

U.S., Uk Launch Campaign of Bullying Against Iran

Page 3 STAY UPDATED #FalseFlagOperation

Interview

By M. A. Saki

Yazidis still suffering from repercussions of ISIS crimes: Yazidi activist

TEHRAN – The Yazidis in Iraq are still suffering from the repercussions of ISIS crimes, a Yazidi activist says.

On 3 August 2014, ISIL militants attacked and took over Sinjar in northern Iraq, a Kurdish-controlled town that was predominantly inhabited by Yazidis.

“On the 3rd of August 2014, the Yazidi regions and villages in Iraq were subjected to the most heinous massacre, abuse, kidnapping, mass and individual killing, chases, theft, land confiscation, crop burning, house demolitions, selling of women and children, killing of men and youth, and brain-washing of teenagers to change their religion and their ideas,” Murad Yazidi tells the Tehran Times.

“All this and more have been exercised against the Yazidis systematically, some crimes of which are still continuing, as more than 3,000 children and women are still missing or held in the terrorist camps,” the Yazidi activist adds.

Yazidis, an ethnoreligious minority group of about 550,000 people, mostly reside in northern Iraq, an area also populated by Kurds and Arabs.

ISIS regards the Yazidis as “devil worshippers” who must either renounce their religious views or die.

According to international organizations, ISIS was responsible for the killing and abduction of roughly 9,900 Yazidis and destroying 68 Yazidi shrines in 2014.

When the terrorist group entered the Yazidi ancestral city of Sinjar on Aug. 3, 2014, they murdered roughly 5,000 men and boys and enslaved thousands of women and children. Page 5

Opinion

By Faranak Bakhtiari

Borderless collaboration for a borderless disaster

TEHRAN – Sand and dust storms (SDSs) are blowing thousands of kilometers in and out of the national borders of 150 countries these days, and their statelessness necessitates negotiations for political intervention between several countries.

Sand and dust storms are common meteorological hazards in arid and semi-arid regions. They are usually caused by thunderstorms – or strong pressure gradients associated with cyclones – which increase wind speed over a wide area.

These strong winds lift large amounts of sand and dust from bare, dry soils into the atmosphere, transporting them hundreds to thousands of kilometers away.

The main sources of this mineral dust are the arid regions of Northern Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Central Asia, and China. Comparatively, Australia, America, and South Africa make minor, but still important, contributions.

Global estimates of dust emissions, mainly derived from simulation models, vary about two billion tons per year, about 27 percent of which originates in Asia-Pacific.

Currently, dust storms are a major challenge to sustainable development, especially in arid and semi-arid regions, where more than 151 countries are directly affected, and 45 countries are classified as SDS source areas, according to UNCCD.

Dust storm belts range from the Sahara Desert and West Asia to the Great Desert of India and the deserts of central latitudes of Central Asia, China, and Mongolia. Thus, with such a wide range of cross-border effects, managing dust storms requires global and regional cooperation. Page 7



Report

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – Iranian athletes won seven medals – three golds, two silvers, two bronzes – at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The Iranian delegation had won three gold, one silver

and four bronze medals in the previous edition in Rio.

Shooter Javad Foroughi won Iran's first medal in the Games in the men's 10-meter air pistol.

Foroughi set an Olympic record with 244.8 points, finishing 6.9 ahead of silver medalist Damir Mikec of Serbia. China's Pang Wei, the 2008 gold medalist, took bronze.

The 41-year-old Foroughi surpasses weightlift-

er Mahmoud Namdjou, who was 38 when he took bronze at the 1956 Melbourne Games.

It was Iran's first medal in shooting in the history of Olympics.

Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammadreza Ger-aei claimed the second gold for Iran. He defeated Ukraine's Parviz Nasibov 9-1 in the men's Greco-Roman 67kg final bout. Page 3

Iran's new president holds talks with OPEC secretary general

TEHRAN - New Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi hosted a meeting with the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo in Tehran on Friday, Shana reported.

Barkindo briefed Raisi on the condition of the global oil market and emphasized the significant role of the Islamic Republic of Iran as one of the founders of this organization which has always played a key and constructive role in the oil market.

In the meeting, Raisi also referred to the efforts

of some powers to weaken the position of OPEC and noted that the OPEC secretariat should consider the rights and interests of its members as the basis for adopting all measures and mechanisms.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran, as an effective member of OPEC, emphasizes on promoting the global position of this organization and promoting its role in managing the global energy market,” he stated.

Congratulating the 60th anniversary of OPEC establishment, Raisi expressed hope that the orga-

nization would become more active and constructive in the future and the members would be more coordinated and cooperative.

“The OPEC Secretariat should play a more active role for coordinating between member and non-member countries,” the president stressed.

Iran completely ready to return to oil market

On the same day, Barkindo also met with the outgoing Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh to discuss the oil market and the possibility of Iran's return to the market. Page 4

IRGC general: Enemies will face “tough response” if they test Iran

TEHRAN — The head of the aerospace force of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has warned the enemies against any aggressive behavior against Iran, saying that if they test Iran's strength again, they will face a “tough response”.

Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh made the remarks on Saturday after Israel and certain Western countries accused Tehran of attacking an Israeli tanker abandoned off the coast of Oman.

They have failed to provide any evidence to confirm their claims against Iran. Tehran has denied any involvement in the incident and categorically refuted the unfounded allegations.

Hajizadeh said, “The Islamic Republic has passed the test and does not need to retest, but it can retest Iran if it wants.” Page 2



Resistance Axis and Iran: A new chapter

TEHRAN — In separate meetings with leaders of the Axis of Resistance, Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi reiterated Iran's unwavering support for the Resistance Axis, lauding their fruitful moves and tactics. Speaking in a meeting with the secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad

Movement Ziyad al-Nakhalah on Friday evening, Raisi stressed the need to support the oppressed people of Palestine against aggression and murder, and stated, “The Islamic Republic of Iran has no doubt in supporting Palestine and we will defend the rights of these oppressed people.” Page 2

Susa: get to know Iran's legendary ruined city

TEHRAN – Ancient Susa is one of Iran's most treasured sights. The UNESCO-designated city, now flanked by the modern city of Shush, formerly belonged to the Elamite, Persian, and Parthian empires.

Situated in the lower Zagros mountain range, around 250 kilometers east of the Tigris river and between the Kharkeh and Dez rivers, Susa is identified as Shushan in the Book of Esther and other Biblical books.

It was once the winter residence of Persian kings after having been captured by Cyrus the Great. Susa became part of the Persian Empire under Cyrus II, the Great in 538 or 539 BC.

Archaeological evidence suggests that Susa has

been continuously inhabited since 4,200 BC placing it among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. In addition, there are traces at Susa of a village inhabited around 7,000 BC and painted pottery dating from ca. 5,000 BC at the site.

Artifacts discovered at the site include carved cylinder seals, jewelry, clay balls, and clay tablets with cuneiform inscriptions recording business transactions, political history, and mathematical calculations.

It is said that Alexander of Macedonia captured Susa in 330 BC and plundered the city, seizing some 40,000 talents of gold and silver from the treasury. Alexander the Great initiated Shushan's

decline by favoring Babylon and shortly after, following a revolt, the city was burnt to the ground. Subsequently rebuilt by Sapor II (309-379 CE), it was renamed Iranshahr Shapur and later helped in the resistance against the Arab invasion of 645.

After the fall of the Achaemenid Empire and the reign of Alexander the Great, who married in Susa, the city became part of the Seleucid empire. It was now called Seleucia on the Eulaeus. A palace in Greek style was erected, next to Darius' palace. The administrative center, however, was in the southern part of the city, where nearly all Greek and Parthian inscriptions were discovered. In the Parthian age, the city minted coins. Page 6

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Op-ed

By Abir Bassam

The maritime attacks in Oman Gulf; what lies behind the bushes

On the 30th of July, Yediot Aharonot reported an attack on the “Israeli” Ship “Mercer Street”, an oil tanker. It was attacked at night in Oman's Gulf and two crew members were killed. The attack was followed by tales of hijacking the “Asphalt Princess” on the 3rd of August, which is an industrial ship. And then again, the Marine Traffic reported the disappearance of “Golden Brilliant”. Both ships were in the Gulf of Oman near Fujairah port in UAE. The U.S., Britain, and Israel mainly pointed the fingers at Iran and Arab liberation movements, mainly Hezbollah, for the suspected incident.

It is not a complicated issue to grasp when Israel is involved. It is a regime that is striving to prove its right of existence as part of the region. Therefore, the history and the presence of this illegitimate regime are full of evidence that shows its criminality against its own people and others. Anything is justified for the sake of getting more sympathy and support from its operators, mainly Britain and the United States, who take turns in playing this role.

Since Iran has declared the establishment of its new oil pipes line, it is currently able to refill its oil tankers without the need to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. No one was pleased. Iran's oil exports no longer pass under the observation of the American military bases in the Arab countries in the (Persian) Gulf.

The “giant project” was launched on the 20th of July. It is aimed to transport oil from Bushehr province to Jask port in Hormuzgan province and enabled Iran to avoid transiting oil through the Strait of Hormuz. This step has saved the oil tanker 1000 miles of navigation.

It was a major economic leap for Iran. However, the attacks on ships started at the end of July, which coincided with the inauguration of Mr. Ibrahim Raisi's assumption of power. Page 5

COVID-19 vaccination of foreign students to begin in weeks

TEHRAN – The vaccination of foreign nationals who are studying at Iranian universities will start in the next Iranian calendar month (August 23-September 22) along with Iranian students, according to the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control.

“Some 57,675 foreign nationals from 133 countries are studying in Iranian universities, many of whom have returned to their country with the outbreak of the pandemic,” Afshin Akhoundzadeh, an official at the Organization of Student Affairs has said. Page 7

Iran asks for unraveling hidden dimensions of Mazar-e-Sharif incident

TEHRAN — On the 23rd anniversary of the martyrdom of Iranian diplomats in Mazar-e-Sharif, the Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement asking for the clarification of the truth behind the terrorist incident.

The statement reads as follows:

"The 8th of August is a reminder of one of the bitterest days for the diplomatic apparatus of the Islamic Republic of Iran. 23 years ago, on such a day, Iranian diplomats and a journalist were cowardly martyred at the Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan,... in violation of international laws and treaties, and Islamic and human logic.

International sympathy is with the people and government of Iran in the wake of this terrorist incident and the expression of special sympathy from the oppressed people of Afghanistan who were themselves victims of blind terrorism, highlights another shining manifestation of the deep ties between the peoples of the two countries. The ties that have always been formed amid unjust wars against the oppressed people of Afghanistan, reiterate the mutual support of the Iranian people for their oppressed Afghan brothers and sisters.

The deep and true ties between the two nations of Iran and Afghanistan leave no choice but to adopt constructive approaches that aim to ensure the interests of both countries. The people and

government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as in the past, stand with their brothers and sisters in Afghanistan and help find a solution to end more than four decades of ruthless war and protect the achievements of the Afghan people, and the blood of thousands of martyrs.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while commemorating the martyrs of this incident and strongly condemning the terrorist act, continues to pursue the clarification of the hidden dimensions of this case as a definite demand of the Iranian government and people.

Finally, the ministry reiterates its call on all parties to the war in Afghanistan to end the conflict and fratricide and seek a solution in the negotiations, and continue to facilitate and host these talks."

