "brutal and brazen crime" that was the result of "weeks of planning" and premeditation.

The lawsuit said Khashoggi -- who lived in the US in self-imposed exile -- was murdered "pursuant to a directive of defendant Mohammed bin Salman."

Mosques in two French cities under police protection after threats

French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said Wednesday he had asked local authorities to put mosques in the cities of Bordeaux and Beziers in southwestern France under police protection following threats or acts of violence.

"Such actions are unacceptable on the soil of the Republic," the minister said in a post on Twitter Wednesday.

France bleu radio reported on its website late Tuesday that leaders of the Ar-Rahma mosque in Beziers had filed a complaint with police following hate messages on Facebook, including a call to set the mosque on fire, Reuters reported.

The threats come just days after a Chechen teenager beheaded a French history teacher for showing caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad in class in a middle school northwest of Paris.

Resistance News

Akhras's health condition is life-threatening

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Prisoner Maher al-Akhras, 49, from **d e s k** Silat al-Dhahr town, south of Jenin, continues his open hunger strike for the 87th consecutive day Wednesday, rejecting his administrative detention amid a serious deterioration in his health condition.

The Prisoners and Ex-prisoners Affairs Authority stated that the health condition of Akhra is extremely dangerous, as he suffers from severe fatigue, he is unable to move and his senses of hearing and speaking have been affected negatively.

It pointed out that he is having seizures constantly and there are fears that his vital organs will suffer a sudden relapse as he refuses to take any fluids and supplements. This poses a real threat to his life after this long period of the strike, it added.

The Authority called on human rights institutions and the International Committee of the Red Cross to pressure the Israeli occupation authorities to release him immediately. It held the Israeli occupation government fully responsible for the life of Akhras.

Fly-by-night countries

Tehran Times analytical report on main countries that have frozen Iranian assets

By Mohammad Mazhari

Due to United States' unilateral sanctions against Tehran, it is estimated that about \$150 billion of Iranian assets are being frozen in other countries. By blocking about \$7 billion of Iranian oil assets, South Korea is one of the major countries that refuses to release them. It is followed by Iraq and Japan.

Although the exact amount of Iran's blocked assets is not known, some reports say Europe alone owes Iran \$100 billion. It seems that a large portion of these assets was for the sale of oil to these countries.

■ Britain

In the 1970s, Iran paid for Chifan tanks from the United Kingdom. Under the agreement, 1,500 battle tanks and armored vehicles were to be delivered to Iran.

Experts believe that the conclusion of such an agreement breathed new life into Britain's economy, which was in recession at that time. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, many military and trade agreements with Western countries were canceled, but in the case of the deal with Britain, Iran had paid all the money in advance. The purchased battle tanks must have been delivered to Iran.

However, London exploited the opportunity to renege on all promises and obligations. It not only refused to deliver the tanks, it did not even return the money.

Over the past 48 years, the blocked money has made a significant profit in Britain's banks. However, Iran has not received the money and its interest rate.

Iran has repeatedly protested Britain over the issue and even sued the London government. Finally, following a British court verdict, London agreed to pay the debt. Now Britain owes Iran around 400 million pounds.

■ Japan

Japan was also a buyer of Iranian oil but refused to pay the money even before the nuclear deal, when Iran was under UN sanctions. After the signing of the JCPOA and the relative easing of sanctions, Iran hoped to recover some of its frozen funds. The process to unfreeze \$4.2 billion of oil revenues in Japan started, and part of the money were paid within six months in eight installments.

The course of events changed after the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA. Again, Japan refused to pay the oil money. Nevertheless, Japan still wanted to maintain its long-standing ties with Iran. After 41 years, when in June 2019 the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Tehran, promises were revived to repay Japan's \$1.5 billion oil money to Iran.

■ U.S.

The United States was one of Iran's most influential trading partners before the Islamic Revolution, but after the downfall of the Shah regime, it turned to one of the countries that owed tens of billions of dollars to Iran.

Due to its hostile policies against the Islamic Republic, the U.S. tried to avoid the repayment of Iranian money and threatened to impose sanctions on other countries if they repay their debts to Iran. Iran's assets blocked in international accounts are estimated at between \$100-150 billion, and a large part of this huge money is frozen in the United States.

This is not the only money blocked in foreign banks. Rather, Iran has blocked property, including real estates, abroad.

The estimated value of Iranian real estates in the United States and their accumulated rent is about \$50 million. So far, the United States has tried to prevent the release of Iranian property and assets under false pretenses, to the point that the American government has confiscated an Iranian-owned skyscraper in Manhattan that worth more than \$1 billion. Not only have these assets been blocked, many Iranian individuals and entities have also been placed on the sanctions list.

■ Luxembourg

It was in March 2020 that Abdolnaser Hemmati, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), announced a legal success in releasing \$1.6 billion of Iran's blocked assets abroad. And at the time, he stressed that Iran will continue efforts to get loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

It was on March 27 that Hemmati announced: "The central bank, in continuation of its active approach and efforts, with the support of the foreign minister, devoted all its efforts to provide the foreign exchange resources needed by our country, ... to buy medicine, medical equipment, and humanitarian aid. Efforts to gain quick access to IMF funding, as Iran's legal and definitive right, and to pursue the release of the Central Bank of Iran's foreign reserves, which have been unjustly blocked under the U.S. government pressure, are all in this regard."

Now, with legal action by the government, a court in Luxembourg has lifted the ban on seizure of \$1.6 billion of Iranian financial resources. And at the same time, another court has temporarily prevented the transfer of these resources to the United States.

■ Canada

In September 2019, in an unusual move,



Canada sold part of Iran's properties. It confiscated the properties to pay the proceeds to individuals it called "victims of terrorism."

The Ottawa government reportedly has done so under the pretext of paying compensation to the so-called "victims of terrorism."

According to a document from the Ontario Supreme Court, individuals have received part of the proceeds from the sale of Iranian-owned buildings in Ottawa and Toronto under the pretext of being "victims of terrorism".