On August 8, 1998, Taliban forces captured Mazar-i-Sharif. After seizing the city, 11 Iranian diplomats and a correspondent from Iran's state news agency IRNA were attacked at the Iranian consulate and subsequently disappeared. Unofficial reports from the city indicated that all these men were killed. Later it was confirmed that 8 of the Iranian diplomats and the IRNA correspondent were killed. The Taliban spokesmen said the Iranians had been killed by renegade forces who had acted without orders. The final death toll was confirmed later to be 11 according to Tehran Times.

Military dismisses false statements, warns Iran will not allow military engagement in region

TEHRAN— A senior spokesman for the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff dismissed false statements made by the United States about recent attacks on Israeli-operated tankers in the Sea of Oman, warning enemy Iran that it will not allow any possible military contact to break out in the region.

On Saturday, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi condemned in an interview with journalists the story fabricated by the U.S., Israeli and Saudi media outlets about Iran's involvement in the recent attack on the Mercer Street oil tanker, which was an attempt to contribute to the Iranophobia.

Commander also warned that in the event of a military confrontation with the enemy, Iran will not allow a battle zone to form in its surrounding areas.

"If we are going to fight the (military) enemy, we will make a clear announcement, just as we did in Ein al-Assad," the general added, noting that Iran launched a large-scale missile strike on U.S. air bases in Iraq in January 2020, in retaliation for the assassination of Iran's top commander, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

General Shekarchi denied the recent enemy story about Iran's role in the attack on Israeli ships. As part of the psychological action, Shekarchi

chi said that such a move showed the enemy's fear for the integrity of the Islamic Republic.

"The United States has not participated in the interaction in the past and currently. They have been trying to overthrow the Iranian government. As long as the Americans are under the influence of the Zionist regime, their approach of dealing with Iran will not change," he said.

The general warned that although the strategies of the United States, Britain, and Israel are based on creating insecurity, the Saudi media have also joined them, intensifying fear of Iran, adding that Iran's strategy is to strengthen the security of the Persian Gulf.

He also refuted the United States' claim that the wreckage of an Iranian drone was recovered from the water after the Mercer Street attack, saying that it is not clear which laboratory examined such undocumented evidence.

The commander pointed out that for Zionists who have a long experience in such operations, it is not difficult to fabricate untenable evidence. "It's not even difficult to create an explosion on a ship," he said.

The unity and solidarity of Iran's Islamic institutions angered the United States, and the United States fabricated such stories as a way to increase pressure on Iran, Shekarchi added.

Ambassador calls accusations against Iran over suspicious attack on Israeli tanker 'delusional'

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador to Paris on Friday rejected as "delusional" accusations against Tehran regarding a suspected drone attack on an Israeli-managed oil tanker.

The comments by Bahram Qassemi comes as the Israeli regime along with certain Western countries have accused Iran of the drone attack against the tanker without presenting a shred of evidence to substantiate their claims.

Iran has called the claims against Iran a false flag operation intended to demonize Tehran.

In a highly provocative statement, Israel's minister of military affairs Benny Gantz has said the regime was prepared to "take military action against Iran."

Ambassador Qassemi said Iran will make Tel Aviv and its Western allies regret for igniting flames of a war in the region, Press TV reported.

The Israeli-operated ship Mercer Street was suspiciously attacked off the coast of Oman on July 29 while traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. The oil tanker, managed by Israeli shipping magnate Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Maritime. Zodiac Maritime said two crewmen, a British and Romanian national, died in the attack.

An Iranian envoy to the United Nations said the occupying entity is "playing victim" to divert the world public opinion from its crimes and inhumane practices in the region.

Qassemi emphasized that Iran - as the country

Diplomat warns UN Security Council on Israeli deception

TEHRAN — The United Nations Security Council must confront Israel's adventurism in the West Asia region and reject its deceptions and fabrications, Iran's ambassador to the UN has said.

"Today, Israel and its supporters presented fake information on recent incidents in regional waters to convince UNSC to censure Iran and failed," Majid Takht Ravanchi tweeted on Friday.

"We strongly reject these allegations. The UN Security Council must confront Israel's adventurism in the region and reject its deceptions and

fabrications" he added.

The suspicious drone attack on the Israeli ship on July 29 has led to wild speculations ranging from an Israeli "retaliatory" strike inside Iran to derailment of the already faltering nuclear talks between Iran and the West in Vienna.

Israel seems eager to intensify these speculations by taking advantage of the attack and singling out Iran as a threat to international security. This is while Iran strongly repudiated the allegations Israel leveled against it.

Resistance Axis and Iran: A new chapter



Ziyad al-Nakhlah (L) in meeting with Raisi

From page 1 ► The president described the Islamic Jihad as an influential group in defending the rights of the Palestinian people and said, "Today, the power to determine the fate of Palestine is in the hands of the warriors and resistance groups, and this will continue until the final victory is achieved."

Noting that the final victory belongs to the right front, Raisi stated, "The wrong front is desperate and helpless against the right front in Gaza, despite having armed and material power."

In the meeting, Islamic Jihad leader al-Nakhlah also congratulated Ayatollah Raisi on his victory on behalf of the Palestinian people and resistance warriors, saying, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has become a model in the world for the peaceful transfer of power, while we witnessed a chaos in America a few months back."

He pointed out, "The message of your speech on the day of the inauguration was to support rights, justice and the oppressed, and we will be by the side of Islamic Iran until the liberation of Holy Quds."

"We have never had and will never have any doubt in backing Palestinians' rights"

In the meeting with Haniyeh, Raisi reaffirmed that Iran will continue to support Palestine as the main issue of the Muslim world.

"We have never had and will never have any doubt about this policy. In our view, Palestine has been and will be the first issue of the Muslim world," he noted.

Raisi also commended Haniyeh's optimistic stance on the liberation of al-Quds and the end of the occupation of Palestine, saying "Operation al-Quds Sword" - the Palestinian resistance groups' 11-day retaliatory rocket and missile launches in response to Israel's brutal bombing campaign on Gaza in May - showed that a great leap has been made in the fight against the occupiers.

"Today, signs of great victory of the resistance movement have emerged and Operation al-Quds Sword was one of the signs of this victory," he added.

Also, in the meeting with the PFLP officials, the new Iranian president described resistance as the



Falih Alfayyadh (L) meets with Raisi

sole way for victory against the Zionists, "The Zionist regime has not honored any of the contracts and treaties it has signed, and those seeking the normalization of ties with that regime will soon admit their mistake," Raisi pointed out.

Raisi lauds Hezbollah for reaction against Zionist aggression

Praising Hezbollah for displaying a successful model of resistance, President Raisi said the Lebanese resistance movement has acted successfully in standing against the Zionist enemy and Takfiri groups.

In a meeting with Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem on Friday, Raisi said

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"Hezbollah has been able to display effective deterrence in the face of the Zionist enemy, the Takfiri groups, and the overt and covert seditions in general," Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi notes.

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the approach adopted by the resistance groups including Hezbollah against the arrogant powers has turned into a successful and inclusive model.

"Hezbollah has been able to display effective deterrence in the face of the Zionist enemy, the Takfiri groups, and the overt and covert seditions in general," the Iranian president added.

He said the hope for resistance that Hezbollah has created among the nations has prompted the enemies to halt the promotion of such workable model with every possible means and that is why the adversaries are restricting or blocking the media outlets affiliated with the resistance

IRGC general: Enemies will face "tough response" if they test Iran

From page 1 ► "They let us stand the test and know the answers they will face. We have both the power and the will to exercise power. We will definitely respond harshly and they cannot make such a mistake," the general added.

According to reports, on July 29, the Libe-rian-flagged Mercer Street operated by the Israeli-owned Zodiac Maritime Company was suspiciously hit near the island of Masirah, Oman. Two crew members were killed in the incident.

"Don't test us"

In similar remarks on Friday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh warned Israel against any "foolish move," saying that Iran will decisively respond to any reckless military adventure.

"In another brazen violation of Int'l law, Israeli regime now blatantly threatens Iran with military action. Such malign behavior stems from blind Western support," Khatibzadeh said on Twitter. "We state this clearly: ANY foolish act against Iran will be met with a DECISIVE response. Don't test us."

He was responding to a threat issued by Israeli War Minister Benny Gantz against Iran. Gantz said Israel is ready to take military action against Iran.

The Israeli-operated ship Mercer Street was attacked off the coast of Oman on July 29 while traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. The oil tanker, managed by Israeli shipping magnate Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Maritime, was reportedly attacked by suicide drones. Zodiac Maritime said two crewmen, a British and Romanian national, died in the attack.

"With profound sadness, we understand the incident onboard the M/T Mercer Street on 29 July, 2021 has resulted in the deaths of two crew members on board," the UK-based Israeli company said in a statement on Friday afternoon, a day after the attack.

Israel, the U.S. and the UK blamed Iran for the attack without presenting any evidence to support their accusations.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett claimed that Tel Aviv knows with certainty Iran attacked the Mercer Street ship and will respond to it.

"I determine, with absolute certainty - Iran carried out the attack against the ship," Bennett stated, according to the Jerusalem Post. "The intelligence evidence for this exists and we expect the international community will make it clear to the Iranian regime that they have made a serious mistake."



Naim Qassem (L) meets with Raisi

front.

For his part, Sheikh Qassem relayed regards from Hezbollah Secretary General Seyed Hassan Nasrallah.

He also noted that despite the difficult social conditions in Lebanon, the resistance current is in good situation because of genuine unity with people.

Sheikh Qassem also described Hezbollah as the only group that has been able to maintain its unity with people in Lebanon against the Zionist enemy's acts of aggression and plots.

"PMF is a great support for Iraq's progress"

Speaking in a meeting with the Chairman of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) Falih Alfayyadh on Friday evening, Raisi praised the valuable role of the mobilization forces in the cohesion and unity of Iraq and defending the people against terrorist groups.

"The initiative of the people in forming the popular mobilization forces was a smart move that have had -and will have- many blessings for the country and the Iraqi people," President Raisi remarked.

The president added, "The popular mobilization is a great support for the development and progress of Iraq and defending the people against the conspiracies and plots of foreigners, just as what Imam Khomeini did in Iran."

Raisi also commemorated the memories of martyrs Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, saying, "Thanks to the blood of these martyrs and other martyrs of the resistance, the relations between the two nations will be deeper and stronger."

For his part, PMU chief Falih Alfayyadh also congratulated Ayatollah Raisi on his election victory.

He also referred to the impact of General Soleimani's "courage and blood" on the deep bond between the two nations of Iran and Iraq, saying, "The people of Iraq respect martyr Qassem Soleimani, and he has become a symbol of the heartfelt relationship between the two nations."



He noted, "In any case, we know how to send a message to Iran in our own way."

The UK also followed suit. "We believe this attack was deliberate, targeted, and a clear violation of international law by Iran. UK assessments have concluded that it is highly likely that Iran attacked the MV Mercer Street in international waters off Oman on 29 July using one or more unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)," said a UK statement last week. "The UK is working with our international partners on a concerted response to this unacceptable attack."

Iran said it was not behind the attack on the Israeli ship. Khatibzadeh has responded to allegations by U.S. and UK top diplomats against Iran about last week's attack on an Israeli oil tanker off the coast of Oman.

Iran condemns G7 statement, calls it baseless

TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh issued a statement on Saturday stating that attributing suspected attack on an Israeli-operated oil tanker to Iran are "baseless scenarios" designed to complicate the atmosphere.

"We condemn the baseless statement of the G7 foreign ministers and the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs, which is full of baseless allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran," Khatibzadeh said in response to the statement of the G7 foreign ministers.

The spokesman added that the Mercer ship incident occurred just a few days before the inauguration of the new Iranian president, which is



a manifestation of the democratic transfer of power in Iran.

"Such baseless scenarios, which are often the work of the Zionist regime from behind the scenes, are designed to confuse the atmosphere," he added.

According to the spokesman, these

allegations have customers among those who are immediately ready for unrealistic and irrational conclusions.

"In fact, for the experts and those familiar with the history of this region, the planning of such conspiracies by the Zionist regime at different times is not new," he added.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman concluded by saying that Iran is fully committed to securing the strategic waterway of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz and considers it a part of its security.

Khatibzadeh added Iran will not hesitate to defend its sovereign rights in the strategic waterway.

On August 6, the G7 issued a statement calling the incident for the Mer-

cer ship "a targeted and deliberate attack," pointing fingers towards Iran.

Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, a senior spokesman for the Iranian military, has said that "if we are going to confront the enemy, we will explicitly declare it, like the attack on Ein al-Assad base."

Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Islamic Republic Guard Corps Aerospace Force, also reacted to threats against Iran in regard to the suspected attack on the ship, saying, "They have already tested us and know what kind of response they will face... therefore they must know that if they want to do any adventure (against Iran) they will receive a crushing response."

U.S., UK launch campaign of bullying against Iran

TEHRAN – In a concerted effort meant to pressure Iran ahead of the expected resumption of nuclear talks in Vienna, Washington and its European allies are exploiting a mysterious attack on an Israeli-operated oil tanker to extract more concessions from Iran.

In doing so, they are unwittingly playing into the hands of an Israeli scheme designed to torpedo the very same nuclear deal Washington and the Europeans are allegedly trying to revive.

The controversy over the recent attack on the Israeli-operated ship Mercer Street continues unabated, with the U.S. and the UK taking the issue to the UN Security Council, though they failed to create a consensus against Iran in the UN body.

The Israeli ship came under attack off the coast of Oman on July 29 while traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. The oil tanker, managed by Israeli shipping magnate Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Maritime, was reportedly attacked by suicide drones. Zodiac Maritime said two crewmen, a British and Romanian national, died in the attack.

This attack, blamed by Tel Aviv, London, and Washington on Iran, marked the beginning of a coordinated diplomatic campaign against Iran at a time when the nuclear talks over the 2015 Iran nuclear deal reached a deadlock after six rounds of painstaking talks in Vienna.

The last round of Vienna talks was concluded more than a month ago with the differences over how to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) still not bridged. The U.S. refused



to lift all the sanctions imposed by the Trump administration as well as give guarantees that it will not withdraw from the JCPOA again.

The sixth round was held while Iran was undergoing a transition of power due to the June 18 presidential election in which Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi won by a landslide.

Sensing a change of calculations in Tehran, the U.S., along with its European allies, embarked on a diplomatic campaign to intimidate Iran into returning to the Vienna talks without any new demands. The main concern of the U.S. was that the new Iranian president's negotiating team would come back to Vienna with new spirit and demands, something that amounts to the abrogation of the "progress" made in the last six rounds. This concern was not gratuitous; The Tehran Times reported in early July that Iran had considered, among other

options, rejecting the outcome of the Vienna talks under Hassan Rouhani. At that time, a source familiar with the matter told the Tehran Times that Iran may seek to reject the outcome and lay out a new agenda for the talks with the West with the purpose of solving the outstanding issues in a new format and spirit.

In an apparent bid to influence Iran's calculations, the U.S. sought to ramp up diplomatic pressure on Iran ever since the end of the sixth round. They threatened to withdraw from the talks, openly opposed lifting all the sanctions, and even prepared new oil sanctions on Iran.

Then there was the attack on Mercer Street, which was seen by the U.S. and its allies as a gift to further squeeze Iran. While the kerfuffle over this attack is still ongoing, the UK and its allies cooked up stories about the hijacking of several commercial ships off the coast of the United Arab Emirates in the Gulf of

Oman. Once again, they accused Iran of playing a role.

Iran fully understood the ulterior motives behind the drama. Iranian officials warned the West against engaging in dirty games of propaganda to extract concessions. Commenting on the alleged hijacking attempt in the Gulf of Oman, the Iranian embassy in the UK said on Twitter, "Misleading the public all around the world for diplomatic gain in New York is not fair game."

But this unfair game may backfire. The U.S. and the UK have enlisted the help of Israel in their campaign of pressure against Iran, a move that is likely to have unintended consequences for London and Washington. Because Israel may be on the same page with the U.S. and the UK in terms of turning up the heat on Iran, certainly Tel Aviv seems to be seeking different goals toward Iran than those the UK and the U.S.

Israel's Ambassador to the US and UN Gilad Erdan has shed his inhibition and unveiled part of these goals. He said that Israel would ultimately like to see the Islamic Republic of Iran overthrown. "In the end, we would ultimately like to see [the government] overthrown and [for there to be] regime change and Iran," Erdan told Army Radio on Thursday, when asked about Israel's strategy vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic, according to the Times of Israel.

Regardless of what Israel pursues vis-à-vis Iran, the current approach of London and Washington is unlikely to bear results as Iran has made it clear that it will not be intimidated into giving up its legitimate rights.

SPORTS

Iran wraps up Tokyo 2020 with seven medals

From Page 1 ► Sajad Ganjzadeh also claimed a gold medal in the men's karate kumite competition in the +75kg category.

He defeated Tareh Hamedei from Saudi Arabia in the final match. Hamedei was given a disqualification penalty for kicking Ganjzadeh hard in the upper body or head.

Weightlifter Ali Davoudi won a silver medal at the +109kg weight class. He lifted a total weight of 441kg. His snatch lift was 200kg, with the clean and jerk of 241kg.

Freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani took Iran's second silver medal in the 86kg weight class. He lost to David Taylor from the U.S. 4-3 in the final.

Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammadhadi Saravi won a bronze medal at the 97kg category. He defeated Finland's Arvi Savolainen 9-2 in the bronze medal match.

Amirhossein Zare also won a bronze medal in the men's freestyle 125kg, beating Chinese Deng Zhiwei 5-0 in the bronze medal match.

Iran sent 66 athletes to Tokyo in 16 sports.

Ganjzadeh wins Iran third gold at Tokyo 2020

TEHRAN – Sajad Ganjzadeh from Iran claimed a gold medal in the men's karate kumite competition in the +75kg category of the 2020 Olympic Games on Saturday.

He defeated Tareh Hamedei from Saudi Arabia by Hansoku in the final match.

Hamedei was given a disqualification penalty for kicking Ganjzadeh hard in the upper body or head.



Turkey's Ugur Aktas and Japan's Ryutaro Araga took the bronze medals.

The sport is not on the program for Paris 2024, and its long-term Olympic future is up in the air.

Shooter Javad Foroughi and Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammadreza Geraei had also won two gold medals for Iran delegation in the Games.

Iran's lack of preparation for World Cup qualifiers

TEHRAN – Iran national football team will begin the third round of the 2022 World Cup qualification with no warm-up matches, while their opponents in Group A have started their preparation for the competition.

The UAE, headed by Bert van Marwijk, have started their preparatory camp in Serbia as they ramp up preparations for the third and final round of qualifiers from Aug. 6 to 13.

Iraq, coached by Dutchman Dick Advocaat, will also hold a training camp in Serbia. The Iraqis will play Oman and Croatia in their camp.

Ivan Hasek will have the Lebanese players at his disposal for an entire month before the start of the final round of the qualification after the FA decided to postpone the start of the domestic league to give the coach time to prepare the national team.

Lebanon will also have two preparatory camps in Turkey and UAE before their first match against the UAE in Dubai on September 2.

Dragan Skocic's side have won every game since the return of international football including a win in Bosnia and Herzegovina but they have a tough task in the final round since just two teams out of six teams will qualify for the 2022 World Cup directly for the finals.

Iran national football team will start training camp in Tehran from Aug. 25. The 'Persian Leopards' will not be playing a friendly match prior to the competition and it could make hard for Iran who look to participate at the World Cup for the third times in a row.

Former Iran midfielder Azizi passes away

TEHRAN – Former Iran and Persepolis football team midfielder Alireza Azizi passed away on Saturday.

He lost his battle with cancer at the age of 72 in Tehran.

Azizi was a member of Iran national football team who won 1976 AFC Asian Cup title in Tehran.

The Abadan-born player started his club career in 1972 with Homa and joined Persepolis after three years.

Tehran Times extends deepest sympathy to Azizi's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

AFC inspectors to visit Iran for 2027 AFC Asian Cup

TEHRAN – The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) inspectors will travel to Iran in November to visit the stadiums and infrastructures for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup.

The host of the 2027 Asian Cup was due to be announced at the 31st AFC Congress in November 2020, but this decision is now due to take place in 2022, because of travel restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic delaying inspectors visits to bidding countries.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has published the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Bid Books of the four Member Associations that remain in contention to host the AFC's flagship competition – the All India Football Federation (AIFF), the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), the Qatar Football Association (QFA) and the Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF).

FM Zarif meets Bangladeshi, Nicaraguan diplomats

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held a meeting with senior diplomats from Nicaragua and Bangladesh.

Zarif held talks with Shahriar Alam, the State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, who was in Tehran on behalf of his government to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iran's new president, Seyed Ebrahim Raisi. In the Friday meeting, the Bangladeshi diplomat and the Iranian foreign minister conferred on issues in bilateral relations in different political, economic, and cultural spheres, according to a statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Zarif thanked the Bangladeshi government for sending a high-ranking delegation headed by the country's State Minister of Foreign Affairs to the inauguration ceremony of the Iranian president.

He also reviewed different aspects of relations between the two countries in bilateral and multi-lateral areas, especially collaborations at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Dhaka's stances regarding the issue of Palestine.

Foreign Minister Zarif further praised the Dhaka government's cooperation in the past eight years on promoting ties with Iran.

He also pointed to President Ebrahim Raisi's special attention to ties with the regional countries,

especially the country's neighbors, and expressed hope that relations and collaborations between Tehran and Dhaka would further expand in the coming period, and the use of creative ways to promote mutual cooperation will continue.

The Bangladeshi diplomat, in turn, highlighted the grounds for the promotion of mutual cooperation in various bilateral fields as well as other areas of cooperation. He also praised Zarif's eight-year efforts for relations between the two countries.

Issues related to the Rohingya refugees, cooperation at the OIC, and direct flights between the two countries were among other topics discussed by the two top diplomats. Zarif also met with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Denis Ronald Moncada on Saturday. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the latest developments in bilateral relations and important issues in the Latin American region, as well as the two countries' resistance to unilateralism and the interference of some parties in the affairs of independent countries.

In this meeting, Zarif appreciated the participation of the high-ranking Nicaraguan delegation headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the inauguration ceremony of the new president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, described the relations between the two countries in various fields as im-

portant and called for using appropriate methods to continue cooperation between the two countries.

The Iranian foreign minister also pointed to the similarities between the people of the two countries in terms of enduring the economic pressures imposed by the unilateralism of the United States of America and stressed the undoubted success of the people of the two countries in this field.

The Nicaraguan foreign minister, for his part, expressed his satisfaction with the invitation and attendance at the inauguration of the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, referring to the historical relations between the two countries and thanked Zarif for his efforts to expand cooperation between the two countries over the past eight years.