Also, the amount of property sold by the Iranian government in Canada is estimated at more than \$28 million. Among the Iranian-owned property sold under false pretenses by the Canadian government was the Iranian Cultural Center near the University of Ottawa, which values \$26.5 million. It was purchased by a construction company in Montreal.

The Iran Studies Center building in Toronto was also sold for \$1.85 million, and \$6.2 million was withdrawn from Iranian bank accounts in Canada.

■ UAE

Relations between Iran and the UAE have gone through many ups and downs since the victory of the Islamic Revolution's victory, especially in recent years. Due to the destabilizing role of the UAE in the region, relations have become cold.

Following the strained relationship, the UAE government froze the assets of nine Iranian individuals and entities in June 2018. The UAE central bank had announced a year before, seven exchange offices, most of whose activities were related to Iran, would be limited in compliance with anti-money laundering laws.

However, in recent months, the UAE announced the release of \$700 million of Iranian money. A member of the Iranian parliament revealed this news, saying that the Iranian exchange offices would be reopened in Dubai after a long closure.

■ Iraq

Currently, relations between Iran and Iraq are strategic and the volume of trade relations between the two countries is high. Iraq owes money to Iran as it imports gas and electricity from Iran. During the new Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021), Iranian officials traveled to Baghdad to follow up on Iraq's debts to Tehran.

The Iraqi side has announced its readiness to pay the money; however, American sanctions are hampering Iran's access to its assets in Iraq, creating obstacles to Tehran-Baghdad's relations.

Another point is Iraq's fragile economy, which has made it rather impossible for Baghdad to pay its debts to Iran in dollars and euros. Baghdad has announced it is ready to pay its dues in Iraqi dinars, but the dinar's official value differs from that in the open market. Of course, accepting the offer could harm Iranian companies.

During a visit by Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian to Baghdad on June 5, Iraq paid half of its debt for electricity, which amounted to about \$400 million. The two countries even signed an agreement to extend Iran's two-year electricity sales to Iraq.

Also, during the Iranian central banker's visit to Iraq, it was agreed that the Iraqi government provide part of the basic goods, including medicine, for Iran from the Islamic Republic's assets held in Iraq.

■ South Korea

Prior to the U.S. sanctions, South Korea was a regular customer of Iranian oil. Even after the U.S. imposed unilateral sanctions on Iranian oil exports, Seoul, along with seven

other capitals, enjoyed a 180-day exemption.

During this time, South Korea bought 350,000 barrels of oil and gas condensate per day from Iran, but at the same time it was negotiating with new sellers to replace them with Iran's oil and gas. After the U.S. sanctions against Iran's banking system and oil exports in October 2018, the Koreans also invented excuses and refused to pay for the oil money.

Iran's banking officials have estimated the amount of South Korea's debt to Iran at about \$7 billion. After the Koreans' procrastinations, Iranian officials strongly protested and demanded the release of the assets.

But according to a source in the Iranian Foreign Ministry, during two years of negotiations with the Koreans, they preferred to just give reports to the United States and waiting for a response instead of paying the funds.

South Korea seems to prefer to follow illegal and unilateral U.S. sanctions and even preventing Iran from using the money to buy food and medicine that are not subject to sanctions.

In May 2020, South Korea sent a humanitarian aid shipment to Iran. It contained medicinal items that are said to be used therapeutically for incurable diseases and valued at half a million dollars.

Immediately after sending it, Seoul announced that it would send another \$2 million aid shipment to Iran next month, including medicine, medical equipment, and agricultural goods and equipment. The value of these items is miles away from the Iranian funds blocked in South Korea. There seems to be no will on the part of Seoul to pay the assets even in the form of humanitarian aid.

Although South Korea is a close ally of the United States, it has also been a major trading partner of Iran in recent decades. Seoul is practically struggling to create a balance between maintaining relationship with the United States and keeping trade with Iran. Nevertheless, the country's banks and financial institutions prefer not to choose the risky path of transactions subject to secondary sanctions.

■ 53 years of business dealings

Economic ties between South Korea and Iran began with the reopening of the Iranian embassy in Seoul in 1967.

However, before the Iranian embassy's official reopening, Tokyo was responsible for coordination between the two countries.

Iran's great business transactions with Korea, which was relatively stable compared to other East Asian countries, led to the opening of a new chapter in economic relations between the two countries. After the 1973 oil crisis and the rise in oil prices from \$3 to \$12 a barrel, the two countries signed agreements to increase trade.

Under the agreement, trade was set to reach \$2 billion over a five-year period by 1980.

Economic relations continued in the wake of South Korea's need for cheap, high-quality Iranian oil until a \$10 billion deal was signed in 2008 despite sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program.

Despite extensive UN sanctions against Tehran before the conclusion of the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran made efforts to maintain prosperous trade and economic relations with South Korea, especially in the last decade. However, now Trump's hostile policies have cast a shadow on the ties.

The escalation of sanctions under false pretenses and U.S. officials' remarks to "bring Iran back to the negotiating table" added another layer of skepticism to Tehran-Seoul relations. It is estimated that South Korea's imports of Iranian oil have dropped to zero

over the last two years.

■ South Korea: From a major buyer of Iranian oil to a big debtor

Prior to the escalation of sanctions against Tehran, South Korea was one of the top five buyers of Iranian petroleum products and the second-largest importer of oil in 2017 after China.

According to official reports, in 2017, after the signing of the JCPOA, South Korea imported an average of 368,000 barrels of oil per day from Iran. This amount was reduced to about 211,000 bpd in 218.

Following the announcement of the return of sanctions and giving Iranian oil buyers six months to find new oil sellers, South Korea reduced its oil orders from Iran, and in May 2019, shortly after the cancellation of all oil exemptions, its oil imports from Iran were reduced to zero.

Although the sanctions targeted Iran's oil industry, two months after the United States "called for tougher sanctions" and ended exemptions, South Korea reduced gas condensate purchases from Iran between 32 to 62 percent, looking for other sellers.

According to South Korean customs reports, in the first two months of 2019, an average of 176,000 barrels of gas condensate was purchased from Iran per day. The purchase of South Korean gas condensate from Iran in the same period of 2018 was reported between 250,000 to 450,000 barrels per day.

However, due to the Iranian Ministry of Oil's policy after the imposition of a new round of oil sanctions, new statistics on oil exports and its products have not been published in the media for several years.

Although some reports suggest that South Korea has kept Iran's oil imports at zero amid fears of future U.S. sanctions it has kept gas condensate imports between 15,000 and 60,000 barrels. Buying condensate is preferable for Koreans because of its low price.

In November 2018, after the Korean officials' meeting with Iranian oil managers, it was decided to pay Iranian oil revenues in form of purchasing goods from South Korea. Under this mechanism, money from the sale of Iranian oil remains in the Korean banks, and Iran can use it to buy goods and medicine.

However, from the last two years until this month, only \$500,000 of oil revenues have entered Iran in the form of medicine.

■ Korean procrastination has endangered the health of Iranian citizens

Less than a month after the Foreign Ministry announced that it was importing \$500,000 worth of pharmaceutical products from Korea after two years of negotiations, the Iranian central bank governor announced that in the current situation that the Coronavirus outbreak is threatening the lives of Iranian citizens, it would increase pressure on Seoul to free up billions of dollars.

"We reserve our rights to take legal actions under international laws," Hemmati told Bloomberg. "The actions of banks in South Korea were preventing Iran from using the money to buy foods and medicines, trade that's exempt from U.S. sanctions."

"It is appalling to see that Korean banks have conveniently neglected their obligations, common international financial agreements, and decided to play politics and follow illegal and unilateral U.S. sanctions," according to Hemmati.

According to informed sources at Foreign Ministry, although negotiations with South Korea for Iran's access to its blocked money are still ongoing and meetings are to be held virtually there is still no clear prospect.

Despite Seoul's commitment to release about \$100 million for medicine for special diseases in Iran, no practical action has been taken. This is while Iran is facing a severe health crisis and is in urgent need of the necessary resources to deal with the rapidly increasing the deadly Coronavirus. The Koreans have not provided the necessary resources to buy vaccines, nor have they sent drugs for special diseases to Iran.

In this regard, Michael Page, the deputy Middle East and North Africa director at the Human Rights Watch, tells the Tehran Times that "despite existing humanitarian exemptions, broad U.S. sanctions on Iran have created massive obstacles, especially in terms of banking access, for the Iranian government to fulfill its responsibility to protect residents' right to health."

"With Covid-19 cases in Iran rising dramatically again during this pandemic, the Trump administration's decision to expand sanctions that threaten Iranians' right to health further is a particularly cruel one," he notes.

■ Seoul a big loser of Iranian market

Iran has been a big market for South Korean goods over the last two decades, including home appliances and cellphones; however, South Korea's refusal to release the Iranian assets may ruin Seoul-Tehran ties forever.

Seoul's persist to follow illegal and unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran would lead to loss of the Iranian market, as Tehran may not welcome Korean brands again.

Without a doubt, South Korea's move to block the Iranian funds will certainly have a negative effect on bilateral ties.

Martyr Hojaji's tomb can help promote war tourism

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The tomb of Mohsen Hojaji, an Iranian soldier who was brutally martyred by Daesh (ISIS) forces in Syria in 2017, is a privilege for the city of Najafabad and can promote war tourism in the region, the deputy tourism minister, Vali Teymouri, has said.



Hojaji, whose name has become synonymous with bravery and struggle against savage terrorism, was captured by Daesh forces near Al-Tanf in southeast Syria on August 7, 2017, and was beheaded two days later.

Boosting tourism infrastructure such as restoration of historical buildings and construction of recreation centers have promoted Najafabad as a top tourist destination near the popular city of Isfahan, ISNA quoted Teymouri as saying on Wednesday.

Najafabad was built during the Safavid-era (1501–1736). The city is famous for its historical dovescotes and the Sheikh Bahai fort with seven dovescotes is one of the city's popular tourist attractions.

War tourism is a kind of recreational travel to active or former war zones for purposes of sightseeing or historical study.

Ancient decorated potteries unearthed in eastern Iran

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A number of ancient potteries bearing geometric patterns and symbols have recently been unearthed during an archaeological survey at Gabri archaeological site in Sarbisheh county, eastern South Khorasan province.

Ancient architectural ruins, kilns, and animal skeletons, which are believed to date from the Sassanid era, were also found during the survey, IRNA reported on Tuesday.



Situated on an easternmost point of the Iranian soil, near the border with Afghanistan, Sarbisheh is home to the mysterious village of Makhunik, which was inhabited by people of very short stature until about a century ago.

In 2005, Makhunik appeared in the news as a mummified body measuring 25cm in length was unearthed. It widely fostered a belief that this remote region was once home to ancient dwarfs. Subsequent studies, however, concluded that the mummy was a premature baby who died some 400 years ago.

Cultural travel sites: Mausoleum of Sheikh Shahab-Ed-Din Ahari

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Sheikh Shahab-ed-Din Mahmood Ahari was a famous seventh and eighth century mystic scholar and this mausoleum was built on his grave long after his death.

In existing sources, the construction of this mausoleum is attributed to the Safavid monarch Shah Abbas I, and the construction of the raw brick enclosure around it to Amir-Taymur Gurkan.

This building was restored near the end of the twelfth century by Mostafa Qoil Khan, the governor of the region. The author of Asar-e-Bastani-e Azerbaijan introduced Sheikh Shahab-ed Din as a descendant of Sheikh Shahab-ed-Din Sohrevardi, whose ancestry traces back to Abu Bakr.



He adds that Sheikh Shabb-ed-Din was the spiritual master of Seyed Jamal-ed-Din Tabrizi. The present building of the mausoleum is attributed to the Safavid period, and some experts believe that parts of it such as the stone enclosure of the tomb and the eastern entrance of the building were built in pre-Safavid times.

The main Eivan is flanked by a pair of massive minarets not taller than the Eivan itself. It is possible that the construction of the minarets was left unfinished, or that their top ends were demolished at a later date.