Zarif met with many foreign diplomats who participated in the inauguration of Ayatollah Raisi. One such meeting was held between Zarif and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah. In the meeting, the two ministers discussed bilateral ties as well as the latest situation of the region and other issues of mutual interest.

In his Thursday meeting with Zarif, the Kuwaiti foreign minister once again expressed his congratulation on the election of Raisi as Iran's new president, reiterating Kuwait City's determination to expand all-out relations with Tehran.

Iran diplomat lambasts Israel at UN Security Council

TEHRAN – An Iranian diplomat at the United Nations Security Council has criticized Israel for playing victim to divert the attention of the public away from its crimes in the region.

"We just heard a distorted statement about the Mercer Street vessel incident. Let me say a few words about it. First, our thoughts are with the families of those who have lost their loved ones in that unfortunate incident. Immediately following this event, Israeli officials accused Iran of the incident. This is what they usually do. It is a standard practice of the Israeli regime. Its aim is to divert the attention of the world public opinion from the regime's crimes and inhumane practices in the region," said Zahra Ershadi, ambassador and Charge d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations.

She added, "To that end, they accuse others of wrongdoing. In almost all incidents in the Middle East, Israel accuses Iran. They do it immediately and provide no evidence."

She made the remarks in a statement on Friday after a closed-door meeting of the UN Security Council on a recent incident for an Israeli-operated oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman.

The Israeli-operated ship Mercer Street was attacked off the coast of Oman on July 29 while traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. The oil tanker, managed by Israeli shipping

magnate Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Maritime, was reportedly attacked by suicide drones. Zodiac Maritime said two crewmen, a British and Romanian national, died in the attack.

"With profound sadness, we understand the incident onboard the M/T Mercer Street on 29 July, 2021 has resulted in the deaths of two crew members on board," the UK-based Israeli company said in a statement on Friday afternoon, a day after the attack.

Israel, along with the U.S. and the UK, blamed Iran for the attack without presenting any evidence to support their accusations.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett claimed that Tel Aviv knows with certainty Iran attacked the Mercer Street ship and will respond to it.

"I determine, with absolute certainty – Iran carried out the attack against the ship," Bennett stated, according to the Jerusalem Post. "The intelligence evidence for this exists and we expect the international community will make it clear to the Iranian regime that they have made a serious mistake."

He noted, "In any case, we know how to send a message to Iran in our own way." Iran strongly rejected the accusation, saying it was not involved in the attack.

"Playing victim, lying and deception are part of their toolbox," Ershadi said of Israel, noting, "Israel's hue and cry on the Mercer Street incident is aimed, in particular, at hiding its terrorist acts

a mistake by the executive welcoming team stationed at Tehran airport.

Khatibzadeh stressed that Iran has always re-

spected the territorial unity and integrity of Iraq, and has an unchangeable policy in this regard, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

Iran says raising Kurdistan flag at Tehran airport was mistake

TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh says raising the Kurdistan Region's flag upon the arrival of the KRG president was

About 10,000 km of railway projects under study

TEHRAN — Iran's outgoing transport minister said that about 10,000 kilometers of railway projects are currently under study.

Pointing out that the length of the country's railway network has reached 14,000 kilometers, Mohammad Eslami said, "Eight rail lines in three provinces will be connected to the country's railway network. The projects for connecting Kordestan, Ardebil, and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari provinces to the national network have a noticeable progress at the moment and will be inaugurated in the coming months."

As the deputy minister has recently announced, 825 kilometers of railroads are going to be constructed across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

This year, eight railway projects are in priority, and with their opening, 825 km will be added to Iran's railway, Kheirollah Khademi, who is also the managing director of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC), stated.

One of the priority railway lines in the present year was the Khaf-Herat railway, 140 km of



which was built inside Afghanistan and was put into operation in recent months, and the second is the Yazd-Eqlid 271-km railway, which is almost completed, the official explained.

The Zahedan-Khash railway is also part of the north-south corridor, 150 km of which has been laid, and the process of adjusting its line is underway, and it seems that its operation will be final this year, he said, adding that the Bostan Abad-Tabriz railway with a progress of about 90 percent and a length of 44 km will be ready to open in the near future.

The Rasht-Caspian Railway, as an important part of the 37-kilometer north-south cor-

ridor with a progress of about 70 percent can be put into operation as one of the country's rail priorities by the end of this year, he noted.

Also, the Hamedan-Sanandaj railway line is 151 km long and has a physical progress of 76 percent, Khademi added.

The development of the railway industry has also been among the top priority plans of the governments in recent years.

The country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021) has envisaged that the railway will account for at least 30 percent of cargo transportation and 20 percent of passenger transportation in Iran.

Value of exports from Semnan province increases 79%



TEHRAN – The value of exports from Semnan province, in the center of Iran, has risen 79 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Ali Sa'dedin, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that over 78,000 tons of products worth \$96 million has been exported from the province in the four-month period, indicating also 11.5 percent rise in terms of weight.

The official said that the commodities have been exported to 31 countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Russia, Armenia, and Persian Gulf littoral states.

Over 60 percent of the goods was exported to Iraq, Afghanistan and Turkey, he added.

He said that 38 types of products are exported from Semnan province to the target countries, and named light and heavy hydrocarbons, detergent powders, construction materials such as cement, ceramic tiles, wire and cable and disposable containers as the major exported items.

Despite the problems in the fields of production and export, and also the sanctions, Semnan experienced significant growth in the field of exports, and this means that this province has a high capacity in this due, the official further highlighted.

As announced by the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil trade rose 47 percent during the first four months of the current year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi has said that Iran has traded 50.8 million tons of non-oil products worth nearly \$29 billion with other countries in the mentioned four-month period, which indicates also 21 percent growth in terms of weight on an annual basis.

The official put the four-month non-oil export at 38.3 million tons valued at \$14.3 billion, with a 65-percent rise in value and a 27-percent growth in weight.

The IRICA head mentioned liquefied gas, polyethylene, iron semi-finished products, methanol, gasoline, iron and steel ingots, steel products, iron rods, liquid propane, bitumen, and copper cathode as the main exported products in the said time span.

He said major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China with about 10 million tons worth \$4.3 billion, Iraq with 10.9 million tons worth \$2.8 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 4.3 million tons worth \$1.6 billion, Turkey with one million tons worth \$923 million, and Afghanistan with 1.8 million tons worth \$728 million.

The official further announced that Iran has imported 12.5 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$14.5 billion in the first four months of the present year, with 32 percent growth in value and five percent rise in weight year on year.

He said that the basic goods accounted for 9.4 million tons of the imported items.

Mir-Ashrafi named cellphones, livestock corn, sunflower oil, barley, meal, wheat, soybeans, sugar and rice as the main imported commodities.

The United Arab Emirates with four million tons of goods worth \$4.7 billion was the first largest exporter of goods to Iran in the four-month period, followed by China with one million tons of goods worth \$3.1 billion, Turkey with 1.3 million tons worth \$1.5 billion, Germany with 351,000 tons worth \$563 million, and Switzerland with 672,000 tons worth \$539 million, the official stated.

As Mir-Ashrafi has previously announced, the value of Iran's non-oil trade stood at \$73 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

He has put the weight of non-oil trade at 146.4 million tons, and said that the figure shows a 25-million-ton annual decline, which is the result of sanctions and coronavirus pandemic.

Iran's non-oil export was 112 million tons valued at \$34.5 billion, and that of import was 34.4 million tons worth \$38.5 billion in the past year, the official added.

Iran's new president holds talks with OPEC secretary general

From page 1 ► Speaking in this meeting, Zanganeh noted that after the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions Iran was robbed of its right for exporting two million barrels per day (bpd) of oil which would equal about \$120 billion of revenues.

The minister expressed Iran's complete readiness for returning to the oil market after the U.S. sanctions are

lifted.

He further underlined the critical role that OPEC plays in the global economy, saying: "OPEC is the only third world economic organization that is influencing the world's economic interactions."

The key concept that OPEC has been able to act on and succeed in, has been cooperation among members despite rivalry and political differences, as we



President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi (R) holds talks with OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo in Tehran on Friday.

saw in the recent meeting.

Barkindo for his part praised Zanganeh's positive work and actions

during his tenure, adding: "We hope that Iran will continue to play a key and important role in OPEC and the oil market."

Iran's largest silo to go operational next fiscal year

TEHRAN – Behrouz Aghaei, the director-general of Ports and Maritime Department of Sistan-Baluchestan Province in southeastern Iran, has said the country's largest fully mechanized grain silo, with a loading and unloading capacity of 1,200 tons per hour, will be put into operation in the next Iranian calendar year (starts in March 2022).

The construction operations of the Shahid Beheshti port's 100,000-ton silo in southeastern Chabahar port city were started in late October 2020 and the silo will be put into operation in the Iranian calendar year 1401, Aghaei told IRIB.

The silo has a dynamic capacity of 600,000 tons per year, he added.

According to the official, the silo will be equipped with an electronic unloading system and two transmission lines to transport goods from docks.



This silo has been constructed with the aim of increasing the port's storage capacity for the ships carrying basic goods to the region, he stated.

"By increasing storage capacity as one of the economic factors of the country's ports, this project will have a great impact on reducing the costs

of transportation and storage of goods in south-eastern Iran," Aghaei added.

As Iran's only oceanic port on the Gulf of Oman, Chabahar port holds great significance for the country both politically and economically. The country has taken serious measures for developing this port in order to improve the country's maritime trade.

The port consists of Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti terminals, each of which has five berth facilities. The port is located in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan Province and is about 120 kilometers southwest of Pakistan's Baluchistan province, where the China-funded Gwadar port is situated.

Iran has already started working on a 600-kilometer-long railway line connecting Chabahar port to Zahedan, the provincial capital of Sistan-Baluchestan province close to the Afghan border.

Mining sector needs €19b investment

TEHRAN – Official statistics indicate that \$19 billion of investment is required for the realization of the development plans set for the country's mining sector for the horizon of the Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts in March 2025).

As IRNA reported, based on the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) data, over 68 percent of the mentioned investment is related to the steel chain.

The mentioned resources are required for providing infrastructure for the country's mines and mining industries, including water, roads, railways, and electricity.

Sustainable water supply for mines and mining industries is one of the basic measures that is being led by IMIDRO in collaboration with large companies and major banks.

In this regard, the first phase of Iran's major water desalination and transfer project which is aimed at



supplying Persian Gulf water to central Iran through pipelines was put into operation in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

Some 163 trillion rials (about

\$3.88 billion) has been invested in the mentioned project which is being implemented by the Energy Ministry in collaboration with the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

Three of the country's major mining industry firms namely, Golgozar Company, National Iranian Copper Industries Company, and Chador-malu Industries were the main investors of the project.

This year too, the plan for providing the required road and electricity infrastructure for 56 mines is going to be implemented by IMIDRO in collaboration with the energy and Industry ministries.

Signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Transport Ministry for the construction of the 778-kilometers (km) Bafgh-Sangan railway with an investment of 81 trillion rials (about \$1.9 billion), the construction of a road in Sangan district with an investment of eight trillion rials (about \$190 million), and the signing of an MOU for the construction of Lamerd-Parsian highway with an investment of 10 trillion rials (about \$238 million) are among IMIDRO's development goals for the current year.