Sasanians promoted Persian arts through trade, conquest, and diplomacy: experts

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Under Sasanid rule (224 CE–651) Persian arts and architecture experienced a general renaissance. However, it made its way well beyond the vast borders of the longest-lived Persian dynasty, which at its greatest extent encompassed all of present-day Iran and Iraq and stretched from the eastern Mediterranean (including Anatolia and Egypt) to Pakistan, and from parts of southern Arabia to the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Experts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York City say that the trade, conquest, and diplomacy resulted in the diffusion of Sasanian luxury arts both in East and West during the four centuries of Sasanian rule.

Architecture often took grandiose proportions such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan that are amongst highlights of the ensemble. Crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sasanians.

Rock-carved sculptures and bas-reliefs on abrupt limestone cliffs are widely deemed as characteristics and striking relics of the Sasanian art, top examples of which can be traced at Bishapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rostam in southern Iran.

According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Sasanian art borrowed from ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman traditions to express a new Iranian cultural identity, particularly manifest in prestig-



Plate: the Sasanid king Yazdgerd I, slaying a stag

ious monuments and objects connected to the royal court. Secure dates for many Sasanian buildings and works of art are difficult to determine, in part due to the lack of material from documented archaeological contexts.

"The most renowned Sasanian objects are finely crafted silver vessels produced in large numbers in Iran and Mesopotamia. They were usually hammered into shape

and then decorated using a variety of techniques. Typical shapes include high-footed bowls, ewers, vases, and plates. Many feature imagery derived from Greco-Roman iconography whose significance was adapted for the Sasanian repertoire."

Efforts made by the Sassanids also led to a revival of Iranian nationalism, for example, Zoroastrianism was declared as the state religion.

The dynasty evolved by Ardashir I and was destroyed by the Arabs during a period of 637 to 651. The dynasty was named after Sasan, an ancestor of Ardashir I. Under his leadership who reigned from 224 to 241, the Sasanians overthrew the Parthians and created an empire that was constantly changing in size as it reacted to Rome and Byzantium to the west and to the Kushans and Hephthalites to the east, according to Britannica Encyclopedia.

At the time of Shapur I (reigned 241 CE–272), the empire stretched from Sogdiana and Iberia (Georgia) in the north to the Mazun region of Arabia in the south; in the east, it extended to the Indus River and in the west to the upper Tigris and Euphrates river valleys.

The Sassanid archaeological landscape also represents a highly efficient system of land use and strategic utilization of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sasanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region" -- to its World Heritage list.

The ensemble is comprised of eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan. It reflects the optimized utilization of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

Hotels allowed to raise prices up to 30%

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Hoteliers Association has announced that hotels in the country have been allowed to increase prices up to 30 percent as of September 22.

Despite the coronavirus outbreak, which reduced travels and caused closure of hotels and tourist service centers, the prices have increased up to 30 percent, while it could have risen by 100 percent if the inflation rate had been taken into account, the association's head Jamshid Hamzehzadeh said on Wednesday.

The prices of hotels for foreign travelers are also being reviewed as the prices in Iran for foreign tourists are very low due to the changes in the exchange rate, however, as there are no foreign tourists in the country over the coronavirus, there is no rush to decide, the official noted.

In September, Hamzehzadeh announced that con-

sidering the number of tourists and travelers, which has decreased drastically, increasing hotel prices does not make sense and will not increase the income of hoteliers.

He added that due to the outbreak of the coronavirus hotels are offering up to 60 percent discounts instead of raising their prices, however, with these amounts of discounts, the occupancy rate of hotels is less than five to seven percent.

Back in June, the official announced that the outbreak of the new coronavirus has inflicted a loss of 60,000 billion rials (about \$1.4 billion at the official rate of 42,000 rials) on the Iranian hospitality industry in four months.

The government has allocated a 750-trillion-rial (about \$18 billion) package to help low-income households and small- and medium-sized enterprises affected by the coronavirus.



Tourism ministry to help empower inmates

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Prisons, Security, and Corrective Measures Organization with the aim of creating jobs and making income for prisoners.

The MOU also aims at implementing special educational and promotional programs, identifying talented prisoners, and improving their social status.

The deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian and the deputy head of the prisons organization Abbas Johari signed



the MOU on Wednesday. Speaking on the sidelines of the signing

ceremony, Mahmoudian said that handicrafts products made by prisoners have been displayed in various exhibitions, and the income generated from selling these products has been returned to the prisoners and their families.

Johari for his part said that many prisoners are able to create beautiful artworks and handicrafts.

He also explained that there is little likelihood those who have completed the training courses return to prisons.

Iran exported \$523 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year

1398 (ended March 19). Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and about \$250 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces, according to data provided by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornaments with precious and semi-precious gemstones were exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Louvre, University of Tehran to conduct survey in ancient Faruj

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Experts from the Louvre and the University of Tehran have been granted a license to conduct a new round of excavation in the historical town of Faruj, northeastern North Khorasan province.

"Experts from the University of Tehran and the Louvre Museum in Paris will conduct a new season of archaeological excavation in the ruined city of Faruj with a permit obtained from the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism," Iranian archaeologist Meysam Labbaf-Khaniki said on Wednesday.

"In the new excavation season, field investigation will be done by Iranian archaeologists and research studies will be conducted by French specialists," Labbaf-Khaniki said, according to the provincial department for cultural heritage and tourism.

"Undoubtedly, preserving archaeological works (relics and sights), exploring and introducing the



architectural remains of the area will have effective results to recognize the history and culture of the northeastern region of Iran."

Online exhibition to display photos on Uraman rural landscape

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The Iranian National Commission for UNESCO will hold an online exhibition on its official Instagram page on Friday, displaying photos on Uraman rural landscape in western Kordestan province which is a candidate for becoming a World Heritage site in 2021.

Entitled 'Uraman: Fringing the Skies', the exhibition aims at acquainting the audience with the ancient architecture, rituals, as well as everyday life in Uraman.

A total of 70 pictures selected from the works of 35 landscape, nature, por-

trait, and press photographers will be showcased at the exhibit.

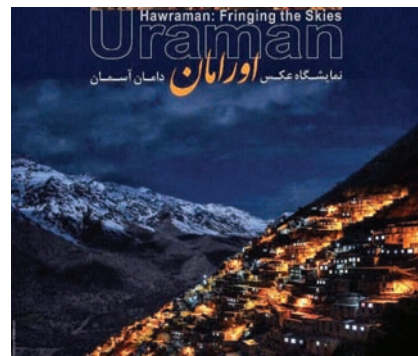
Iran submitted the UN body a dossier for the Uraman cultural landscape in 2019. Some eighty experts in various fields compiled and developed the dossier in terms of anthropology, archeology and history, natural sciences, architecture, historical documents, and other related fields.

As the cultural landscape covers 300 villages and in terms of architecture and landscape, it is one of the most beautiful and presentable heritages in the world, the dossier is really important to Iranians,

tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said earlier this month.

Back in September, Hessem Mahdi, the representative of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) visited the western province of Kermanshah to assess the possible inscription of the cultural heritage site on the UNESCO list.

Pouya Talebnia, the director of the cultural landscape, announced that the visit of the UNESCO assessor will be the last step for reviewing the status of Uraman rural landscape for the World Heritage list.



Iran, Afghanistan underscore need to boost anti-narcotics fight

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian commander of border guards Ahmad Ali Goudarzi, and the Afghan deputy minister of interior for counter narcotics Mohammad Hashim Aurtaq, emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation to fight against drug trafficking.

During a meeting held in Tehran on Wednesday, Goudarzi highlighted on cooperation and coordination between the border guards of the two countries and said that practical and serious cooperation is essential, and drug smuggling should be combated by exchanging information.

The border guards are in charge of the police force, and at the forefront of the fight against drugs, he noted, IRNA reported.

"We are on the border with the friendly and Muslim country of Afghanistan and there is a long-standing cultural and historical affinity between the two countries and this long-standing relationship is not hidden from anyone," Goudarzi stated.

Referring to the establishment of permanent security on the long border with Afghanistan, he added that there are religious and cultural commonalities between Iran and Afghanistan which is very valuable.

Drugs are the products made by erring human beings and the enemies, which, with the cooperation of the two countries, can be prevented, he added.

Referring to the increase in the produc-



tion of narcotics in Afghanistan, Goudarzi added that joint and simultaneous patrols on the common borders of the two countries will contribute to the lasting security of the borders.

Aurtaq pointing to the production of 84 percent of the world's opium in Afghanistan, said that due to the presence of Taliban forces in some border areas and provinces of Afghanistan, the country is struggling

to fight the cultivation and production of narcotics.

Referring to the destruction of 52 laboratories producing methamphetamine in the country, he stated that "We understand the concerns and sensitivities of Iran and hope that by amending and revising the anti-narcotics laws, more effective steps will be taken in this regard."

Iran's measures in anti-narcotics fight

Iran seized some 1,000 tons of narcotics in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), putting the country in the first place in the world, Eskandar Momeni, the secretary-general of Iran's drug control headquarters, said in July.

After the Islamic Revolution (in 1979), 3,800 were martyred, 12,000 were wounded and disabled in the fight against drug trafficking, Momeni announced.

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

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

According to UNODC, Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries and has had a leading role at the global level in the drug-control campaigns.

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

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

National Network of NGOs formed to promote 'sport for all'

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The National Network of Non-Governmental Organizations has been formed to promote sports, especially cycling, athletics, and swimming, in the society.

According to IRNA, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Ministry of Sports and Youth and the Federation of Sport for All on Sunday to form the network.

Iranians celebrate physical education and sports week each year on October 18-23, and the first day of the week is called physical education day, which aims at familiarizing the society with the importance and effects of sports in individual and social life, the spread and development of sports at home.

Afshin Mollaei, president of the Federation of Sport for All, said the prevalence of inactivity has reached 56 percent in the country, accounting for 82 percent of all deaths, which will also affect the pandemic.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki said in Late-June that about 87 percent of those who have lost their lives due to COVID-19 in Iran had been diagnosed with obesity and underlying illnesses.

Obesity and overweight have affected about 65 percent of the country's population, while physical inactivity is the main reason behind, Afshin Ostovar, the Health Ministry's director for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) said in January 2019.

Physical inactivity leading risk factor for global mortality

According to the World Health Organization, insufficient physical activity is one of the leading risk factors for global mortality, which is on the rise in many countries, adding to the burden of NCDs and affecting general health worldwide. People who are insufficiently active have a 20 percent to 30 percent increased risk of death compared to people who are sufficiently active.

Globally, around 23 percent of adults aged 18 and over were not active enough in 2010 (men 20 percent and women 27 percent). Some 81 percent of adolescents aged 11-17 years were insufficiently physically active in 2010. Adolescent girls were less active than adolescent boys, with 84 percent vs. 78 percent not meeting WHO recommendations.

In high-income countries, 26 percent of men and 35 percent of women were insufficiently physically active, as compared to 12 percent of men and 24 percent of women in low-income countries. Low or decreasing physical activity levels often correspond with a high or rising gross national product.

As per the data revealed by WHO in 2016 more than



1.9 billion adults were overweight and 650 million people were obese. Sadly at least 2.8 million people each year die as a result of being obese or overweight. Globally, 41 million preschool children were overweight in 2016.

In May 2018, Reza Malekzadeh, the deputy health minister, announced that deaths linked with overweight and obesity have seen a twofold increase in Iran between 1990 and 2015.

Out of 372,000 deaths occurred in 1990 some 21,500, nearly 6 percent of the deaths, were weight-related while out of 385,000 deaths in 2015 some 50,000, nearly 13 percent of the deaths, were attributed to overweight and obesity, Malekzadeh said, adding that in 1980 some 2 million people were obese while the number increased 5.5 times in 2015 as about 11 million people are suffering obesity, same goes for people who are overweight; the number jumped from 5 million to 8 million over the same time span.

NCDs kill 300,000 Iranians per year

In February 2019, the health ministry announced that some 300,000 Iranians die of NCDs annually in Iran, which means that one-fourth of the country's population (standing at 80 million) are overweight or obese which also results in developing NCDs.

Diabetes, non-communicable diseases, is a serious threat to people's health and is the fifth leading cause of death in the country. Diabetes prevalence is 10 percent in Iran and is high among people aging 50 or more.