Domestic contractors able to construct 1m housing units per year

TEHRAN – Deputy Head of Iran's Mass Construction Association Iraj Rahbar has said the country's contractors are capable of constructing one million housing units a year if the necessary funding and land is provided, IRNA reported.

Mentioning a plan for the construction of one million affordable housing units per year by the new government, Rahbar said: "allocating land and financing are two important factors for the successful implementation of any housing project, and if these two are provided, building one million housing units per year will be easily possible."

The official noted that over the last three years, many efforts have been made to allocate the needed land for housing projects including the National Housing Action Plan to the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, but the land has not been provided as needed.

Rahbar further stressed that there are different ways to attract financial resources for housing construction projects including the use of private sector potentials.

If the trust between the private sector and

the government is restored, the issue of taxation on housing projects is resolved and the government's dues to the private sector contractors are paid on time, mass builders will be more motivated to participate in construction projects, he said.

The official noted that private sector investors have huge resources that can be guided into mass construction projects if they are encouraged and appropriate incentives are considered by the government.

Referring to the recent rise in the prices of cement and steel as main items used in construction, he continued: "The rise in the prices of cement and steel is one of the obstacles in housing production that the government must address; the government has provided all the necessary facilities including cheap energy for the cement and steel production units, but we see that such products are exported instead of being supplied to the domestic market."

Earlier this month, Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh, deputy transport, and urban development minister announced that planning has been made and preparations have been done to start construct-



ing 1.3 million affordable housing units across the country.

Mahmoudzadeh said the required regulations have been prepared and facilities have been created to provide land for the mentioned housing units by the next government.

"With the measures taken, the conditions are more favorable for the new government to begin the work," he noted.

TEDPIX gains 1,700 points on Saturday

TEHRAN – TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 1,718 points to 1,407 million on Saturday (the first day of the Iranian calendar week).

As reported, over 7,845 billion securities worth \$9,465 trillion rials (about \$1.415 billion) were traded at the TSE on Saturday.

The first market's index rose 1,697 points, and the second market's index gained 12,654 points.

TEDPIX rose 90,000 points, or 8.5 percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1,406 million



points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Group, National Iranian Copper Company, Social Security Investment Com-

pany, and Barekat Pharmaceutical Group were the most widely followed indices.

As forecast by a capital market analyst, TEDPIX is going to improve in the second half of the current Iranian calendar month (ends on August 22).

Mehdi Bayat-Manesh has said that considering the current trend of capital inflow into the market TEDPIX is expected to rise in the current month.

"It is expected that the upward trend of the market in the last one month, when the stock index rose from 1.4 million points to 1.8 million points, will continue, and it is also likely that according to the forecasts,

the stock index will once again enter the 1.4 million-point channel by the end of the current month," he said.

According to Bayat-Manesh, the government policies for supporting the upward trend of the market should continue in the coming months in order to ensure this upward trend.

"It is also better for the managers of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) to take the necessary measures for supporting the market so that the stock market index can once again reach more than two million points, which takes at least a few months to happen."

Yazidis still suffering from repercussions of ISIS crimes: Yazidi activist

From page 1 ► Following is the text of the interview:

What is the meaning of the word Yazidi? Is it true that the beliefs of this sect are descended from ancient Persian religions such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism? Is there a common ritual between the Yazidism and Zoroastrianism?

The word “Yazidi” in our language means “servants of God”. “Izady” means the one who created me.

It is a monotheistic, non-missionary religion that believes in one God and only God. Its roots return to the Indo-European religions and is not one of the ancient Persian religions such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, as is rumored.

Although there are commonalities between Yazidism and Zoroastrianism, they are two separate religions since ancient times. There are sources confirming the seniority of the Yazidi religion, because it is considered a doctrine that crystallized and developed without a prophet or messenger that extends to the Sumerian and Babylonian eras, with evidence that most of its religious rituals are linked to nature and its sanctification.

However, the Yazidis consider Sheikh Adi (Sheikh Uday bin Musafir) a “renewer (founder)” of their religion, neither a messenger nor a prophet.

What are the main strongholds of the Yazidis in West Asia before and after the ISIS advent?

Some reports indicate that the original Yazidi population was in Turkey until the Ottomans came to power and



began to expel and exterminate them, which led to reducing their numbers from millions to a few thousand.

A large number of them migrated to the former Soviet Union republics, and others to Iraq, which is so far considered their “largest and oldest home.”

There are some Yazidis in Syria, Georgia, Armenia and Russia. Recently, the number of Yazidis has increased dramatically in the European Union especially in Germany, which has more than 150,000 Yazidis. They are also present in America, Australia and Canada.

It is certain that the number of Yazidis has decreased in Iraq and Syria after the genocide they were subjected to at the hands of ISIS, while it has increased in Western countries and Europe by nearly

a hundred thousand since August 2014.

Can you update us about crimes ISIS committed against the Yazidis in Iraq and Syria?

On the 3rd of August 2014, the Yazidi regions and villages in Iraq were subjected to the most heinous massacre, abuse, kidnapping, mass and individual killing, chases, theft, land confiscation, crop burning, house demolitions, selling of women and children, killing of men and youth, and brainwashing of teenagers to change their religion and their ideas.

All this and more have been exercised against the Yazidis systematically, some crimes of which are still continuing, as more than 3,000 children and women are still missing or

held in the terrorist camps.

ISIS as a terrorist organization followed the same approach as the elements of al-Qaeda did, where they killed the Yazidis on identity according to their false attitudes, considering the Yazidis as infidels or devil-worshippers.

This was a false accusation made by extremists for decades with the aim of seizing peoples’ lands and properties.

How do you see Iran’s efforts to support the Yazidis, especially during the ISIS invasion?

Actually, there was no special support for the Yazidis from Tehran but the Iranian government stood with the Iraqi defense forces to liberate many Iraqi lands from the cowardly ISIS, so this support was not only for the Yazidis.

Unfortunately, today the Yazidi regions have become an arena for political struggles between Iraqi groups after their liberation from ISIS.

How do you see the performance of international community in shedding light on what happened to the Yazidis?

I can say that the international community as a whole promised more than it contributed regarding support for the Yazidis and the Yazidi cause, but there are some European countries whose positions were honorable towards our humanitarian cause.

On the other hand, we are stunned by the silence of Arab and Islamic countries regarding support for the Yazidi cause, as it is a humanitarian issue that should be supported by all governments without exception.

11/9 families pressure Biden to declassify Saudi documents

Family members of victims of September 11, 2001, attacks have called on President Joe Biden to stay away from memorial events next month unless he upholds his pledge to declassify U.S. government evidence that is widely believed to show a role played by Saudi Arabian leaders in the attacks.

The victims’ family members along with first responders and survivors called on Biden to skip 20th-anniversary events if he does not release the documents, which they say implicate Saudi officials in supporting the acts of terrorism.

The group says during the Presidential election campaign, Biden pledged to be more transparent and declassify as much information as possible.

However, they say, now, since taking office, the Biden White House has ignored their letters and attempts to communicate with the administration.

They also expressed anger saying “we had great hope that President Biden, who campaigned on bringing truth and trust back to the Oval Office, would value the lives and sacrifices of America’s citizens over diplomatic relations with a country accused of mass murder”

In a statement, the group wrote that “we cannot in good faith, and with veneration to those lost, sick, and injured, welcome the president to our hallowed grounds until he fulfills his commitment”

This will no doubt be embarrassing for the American President; something he would want to avoid.

The statement adds that “since the conclusion of the 9/11 Commission in 2004 much investigative evidence has been uncovered implicating Saudi government officials in supporting the attack...Through multiple administrations, the Department of Justice and the FBI have actively sought to keep this information secret and prevent the American people from learning the full truth about the 9/11 attacks.”

According to the statement, Biden is being urged to implement two key issues.

1) Authorize the release of all documents and information to the 9/11 community that our government has accrued in its investigation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (and which former FBI agents have sworn establishes the Kingdom’s role in 9/11) to allow us to rightfully obtain justice against the Kingdom.

2) Implement a policy toward the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that makes clear it must acknowledge its role in terrorist attacks against our citizens and residents, which in the last 20 years include not just 9/11 but the horrific murder of Jamal Khashoggi, and the murder of U.S. service members in Pensacola, Florida; and, accordingly, immediately cease the Kingdom’s support for acts of terrorism.

The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Democrat Senator Bob Menendez, has weighed in on the debate saying “If the United States government is sitting on any documents that may implicate Saudi Arabia in the events of 9/11, these families and the American people have a right to know”

Speaking at a press conference outside the U.S. Capitol he added “These families want answers. They want justice. They want accountability...you can’t make your case in court if you don’t have the facts and information to make their case”

Furthermore, a group of influential U.S. senators have also announced support for a bill that would push the Justice Department, the CIA and Director of National Intelligence to release additional information.

Among the many documents, the family victims seek to be made public are supporting evidence found during a widespread FBI investigation into the attacks, completed in 2016, that examined Saudi Arabian involvement.

The co-signers, along with another group of victims’ relatives (who have already filed a federal lawsuit against Saudi Arabia’s alleged complicity say “we are frustrated, tired and saddened with the fact that the U.S. government for 20 years has chosen to keep information about the death of our loved ones behind lock and key”

In 2004, the 9/11 Commission found that Saudi Arabia had been “problematically” particularly when it came to sharing intelligence.

In a report, it said the Saudi government “as an institution or as individual senior officials’ lack of awareness and a failure to conduct oversight over institutions created an environment in which such (al-Qaeda) activity has flourished”

It identified Saudi-based “charity groups” as a major source of funding for the al-Qaeda terrorist group.

The 2004 commission concluded it “found no evidence that the Saudi government as an institution or as individual senior officials knowingly support or supported al-Qaeda.”

The Saudi monarchy has also denied any connection to the attacks.

However, family members of 9/11 say they are convinced that senior leaders in the Saudi monarchy knew about the planned attack and did nothing to stop it.

Since the commission ended its investigation,



the families say “much investigative evidence has been uncovered implicating Saudi government officials in supporting the attacks.”

In the family’s lawsuit, they note, in an affidavit, that “based on evidence we gathered during the course of our investigation, concluded that diplomatic and intelligence personnel of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia knowingly provided material support to the two 9/11 hijackers and facilitated the 9/11 plot... our investigation shared that conclusion”

Since the attacks, three consecutive administrations of George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump also declined to declassify the supporting documents. All three cited “national security concerns”.

In 2019, to justify keeping documents out of public sight, the Trump administration invoked the state secrets privilege.

The group wrote “twenty years later, there is simply no reason - unmerited claims of ‘national security’ or otherwise - to keep this information secret”

It added “But if President Biden reneges on his commitment and sides with the Saudi government, we would be compelled to publicly stand in objection to any participation by his administration in any memorial ceremony of 9/11”

In an interview one member said “The buck stops at the president.”

U.S. media citing a Biden administration source, familiar with the matter, saying the Justice Department is expected to begin a review of the documents to determine whether any can be released.

The source added “the review will include documents in which states secrets or law enforcement privilege has been cited as grounds for keeping the information classified”

Despite the calls for a quick release of the secret documents, analysts note it is unlikely to be completed before the 20th anniversary of the attacks this year.

The group says previous administrations had also promised reviews only to use them as “delay tactics to protect the Saudi government and keep the American people in the dark.”

They argue “the promise of a review is simply not enough; our expectation is that we will begin to receive the information we seek before the 20th anniversary.”