Cardiovascular diseases (mainly heart disease and stroke), which were the leading cause of death in 2012, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders (especially osteoarthritis – a highly disabling degenerative disease of the joints), and some cancers (including endometrial, breast, ovarian, prostate, liver, gallbladder, kidney,

and colon) are common health consequences of overweight and obesity, WHO warns.

Having too much sugar in the blood for long periods of time can contribute to serious health problems if it's not treated. Hyperglycemia can damage the vessels that supply blood to vital organs, which can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke, kidney disease, vision problems, and nerve problems.

Moreover, 30 percent of men and 36 percent of women aged 25 to 64 years also have high cholesterol due to overweight and obesity, consuming fast food, and insufficient physical activity.



Invitation for Identification and Prequalification of Contractors

Tender Holder: Kerman Parand Golfam Mine Co.

Tender No.: 9903

Tender Subject:

Identification and prequalification of contractors for design, development and exploitation of iron ore from Gol Gohar 6 underground mine in the form of EPCF contract.

Subject of Services:

Basic and detailed design of Gol Gohar 6 underground mine, financial and economic studies, development and exploitation from the mine (in the average amount of 5.5 Mt per year). Financing at 85% is considered (It will be negotiable).

Brief Description of the Project:

Gol Gohar 6 underground mine is located in the Gol Gohar Region, in the southwest portion of Kerman Province, Islamic Republic of Iran. Totally, 28 exploratory boreholes with accumulative length of 19750 meters and 19 geotechnical boreholes with accumulative length of 14055 meters have been drilled. Also, the hydrogeological studies were performed in the 7 boreholes and the required reports have been prepared based on the drilling program. According to the latest exploration studies, Gol Gohar 6 underground mine has 99 Mt of geological resources of iron ore with grade of FE=56%. Ore deposit is surrounded by metamorphic rocks such as amphibolite and mica schist. Depth of orebody varies between 500 and 700 meters below the surface. Also, the average thickness of the orebody is about 90 meters. Based on the conceptual studies, access to the ore body will be done using double inclined tunnels and about 84 Mt of iron ore will be extracted from underground mine using the sublevel caving method.

Location and duration of the Project:

Project is located in the Gol Gohar region, 50 Km. Shiraz Road, Sirjan, Kerman, Iran. Implementation of the project will be 4 years for study and development and about 15 years for exploitation.

Desired Condition:

All Iranian and foreign applicants may take part in the prequalification procedure, providing that they have sufficient financial and technical capabilities and experience in the subject of services.

Required Documents:

Required documents include official company documents, work experience documents related to the subject of the tender, complete documentation of current projects, list of available equipment, facilities related to the subject of the tender, the latest certificate of financial statements, certificate and standards obtained related to the company's activities and company organizational chart.

Note that due to the importance of basic and detailed design of the underground mine (including mining method and opening tunnels), the documents of a competent consultant should also be provided.

Deadline for Submission of Bids:

30 days after the tender announcement.

Delivery of Documents:

Applicants should submit their documents and contact to send questions using the Mine6@kushamadan.com

Qualitative Evaluation Results:

After receiving and reviewing the submitted documents and the approval of the evaluation committee, the applicants who are qualified in the pre-evaluation stage will be invited to receive the tender documents. Note that the initial prequalification and invitation to receive bidding documents will not create any rights for applicants.

Iranian researchers produce nano-mask with 99.9% lethality to coronavirus

1 → Mehdi Kashmiri, director for technology and planning at the science ministry, said in July that about 450 knowledge-based companies were active in the country for manufacturing protective equipment and treatment products to fight the coronavirus.

Production of more than one million face masks per day, production of more than 1.5 liters of disinfectants per day, diagnostic kits, non-contact thermometers, protective clothing, ventilator are among the produces manufactured by these companies, he added.

Iranian-made innovative products in the field of diagnosis, screening, and fighting coronavirus were also unveiled to combat the disease, namely, ozone generator, nanotechnology face shields, disinfection gate, and molecular COVID-19 diagnostic kits.

COVID-19 new cases hit daily records high in Iran

In the press briefing on Wednesday, Health Ministry spokesperson Sima-Sadat Lari confirmed 5,616 new cases of COVID-19 infection, raising the total number of infections to 545,286. She added that 438,709 patients have so far recovered, but 4,861 still remain in critical conditions of the disease.

In the past 24 hours, 312 patients have lost their lives, bringing the total number of deaths to 31,346, she added.

Lari noted that so far 4,599,554 COVID-19 tests have been conducted across the country.

She said the high-risk "red" zones include provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, East Azarbaijan, South Khorasan, Semnan, Qazvin, Lorestan, Ardebil, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Kohgi-



luyeh-Boyerahmad, Gilan, Bushehr, Zanjan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Alborz, West Azarbaijan, Markazi, Kerman, North Khorasan, Hamedan, Yazd, and Kordestan.

The provinces of Hormozgan, Fars, and Golestan and Sistan-Baluchestan are also on alert.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian

■ Editor-in-Chief: Ali A.Jenabzadeh

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com

» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430

» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603

» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com

» Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79

Tehrantimes79

Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran

P.O. Box: 14155-4843

Zip Code: 1599814713

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)

New book on moral principles of Commander Qassem Soleimani published

→1 After his assassination, books on Soleimani became bestsellers in the country, and numerous books have also arrived in the book market. “The Motherland’s Borderless Commander”, a book that gives a deep insight into the life of Soleimani, is one of these books.

Front cover of “Let Us Be This Way: Principles of Soleimani’s School” written by Mohammad-Baqer Babai.

The role of Soleimani as the commander of the Quds Force in the defeat of the ISIS terrorists in the region is also discussed in the book.

Another highlight of the book is a chapter that scrutinizes the legal aspect of the assassination of Commander Soleimani during a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3.

Based on the information collected for this chapter, the writer argues that the U.S. operation to assassinate Soleimani is in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and many other world conventions on peace.

The Sebte Akbar Publications also published a book recounting Soleimani’s memories of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war after the end of the holy month of Ramadan this year.