The 9/11 community members have been “ignored” by the attorney general, the FBI and other senior officials in the administration. They say Biden “really needs to be the one to step up and take action” adding that the families hope for a day when the president is “working with us and not against us.”

As a 2020 presidential candidate, Biden expressed support for the 9/11 families’ search for “full truth and accountability” regarding the attacks and said he would direct his attorney general to “personally examine the merits of all cases where the invocation of privilege is recommended and to err on the side of disclosure in cases where, as here, the events in question occurred two decades or longer ago.”

The group says it believes the United States is not releasing the documents because of strong diplomatic and military ties between Washington and Riyadh.

The family members and survivors say the FBI’s investigation that wrapped up in 2016, showed support provided by Saudi officials for the attackers.

Fifteen of the 19 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom is being sued for billions of dollars by the families of some 2,500 of those killed, and by more than 20,000 others who sustained injuries, businesses and different insurance companies.

The United States used the attack as a pretext to launch its so-called war on terror.

This led to a catastrophic U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. Two countries, which many experts say had absolutely nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks.

The maritime attacks in Oman Gulf; what lies behind the bushes

From page 1 ► Many questions can be proposed about the timing of the attack and the reasons behind the accusations against Iran or one resistance or liberation group by the Americans and the Israelis.

After a few days of deliberations Britain, the U.S. and Israel decided to hold Iran responsible for hijacking or attacking the Israeli ships. However, the Iranians declared absolute refutation of the allegations and warned against any reckless military actions against Tehran.

Zealous American and European press releases and articles were written about the hijacking. However, in an unprecedented step a couple of days later, Britain announced that hijacking was over, and the operation ended, and the people that got on board have left. It is the most ridiculous story! Who are the people? What did they want? Why did they leave? And was Britain familiar with their identity? The questions were left unanswered!

In 1939, Britain, during the mandate of Palestine, issued a document called the “White Paper”, in which the Jewish immigration to Palestine was banned, due to the high resistance in Palestine in 1936-1939. In an attempt to go around the British decision, in 1940 during the Second World War, the Central Office for Jewish Immigration [ZJA] managed to send 3 ships that arrived in Haifa harbor from Romania.

However, Britain refused to allow the immigrants to dock and planned to deport them in an ocean liner named “Patria”. In order to disable the ship from departing and sending them to Mauritius Island in the Indian Ocean, the Haganah planted a bomb in Patria to prevent it from sailing. The bomb exploded in 15 minutes: the Patria sank

killing 200 and injuring 150.

In another incident, in 1942, Struma was a Bulgarian vessel, in which also ZJA crowded Jewish immigrants from Romania to be deported to Palestine. The vessel was horribly overcrowded. When the engine failed the ship docked in Istanbul Harbor, the Turks were trying to negotiate with Britain over the fate of the passengers. As the British were forcing the limited Jewish immigration to Palestine, they refused to receive them. The Turks towed the ship, which carried around 800 passengers to the Black Sea. 12 hours later, a torpedo was fired and the ship sank, killing the passengers except for one survivor.

The point is that history is full of stories in which the ZJA has scarified its own people to reach its aim. The Americans after the incidents interfered and forced Britain to receive a higher number of Jewish immigrants in Palestine. Hence, the details about the number of attacks in Oman’s Gulf are of no significance. The important element in the story is that Israelis, or perhaps the Americans, are both trying to play some kind of Hollywood role.

The Americans acted in the same manner on September 11. Several reports spoke of American national security agencies’ involvement. They knew about the attacks, yet they were reluctant to stop them. They used the American blood and victims to justify wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Therefore, it is always useful to look behind the Hollywood charade. The ships were attacked and others were hijacked. Then, all was back into order, and the hijackers disappeared. The ships’ nationality or names are of no importance at all. What matters is the aim behind the declarations and the accusations pointed at Iran and Hezbollah, as a proxy to Iran. The timing is of particular importance with

a new coming round of nuclear talks between Iran and G5+1. And the attacks coincided with Mr. Raisi’s assumption of power in Iran.

The aims of the charade were the intensification of the political blockade on Iran, by accusing it and its friends of committing the attacks and demonizing both Iran and Hezbollah by accusing them of piracy. Demonization would eventually lead to an escalation in the UN and mobilization of their allies to push towards spreading military naval forces in the Gulf of Oman and the Arab Sea to be able to monitor or hassle the Iranian ships.

In the last two days, another stage of lies was built, when an unknown group fired 4 missiles to the north of Palestine. They were arrested by the Lebanese army. The Israelis retaliated in open uninhabited space. However, the Israeli appetite to bombard Lebanon was greater than it may imagine. It was excessive.

As a result, the Islamic resistance in Lebanon responded. The names of the groups, who led the retaliation, were: “Ali Kamel Muhsen”, who was assassinated in an Israeli attack on Damascus airport last year, and “Muhammad Qassem Tahan”, who was killed in an Israeli open fire on the demonstrators who were supporting the Palestinians during operation “Saif al-Quds”. The message was clear.

If Hezbollah wants to revenge the killing of the martyrs, who were targeted by Israel, the party will revenge openly and clearly. Hezbollah will not hide behind its allies and supporters to do his duty in protecting Lebanon and his fighters. And when Hezbollah wants to revenge for the killing of his members in Dabaa Airport in Homs- Syria, it will do it openly. This is only one Chrystal clear message among many others.

Will Israel stop playing and breaking its teeth in the “Axis of the Resistance” playground?

By Elijah J. Magnier

A Romanian Captain and a British security officer were killed by a suicide drone attack on the M/T Mercer Street oil tanker – a Liberian-flagged, Japanese-owned ship that is part of the Zodiac Group of Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer- sailing from Tanzania towards the United Arab Emirates. The first attack on the tanker caused only material damage but was followed by a second attack where the command-and-control tower was hit to cause human casualties. Al-Alam TV said the attack responded to an Israeli attack on al-Dabaa airport in Syria where Iranian and Lebanese Hezbollah were killed and wounded. Therefore, the Israeli attack represents a change of the Rule of Engagement (ROE), violating the limit of acceptance in the ongoing conflict and pushing Iran to start a “campaign between wars,” expected to increase in intensity in the future. What is shocking to Israel is that, for the first time, Iran showed how linked all theaters are and how an Israeli hit is met with an unexpected response in the Oman Sea.

Israel had carried out over a thousand strikes against targets in Syria during the decade of war against the Syrian army and targets belonging to the “Axis of the Resistance.” However, Israel’s only objective result was to enlarge the influence of the “Axis of the Resistance” in the Levant – that won the destructive war and defeated the Takfiri groups (ISIS and al-Qaeda) and the different Syrian groups supported by [Persian] Gulf and western countries. The “Axis of the Resistance” enlarged and consolidated its influence on Iraq and Yemen, forming a robust front against Israel and its allies.

Israel tried to operate in the Iraqi theater, sending suicide drones that destroyed seven warehouses belonging to the Iraqi security forces al-Hashd al-Sha’abi. Also, an Israeli drone operating from U.S. military bases in Syria and Iraq attacked and killed an Iraqi commander while he was traveling towards the Iraqi-Syrian borders.

Two years ago, Israel sent two suicide drones onto the Lebanese capital Beirut. One exploded

close to Hezbollah’s office and another crashed and was found intact, containing explosives. That raised the alarm among the “Axis of the Resistance” that Israel was now using this kind of kamikaze drones to reach its targets yet avoid accountability. The “Axis of the Resistance” then adopted this Israeli use of suicide drones for many theaters.

In the last two and a half years, Israel claims to have carried out several dozen attacks against Iranian targets. The ‘war of sabotage’ between Iran and Israel is no longer a secret, both sides admit their respective responsibility for the attacks inflicted on one another in the traditional manner, through media leaks. The former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu explicitly broke the Israeli practice of deniability and revealed the responsibility of Israel in many sabotage attacks and unlawful assassinations against Iranian scientists and institutions.

However, it is safe to acknowledge that Israel is playing with fire since it is operating outside its comfort zone and competing in Iran’s playground. Furthermore, Israel is clearly facing a severe challenge to its authority and reputation in West Asia. The question is, how long it can sustain this tit-for-tat game that it has itself initiated?

Iran officially denied its involvement in the attack. However, analysts in the region believe that Israel is under shock because it is possible that Iran has responded in the Sea of Oman against an Israeli attack in Syria, introducing a new ROE and choosing the theater directly and not through its allies or in the same operational theater in the Levant. This Iranian choice – claim analysts – indicates that Tehran has deliberately avoided any further implication of the Syrian government, clearly unwilling to start an open war against Israel. It is also saying that Iran will no longer be contained by the Syrian frame for retaliation or containment, and will choose where to hit back at Israel for its continuous attacks on Iranian targets in the Levant.

According to a high-ranking official in the “Axis of the Resistance,” Iran is aware that “90% of Israel’s

goods pass through the sea, which falls into Iran’s operational theater and within a comfortable range of its military reach. Israel is indisputably an intelligent enemy. However, the idea to expand its operational theater within Iran’s controlled area is arrogant, provocative and counterproductive. Israel is offering Iran unlimited targets in the sea to select from when it initiates this game, which will undoubtedly break its teeth. Israel has much more to lose if it decides to respond to the attack because the retaliation from the Iranian side will not take very long. The last response was significant and balanced, imposing deterrence and a new Rule of Engagement that still causes confusion and pain to Israel.”

This is not the first time that Israel has bombed the al-Dabaa airport situated in the al-Quseir area. Israel considers the zone as a base for the “Axis of the Resistance”, a storage zone for its precision and strategic missiles and an area implicated in the next war against Israel. However, this is the first time that Israel targets a dormitory at the airport with the apparent intention of causing human casualties, killing and wounding three people. Israel was, therefore, aware that retaliation could be on its way. However, it ignored how, when and where. The Mercer Street oil tanker was initially attacked by a drone that damaged only the tanker. The second attack with a suicide drone against this Israeli-operated tanker appears to intentionally aim to cause human casualties (two people were killed), seemingly bringing the account with al-Dabaa losses to evens.

“If Israel raises the tension and the attacks, it will be met with similar acts unless the traditional ROE is re-established where Israel bombs insignificant targets, destroying replaceable warehouses or a kitchen or a runway. Otherwise, Israel should expect retaliation against its interests anywhere, with or without a U.S. naval escort. Iran’s bank of objectives is abundant, and Israel is clearly much more vulnerable than it is able to imagine. This time, the attack took place against an empty tanker, but enough to increase the price of insurance and cause financial repercussions on Israel,” revealed the source.

(Source: Press TV)

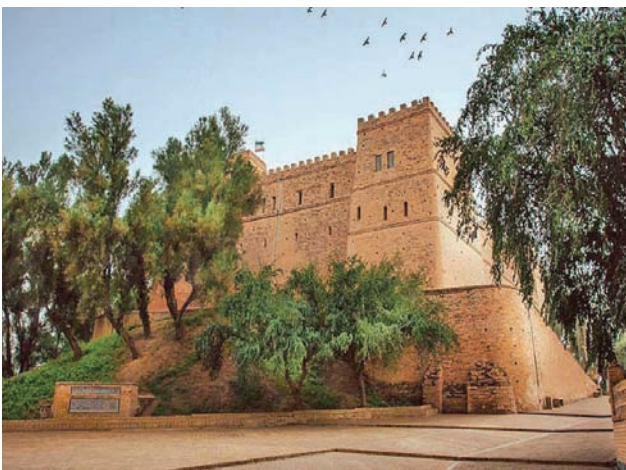
Susa: get to know Iran's legendary ruined city

From page 1 ► During the Sasanian age, the city had a large Christian community. It was sacked by the Sasanian king Shapur II, who transferred the population to Iwan-e Karkheh, but Susa was sufficiently recovered in the early seventh century to fight against the Arabs, who nevertheless captured the city which remained important until the thirteenth century CE.