The book named “Our Blessed Comrade” has been compiled by Asadollah Mohammadinia and Mohammad Mohammadinia.

Earlier in 2016, scholar Ali-Akbar Mozdabadi published “Hajji Qassem”, which contains Soleimani’s memories of the Iran-Iraq war and some other topics and articles published about the commander by several international studies centers.

“The Soldiers of the Commander” authored by Morteza Keramati was also published the same year. In this book, the writer gives an account of Soleimani’s leadership as the Quds Force commander. In addition, it also carries the memories of his soldiers in the fight against the ISIS terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

A Turkish translation of the book by Aykut Pazarbasi was published by Feta Publishing in Istanbul under the title “Haci Kasim Suleymani ve Harem Savunucuları” (“Hajji Qassem Soleimani and Sacred Shrine Defenders”) in March 2020.

John Buchan’s “The 39 Steps” appears in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Scottish novelist John Buchan’s “The 39 Steps” has recently been published by Saad Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Shiva Moqanlu. An effortless adventure classic spanning the void between dime shocker and quality literature, Buchan’s “The 39 Steps” still satisfies after many reads.

Richard Hannay, who returned to England after making his fortune in South Africa, is unwillingly ensnared in a tortured plot to assassinate Karolides the Greek premier and so plunge Europe into war.

Scudder, an American journalist turned spy has coded information relating to the plot but is murdered in Hannay’s luxurious flat before he can pass on the code. Hannay, with all fingers pointing to him as the murderer escapes by Scottish express and with Scudder’s coded notebook.

Decamping from the train in the Sottish lowlands (the Forth Bridge escape from the train was created with the 1935 Hitchcock film adaptation) he is pursued across hill and dale by the police and enemy agents intent on seizing the notebook.

In his flight, he holes up in a remote wayside inn with a literary innkeeper who can quote Kipling. It is here that he masters the code and learns Scudder’s secrets. From then on it’s a race to get to London and notify the authorities. One of the brilliant scenes on the way, concerns Hannay posing as road mender to evade his pursuers. To do this, Hannay explains how you must become one with the environment you’re using as a cover; one of Buchan’s favorite ploys and one employed in many of his novels. Hannay exchanges pursued for pursuer and tracks the agents to their escape channel and ultimately the title of the book is explained. Every reading of this splendid and timeless novel reveals further delights that may have been missed before and even well-remembered scenes take on a fresh vividness and charm,” the book says.

Isfahan festival pays tribute to critic Zaven Qukasian

A R T TEHRAN — The 33rd International Film Festival for Children and Youth organized an online program Tuesday evening to pay tribute to Zaven Qukasian, veteran critic and filmmaker whose hometown Isfahan is currently hosting the festival.

The audience watched the program which streamed online at TVA, the Iranian video sharing and film streaming website.

The program named “A Night with Zaven” began with a video clip about the filmmaker followed by speeches delivered by his friends and students.

Author Heshmatollah Entekhabi talked about Zaven and his influence on the art of Isfahan and said, “The atmosphere of Isfahan is sad without Zaven. He was an inseparable part of the art of Isfahan.”

Entkhebai, the managing director of Mana Publications, said that a special report was published in honor of Zaven, which he took to him and he liked it very much.

“I think the best bulletins of Isfahan were published while Zaven was alive. He established the love of cinema in the hearts of the children of Isfahan” Entekhabi said.

Next, the young filmmaker Majid Sheida, one of Zaven’s former students who has compiled the book “A Season with Zaven”, said, “The story of the book dates back to 2009 when I met him at the Isfahan Artists Forum during an interview, and I thought why hasn’t anybody written a book about Zaven, who himself has carried out many research works and written many books. I asked him for an interview and he accepted, and I began with his love and interest in cinema.”

Isfahan Mayor Qodratollah Noruzi called Qukasian a popular artist who was well-known

Film critic and director Zaven Qukasian.

among the people of Isfahan.

Qukasian passed away at the age of 64 in 2015 following a battle with stomach cancer.

He was the author of a large number of books and biographies of prominent Iranian filmmakers and stars, including Bahram Beizai, Masud Kimiai, Abbas Kiarostami, Bahman Farmanara, Khosro Sinai, Golab Adineh, Reza Arham-Sadr and Fatemeh Motamed-Arya.

He made his debut feature “All My Children” in 1984. He had previously directed the short films “Ancient Bride” and “Another Season”, and the documentaries “Jolfa, My

Museum” and “The Picture of Imagination”.

Earlier in May 2009, Qukasian was honored during the second edition of Iran’s Cinema Book of the Year ceremony held at the Iranian House of Cinema.

The honoring ceremony was followed by a screening of a short film on Qukasian in which cinematic figures Khosro Sinai, Kianush Ayyari, Minu Farshchi and Jamshid Arjmand talked about Qukasian.

In his short speech during the ceremony, Farmanara said, “I have been friends with Qukasian for years. We are both from Isfahan

and whenever I get a chance to travel there, I would be sure to meet him. Actually, it is hard to befriend a critic, especially when you are a filmmaker, and he is a critic. But he is the kindest critic I know. He might be kind, however, he informs us of his views too, but he doesn’t tear the filmmaker apart with his criticism. He never left Isfahan and tried to develop cinema in the city, and actually brought cinema experts to Isfahan.”

Farmanara had later pointed to the active presence of the Armenian-Christian community residing in Iran and continued, “Iran’s cinema is indebted to the Armenian community [in Iran]. They have made great progress in the technical aspect of cinema. For example, Samuel Khachikian and Varuj Karim-Masihi are two examples of veteran Armenian filmmakers.”

Qukasian had also made a short speech and stated, “Newton has said in one of his statements, ‘If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants who have come before me.’ And all these years, I tried to put myself on the shoulders of the dear and splendid giants around me to see a few steps more in front of me. Their breath gives me life and hope.”

“We must understand first to learn more. I made great efforts to understand myself and others, to understand the films, filmmakers and the critics in the country and overseas. In order to see a few steps further, I spoke a lot with filmmakers Masud Kimiai, Bahram Beizai, Mohammadreza Aslani, Bahman Farmanara, and even young filmmakers and critics,” he remarked.