Different archaeological seasons in Susa have yielded ample relics including pottery, arms, ornamental objects, metalwork, bronze articles, as well as clay tablets. Susa is also a gateway to several worthy destinations such as the UNESCO-tagged ziggurat of Tchogha Zanbil, the ruins of Achaemenid Apadana Castle, Shush Castle (Akropol), Prophet Daniel Shrine, Museum of Susa, the archaeological mount of Haft Tapeh.

In the Bible, Susa is known primarily from the story of Esther in which Haman the Agagite planned to defeat the Jews of Persia. According to the story, Esther outwitted him by persuading her husband, King Ahasuerus of Persia, to sabotage Haman's plan. The episode is commemorated every year in the Jewish Purim festival which is marked with costumed parties and other celebrations, according to Ancient Origins.

Susa is also mentioned in Nehemiah and Daniel, both of whom lived in the city during the 6th century BC in the period known as the Babylonian captivity when several Jews were held captive following the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. A tomb known as Shush-Daniel is believed to be that of Daniel



himself. It is capped by an unusual white cone which some belief was formerly a stone 'Star of David'.

Susa was also associated with Daniel's vision of a ram and a goat in the third year of Belshazzar. According to the book of Esther, Shushan once had a magnificent palace that included a great hall formed from magnificent columns and a highly impressive frontage. According to inscriptions discovered in the ruins, the palace was built by the Persian kings Darius and Artaxerxes. Panels of colored glazed bricks can still be seen in the ruins today and a number of sources list cedar from Lebanon, teak from Gandara, and gold from Sardis and Bactria.

According to UNESCO, "the excavated architectural monuments include administrative, residential, and palatial structures" and the site contains several layers of urban settlement dating from the 5th millennium BC through the 13th century CE.

Iranian handicrafts: Namakdan-Bafi



TEHRAN – Namakdan, a kind of handwoven saddlebag, is one of the ancient handicrafts being practiced across Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province.

Such saddlebags are made to contain products like grains of wheat, oats, beans, and salt. They are woven on looms usually by nomadic and villager women. Nomadic shepherds use Namakdan to carry chunks or grind salt to meet the necessities of the herd.

In addition, nomadic people put salt in Namakdan and hang it in corner of their tents for cooking. Grind salt is very hard to prepare, and it is important to be taken care of. That is why the

Namakdan is designed so that the salt does not pour out.

For nomadic people of the region, the salt is a valuable blessing, related with thankfulness, and greetings of the guests. People may swear in the name of Namak (the salt) and use the word "Namak Nashnas" (a person who does not pay the rights of Namak) to describe unworthy people who use the salt but break the salt holder, according to Visit Iran.

When it comes to form and design, Namakdan could be considered an important, valuable, and even holy object. It consists of a body and a head, which makes it look like a prayer rug.

Weaving Namakdan has solid rules based on the following four principles:

The front is woven by Pich-Bafi (a special kind of knot of Kilim). The bottom is woven like carpets. The back is a plain Kilim with strip design, and finally, the two sides are Pich-Bafi.

Moreover, various motifs and patterns are applied to make the saddlebag. Patterns of Howz (a small pool), strips, regular polygons, repetitious polygons, fishes, birds, Setareh Kharchangi (crab star), and foliage are some of the designs that can be seen in Bakhtiari Namakdan that, being made by rich and bright colors, attract the praise of the viewer. Green, blue, dark red, yellow, and brown are the most common colors of Namakdan.

Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari lies in the southwestern part of the country. Its capital is Shahrekord. The province has various unique traditions and rituals relative to the 'tribal' lifestyles. Special forms of music, dance, and clothing are noteworthy. It has considerable potential to become a vibrant tourist attraction because of its changing natural landscape.

The province is also a hub for making wool felt products, majority of which exported abroad. It is home to some 500 crafters, in over 250 workshops, making handmade felt products.

Old trees, waterfalls in Mazandaran made national heritage

TEHRAN – A selection of eight natural properties across the northern province of Mazandaran has recently been inscribed on the national heritage list of Iran.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced the inscriptions on Saturday in a letter to the governor-general of the province, CHTN reported.

Old plane, maple, and oak trees as well as Shey Alim, Mij, and Hali Dareh waterfalls were among the properties added to

the list.

Stretched along the Caspian Sea and Alborz mountain range, Mazandaran is a popular destination for domestic holidaymakers, while it is home to more than 3500 villages and rural areas.

Having an opulent tourist circuit with 26 UNESCO World Heritage sites, of which the vast Hyrcanian Forest and Lut Desert are among the natural properties, Iran seeks to acquire a greater share of the global tourism industry by 2025.



Golestan Palace: one of the top things to do in Tehran

TEHRAN – One of the top things to do in the Iranian capital is visiting the most magnificent historical monument downtown; the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace.

This majestic complex was once the official residence of the Qajar monarchs who ruled the country between 1789 and 1925. It displays a remarkable mixture of ancient Persian and contemporary European architectural styles, which characterized much of Iranian art in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Golestan Palace is on a lavish scale, and it can be overwhelming to figure out where you should start your sightseeing. You can simply spend half a day admiring several key structures that make up the palace, including lots of spectacular halls, chambers, museums, and gardens. All of them were built during the rule of the Qajar kings.

A few of the key sites you won't want to miss are the stunning Karim Khani nook, which was the former residence of the founder of the Zand dynasty (1751 to 1779), and the brilliant Mirror Hall, which was used for royal weddings and coronations.

Be sure to also not miss Shams-ol Emareh ("the Edifice of the Sun"), a palace that offered a panoramic view of the city for the monarchs, and Brilliant Hall, which is known for its incredible display of mirror work done by Iranian artisans.

It may likely take you two to three hours to explore the whole of Golestan Palace. You can relax by the gorgeous pond in the main garden after all the



walking around. Next to the palace, you will also see the bustling Tehran Grand Bazaar, which is a great place to get a glimpse of local life.

Some visitors to the bazaar refer to it as "a city within a city" because it also includes several mosques, guesthouses, banks, and once-thriving caravansaries. While most of its covered struc-

tures and marketplaces are associated with the 19th century onwards, the history of trade in the bazaar is rooted much deeper in time.

UNESCO says that the complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

First agritourism farm comes on stream in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad

TEHRAN – The first-ever agritourism farm has been inaugurated in the southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

With an area of 17 hectares, the farm has created direct job opportunities for 30 people, Majid Safai announced on Saturday.

"Back in April, an operating permit was issued for the farm, which has come on stream in collaboration with the private sector."

Such permits are granted to eligible farm owners in the country to launch agritourism businesses, aiming to set certain standards in a move to ensure the quality of their services, according to the official.

Agriculture tourism is intended to generate income for indigenous communities and help achieve rural development, he explained.

The best choice for villages and the prosperity of the province is to promote agritourism or farm tourism, he mentioned.

He also noted that among the



most important plans of the province's cultural heritage department in the current Iranian year 1400 are the development of rural tourism, the establishment of nomadic camps, and the development of ecotourism to promote economic prosperity in rural areas.

Agritourism is a relatively new branch of the travel industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas. Farm/ranch recreation refers

to activities conducted on private agricultural lands, which might include fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays, educational activities, etc.

Experts believe that in addition to the customer services jobs, agritourism pays special attention to the production sector, saying agricultural tourism is much more important and practical than other branches of tourism because it creates a new chain and diversity in the field of pro-

duction and services.

Agritourism and nature-tourism enterprises might include outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife study, horseback riding), educational experiences (cannery tours, cooking classes, or tea or coffee tasting), entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances), hospitality services (farm stays, guided tours, or outfitter services), and on-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).

Agritourism is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets, non-profit agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside.

The lesser-known Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is a cradle for nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

Safavid-era mansion undergoes restoration in Belad Shapur

TEHRAN – Restoration work has commenced on Kohzadi Mansion, a Safavid-era (1501-1736) monument located in the ancient city of Belad Shapur.

The façade of the mansion, its floor covering, and rooftops are subjects of the restoration project, a local tourism official announced on Saturday.

A budget of 3.5 billion rials (about \$84,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) has been allocated to the project, CHTN quoted Esfandiar Abab as saying

Located in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Kohzadi Mansion is one the most beautiful monuments in the city with two side rooms, a central yard, and water well, the official added.

Last November, the provincial tourism chief Majid Safai announced that the historical neighborhood of Dehdasht and the historical monuments located inside it is planned to be restored and revived.

A budget of 20 billion rials (\$476,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to boost tourism infrastructure in the ancient city of Belad Shapur, the official explained.

Despite all the destruction that took place in this historical city in different eras, with an area of more than 45 hectares, it is currently considered as one of the largest historical structures in the



country in terms of size and number of historical buildings. Inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1985, the ancient city of Belad Shapur is one of the top tourist sites of the province.

Belad Shapur, known by its current name, was built at the time of Shapur I, also known as Shapur the Great, (reigned 241 CE–272), the second king of the Sassanid Dynasty. Under his leadership, 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.

Under Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. 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 Sassanians.

Rock-carved sculptures and bas-reliefs on abrupt limestone cliffs are widely deemed as characteristics and striking relics of the Sassanian art, top examples of which can be traced at Bishapur, Naqsh-e Rostam, and Naqsh-e Rostam in southern Iran. In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran -- titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region" -- to its World Heritage list.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is known for its nomads and nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

Inmates to be offered handicrafts courses

TEHRAN – Prisons across the western province of Ilam are scheduled to hold handicraft courses for the inmates, the provincial tourism chief has announced.

The courses will be held under a memorandum of understanding recently signed between the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department and the Prisons, Security, and Corrective Measures Organization, Abdolmalek Shanbezaideh said on Saturday.

By taking part in the courses, inmates can become job-ready upon their release, the official added.

The MOU also aims at holding handicrafts exhibitions to promote the prisoners' handmade products and create a market for them to generate income, he noted.

Tourism ministry helps empower inmates

In October 2020, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts signed a memorandum of understanding with the Prisons, Security, and Corrective Measures Organization to create jobs and make income for prisoners.

The MOU also aimed at implementing special

educational and promotional programs, identifying talented prisoners, and improving their social status.

The deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian said that handicraft 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.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

The value of Iran's handicrafts exports stood at \$120 million during the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – February 18, 2021), Mehr reported. The country's handicrafts exports slumped during the mentioned months in comparison to the same period last a year earlier due to the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on global trade.

The Islamic Republic exported \$427 million



worth of handicrafts during the first eleven months of the calendar year 1398. Of the figure, some \$190 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through 20 provinces, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths as well as personal ornamentations with precious and semi-precious gemstones are traditionally exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

Spikogen vaccine enters third phase of clinical trial

TEHRAN – The Iranian-Australian coronavirus vaccine Spikogen started the third phase of the clinical trial with the participation of 17,000 people on Saturday.

The first phase of the study was performed on volunteer Australians and received the necessary approval, the second phase was administrated to 400 Iranians, which has had no serious side effects, Payam Tabarsi, researcher of the vaccine study project said.