The festival will be running until October 23.

Ahmadreza Shojaei picked as Iran’s Still Photographer of the Year

A R T TEHRAN — Ahmadreza Shojaei was crowned Iran’s Still Photographer of the Year on Tuesday for his collection on director Mohammadreza Honarmand’s romance-fantasy “Symphony No. 9”.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no celebration and Shojaei received his award during a small meeting with a limited number of members of the Iranian Society of Still Photographers at the Iranian House Cinema.

Jury members Ghogha Bayat, Shahbeddin Adel and Reza Mohajer also attended the meeting.

“Symphony No. 9” is about Rahil whose husband dies in surgery. She wants to bury her husband beside his parents’ graves in a remote village based on his last will and testament, however, her husband’s relatives disagree. In her struggle to execute the will, she meets the Angel of Death and learns she has no more time. However, the angel falls in love with her instead of claiming her life.

Photographers Habib Majidi and Fattah Zinuri also

were honored as runner-up and winner of third prize respectively for “180° Rule” by Farnush Samadi and “Rona, Azim’s Mother” by Afghan brothers Jamshid and Navid Mahmudi.

“180° Rule” features a tragedy that strikes at the heart of a wedding in the mountains overlooking Tehran. In the movie, a teacher from Tehran makes a choice that changes her family’s structure and puts her on a painful path to atonement.

The acclaimed movie “Rona, Azim’s Mother” is about Azim, an Afghan refugee who works as a janitor in Tehran. While helping his mother and his brother’s family plan to smuggle themselves into Germany, he feels betrayed by his brother when he abandons their mother.

Iran’s Still Photographer of the Year is annually honored during the Iranian Society of Still Photographers Celebration. However, the sixth edition of the gala was canceled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“Rotation”, “Song Sparrow” to compete in Suncine environmental filmfest

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian animated films “The Rotation” and “Song Sparrow” will be competing in the 27th Suncine International Festival of Environmental Cinema in Mexico.

Both of the short movies will be screened in the Suncine Views section of the festival, which will take place from November 4 to 12.

Suncine Views is a global look at the state of our planet through productions made in different countries.

“The Rotation” directed by Hazhir As’adi tells the story of a country where there is a war between two tribes over claiming the sun in the sky. As a result of that war, the

“The Rotation” directed by Hazhir As’adi.

sun is annihilated and a volcano erupts. Those two tribes now are dead and a new

sun is made, both done by the lava. Several centuries pass and the humans are still at war to claim the sun in the sky.

“Song Sparrow”, a co-production with Denmark directed by Farzaneh Omidvarnia, is about People of different color and race and culture, old and young, who embark on journeys, eager to find some place they can call home, or just some place they can live in. Many brave perils more formidable than the ones they ran from in the first place. They dream of better lives while in reality having little choice.

Suncine is the oldest environmental film festival in the world. Its goal is to

educate through entertainment and to raise awareness, using audiovisuals as a tool and language.

“Our planet is in the situation that it’s in, and now is the time to be critical and to see how far our responsibility can go, commit ourselves to it and push for change,” Suncine director Jaume Gil has said in a statement published by the organizers.

“We owe this self-criticism to the youngest among us, to those that are inheriting the future, to those who have for years been heading out onto the streets to demand change in everything associated with environmental policy,” he added.

IDFA picks “Snow Calls”, “Shadegan” from Iran

A R T TEHRAN — A lineup of two Iranian movies will go on screen in the various sections of the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) running online from November 18 to December 6.

“The Snow Calls” by Marjan Khosravi will have its world premiere in the Student Documentary category, while “Shadegan” by Ako Salemi will have its European premiere in the Kids & Docs category.

“The Snow Calls” centers on Mina after bearing three daughters, she has just one more chance, her next child has to be a boy or her husband will marry another woman.

That’s the tradition. The very pregnant Mina and her family live in southwestern Iran, where the rules of the Bakhtiari tribe apply. This time, the expectant mother decides not to have an ultrasound scan, for fear of the result and the gossip that would ensue. She is already under enough pressure from her in-laws, although she does still have people on her side too. “Shadegan” portrays 12-year-old Milad on a golden

A scene from “Shadegan” by Ako Salemi.

morning, while sailing out across the Shadegan Wetlands in Khuzestan, a province in southwestern Iran. He skillfully

Goodreads 2019 best science fiction “Recursion” available for Persian readers

CULTURE TEHRAN — American author William Blake Crouch’s “Recursion”, which won the Goodreads award for best science fiction in 2019, has come out for Persian readers in Iran’s bookstores.

Seyyed Reza Hosseini is the translator of the story released by Amut Publications in Tehran.

In “Recursion”, memory makes reality. That’s what New York City cop Barry Sutton is learning as he investigates the devastating phenomenon the media has dubbed False Memory Syndrome — a mysterious affliction that drives its victims mad with memories of a life they never lived.

That’s what neuroscientist Helena Smith

believes. It’s why she’s dedicated her life to creating a technology that will let us preserve our most precious memories. If she succeeds, anyone will be able to re-experience the birth of a child or the final moment with a dying parent.

As Barry searches for the truth, he comes face-to-face with an opponent more terrifying than any disease — a force that attacks not just our minds but the very fabric of the past. And as its effects begin to unmake the world as we know it, only he and Helena, working together, will stand a chance at defeating it.

But how can they make a stand when reality itself is shifting and crumbling all around them?

A Persian translation of Crouch’s latest

Front cover of the Persian version of American author William Blake Crouch’s “Recursion” book “Dark Matter” by Hadi Salarzahi has recently been published by the Noon

Publishing House in Tehran.

Bestselling novelist and screenwriter Crouch is best known for his Wayward Pines Trilogy – “Pines”, “The Last Town” and “Wayward”, which have been translated into Persian by Zahra Rahimi at Bazh Publications.

The trilogy was adapted into the 2015 television series “Wayward Pines”. He is writing a screen adaptation of “Dark Matter” for Sony Pictures.

He has written more than a dozen novels that have been translated into over thirty languages and his short fiction has appeared in numerous publications including Ellery Queen and Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine. Crouch lives in Colorado with his family.