The second human testing showed good results, with 70 percent antibody, he stated, adding, the delta variant is now very strong and many vaccines have not been effective against the mutant.

Vaccines against viruses can be divided into three main categories: live attenuated, inactivated/killed, and subunit vaccines. Recombinant protein subunit vaccines are composed of at least 1 type of viral antigen. These vaccines are significantly more secure than live attenuated and inactivated vaccines.

Iran is also producing vaccines jointly with two countries of Cuba and Russia, which may also be released by September.

The Iranian-made Sputnik vaccine is undergoing the final testing phase, and Pastu Covac received the emergency use license.

Mass vaccination against COVID-19 started on Iranian citizens with the Russian-made Sputnik V



vaccine on February 9.

While Iran continues efforts to mass-produce local candidates, over 13 million doses of foreign vaccines have already been imported and others

are expected soon.

According to the Food and Drug Administration, 14 vaccines are being domestically developed in the country which are in different study phases.

32 eco-schools being built for energy management



TEHRAN – A total of 32 green schools are under construction across the country, aiming to promote energy management in the education sector, Mehroollah Rakhshanimehr, director of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, said.

Eco-schools, also known as green schools, bring a range of benefits, including waste management, waste reduction, biodiversity, energy, water, transport, health, global sustainability, healthy nutrition,

citizenship, and climate change. Countries considering their own socioeconomic and cultural characteristics must be able to adapt these criteria into their own particular circumstances.

The materials used in these schools are nature-friendly, and each is built in four days and costs about 40 percent lower than the regular schools, IRNA reported on Saturday.

By managing the consumption of energy, water, and materials, eco-friendly schools will play an important role in the development of knowledge and the formation of environmental ethics, he further emphasized.

In fact, organizations today intend to minimize environmental damage by developing green buildings in cities and villages and managing energy, water, waste, and materials, he highlighted.

Rakhshanimehr went on to say that the country is facing problems in the field of energy that have reached their peak this year.

So that, energy-saving comes to the center of attention, in addition to culture promotion,

construction is important and green management indicators should be observed in building schools, he said.

Many eco-schools in different parts of the country were built, among which, a school was opened in Tehran's District 5 with a green management approach, and is planned to make maximum use of solar energy and water recycling, he explained.

Earlier in March, Barekat Charity Foundation, affiliated to Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, inaugurated 100 nature-friendly schools across the country.

Current environmental problems are rooted in the lack of proper awareness and cultural weakness regarding the relationship between man and nature. Under such circumstances, environmental issues have only belatedly been recognized in school activities worldwide and led to the initiation of green schools. Effective school programs should not only help students to progress the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for responsible environmental behavior, but also have the potential to spread awareness of the concept.

Borderless collaboration for a borderless disaster

From page **1** ► The most important factors of dust storms are land degradation, desertification, climate change, unsustainable land, and water use, strong winds, increasing drought, and its severity over time.

Natural sources of SDSs (including dried lakes and rangelands affected by vegetation depletion) account for 75 percent of the world's dust emissions and the share of human-caused SDSs (such as land-use change, agriculture, water diversion, and deforestation) is about 25 percent.

Dust storms have both internal and external origins, but their negative consequences are very wide and include serious risks to human health up to major economic losses in the fields of transportation, agriculture, water, and air quality.

Impacts on human health

Airborne dust presents serious risks for human health. Dust particle size is a key determinant of the potential hazards to human health. Particles larger than 10 micrometers are not breathable, thus can only damage external organs – mostly causing skin and eye irritations, conjunctivitis, and enhanced susceptibility to ocular infection.

Inhalable particles, those smaller than 10 micrometers, often get trapped in the nose, mouth and upper respiratory tract thus can be associated with respiratory disorders such as asthma, tracheitis, pneumonia, allergic rhinitis, and silicosis.

However, finer particles may penetrate the lower respiratory tract and enter the bloodstream, where they can affect all internal organs and be responsible for cardiovascular disorders. A global model assessment in 2014 estimated that exposure to dust particles caused about 400,000 premature deaths by cardiopulmonary disease in over

30 populations.

Globally, 334 million people and 14 percent of the world's children experience asthmatic symptoms.

Some infectious diseases can be transmitted by dust. Meningococcal meningitis, a bacterial infection of the thin tissue layer that surrounds the brain and spinal cord, can result in brain damage and, if untreated, death in 50 percent of cases.

Outbreaks occur worldwide, yet the highest incidence is found in the “meningitis belt”, a part of sub-Saharan Africa with an estimated population of 300 million. These outbreaks have a strong seasonal pattern – many studies have linked environmental conditions, such as low humidity and dusty conditions, to the time and place of infections.

Researchers believe that the inhalation of dust particles in hot dry weather may damage nose and throat mucosa creating favorable conditions for bacterial infection. Moreover, iron oxides embedded in dust particles may enhance the risk of infection.

Dust also plays a role in the transmission of valley fever – a potentially deadly disease – in the Southwest of the United States and in Northern Mexico by acting as a transporter of Coccidioides fungi spores.

Internal SDSs hotspots

Masoud Tajrishi, deputy head of the Department of Environment (DOE) for the human environment stated in June that a total budget of €450 million has been earmarked to contain sand and dust storms (SDSs) nationwide over the past three years.

Accordingly, in 2017, a special working group called “national headquarters for SDSs control”

was formed, which has been able to manage this issue to a very good extent, he further highlighted.

Tajrishi went on to state that the headquarters first identified internal and external dust hotspots, based on which it was determined that about 35 million hectares are generating dust in the country, two million hectares of which are in critical condition.

Studies have shown that 40 percent of the critical dust sources are dried wetlands. To manage this section, we are going to have a meeting with the Ministry of Energy, he added.

About 350 million hectares of surrounding countries affect Iran, which is mainly raised from Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Turkmenistan, he noted, adding, so that the Ministry of Foreign affairs started negotiations with the international community to tackle the problem.

During this period, about 110,000 hectares undergone seedling plantation, more than 750,000 hectares of protection, trapping and grazing operations in pastures with dust-raising potential, soil stabilization in 150,000 hectares, including mulching, construction of live and non-living windbreaks, equipping 100 stations for forecasting and warning, about 360 thousand cubic meters of dredging operations, improving routes for water to reach wetlands and about 100 kilometers of water transmission channels to humidify areas with dust potential in 27 dusty provinces were among the actions have been taken, he explained.

COVID-19 vaccination of foreign students to begin in weeks

From page **1** ► During the pandemic, the admission of foreign students increased by 20 percent, most of whom were admitted from neighboring countries, especially Iraq, and most of whom are paying tuition, he noted.

However, 4,000 non-Iranian students have been applied with a scholarship, he further added.

With the online university education system, more than 15,000 international students returned to their country and communicate with their professors in Iran through virtual education.

Some 30,600 of the whole students are studying in universities affiliated with the Ministry of Science, while 25,000 others are receiving education in Azad University, and about 2,000 in medical universities.

Fifty-seven percent of the international students are studying for a master's degree, 27 percent for a bachelor's degree and 15 percent are educating to receive a Ph.D., while the remaining one percent study at other levels.

Law, Persian literature, and computer engineering are the top three fields of study for foreign students in Iran, while civil engineering, business management, political science, English language and literature, Quran and hadith sciences, international relations, and electrical engineering, and other majors with the highest number of non-Iranian students.

In 2013, 35 centers were allowed to admit foreign



students, which has increased to 77 in 2021.

Earlier in May, Indrika Ratwatte, Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), appreciated Iran for vaccinating foreign nationals Iran.

In light of the pandemic, all refugees, even those undocumented, benefited from access to free primary health services and free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like Iranian nationals.

The same happened for the vaccination when the country has generously considered foreign national and refugees over the age of 75 for vaccination against coronavirus.

PEOPLES OF IRAN



(Part 2)

Arrival of the Iranians. A general picture of the peoples of Iran at the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E. might be reconstructed, from cuneiform sources of Mesopotamia and from later relics, as follows: in the southern plains (Khuzestan) were the Elamites (see ELAM), who extended to the east perhaps as far as Sistan and in the north possibly to the Alborz mountains.

It would be more accurate to say that Elamite culture and influence reached so far, as may be inferred from remains of material culture and traces of proto-Elamite writing. Obviously many dialects and forms of social life existed, but the basic racial features of Caucasoids remained constant.

Above Elam, the expanse of territory of the peoples north and west across and beyond the Zagros was labeled vaguely as “Gutium” (q.v. at iranica.com) by the states of Mesopotamia from the third millenium on. This convenient term would continue in use down to the arrival of Persian rule in Babylon (as on the Cyrus cylinder, in Pritchard, 1974, pp. 315-16).

In the north, the Caspians and other tribes or sub-tribes lived in the Alborz mountains and on the southern shores of the Caspian seacoast in relative isolation and independence—a condition which persisted in varying extent into the Islamic period.

In the northwest of Iran, in Azerbaijan, and extending into Anatolia, were probably the ancestors of historical peoples who would exert important influence on the arriving Iranians—namely, the Manneans (successors in the Zagros and Lake Urmia region, if not lineal descendants, of the Hurrian people of the 3rd-2nd millenia) and the Urartians (the dominant people of the Caucasus in the early first millenium).

The fortified town excavated at Hasanlu (q.v.) in Azerbaijan provides valuable glimpses of the economic and cultural interaction across these re-

gions and with Assyria.

The population of eastern Iran and Afghanistan about 2000 B.C.E. is virtually unknown, so conjecture is rife. We may suppose that, similar to the Elamites in the southwest, here the people of the Indus valley civilization, possibly proto-Dravidians, dominated the east, at least in culture and influence.

North of the Hindu Kush range it is conceivable that ancestors of the Hunzakut, the Burushaski-speaking people of present-day Hunza (in Northern Areas, Pakistan), had a presence so far to the west. Some scholars have suggested that, previous to the expansion of the Indo-European speakers, a family of peoples extended from the Atlantic Ocean to India, the relics of which were, or are, the Basques, Etruscans, Rhaetians, some Caucasian peoples, and the Hunzakut plus the Dravidian Brahuis of Baluchistan (Berger, 1998, pp. 1-25).

This is an unproved theory, and we can only say that it is most probable that the Indo-European speakers did not come upon empty areas in their expansion on the Iranian plateau but found earlier, unrelated inhabitants. The role of these people in conveying new culture, both material and other, to the arriving Indo-Europeans is a subject of much speculation. This holds true especially for those settled in the northeasternstaging ground for entry to the plateau—i.e., the area termed the Bactriana-Margiana Archeological Complex (for overview, see Possehl, 2002, pp. 215-36, with lit.).

A long period of contact there between the settled agriculturists and the Indo-Iranians to the north may have been characterized by a symbiosis similar to that between Bactrians and Scythians (see below, “Pre-Islamic Period”) in and after the Achaemenid period. The Indo-Europeans, as their migration proceeded southward, also must have benefited from the existence of routes linking Bactria with other trading points across Iran.

The Semitic and Hamitic peoples of the Near East and Africa are not in the purview of our investigation, even though small numbers of Semites did move onto the plateau at various times.

The expansion of the Indo-Europeans in the second millennium B.C.E. changed the face of Iran. The IE languages are usually divided into two major groups, the centum (western) and the satem (eastern), from the Latin and Avestan words respectively for the number 100. The following is a speculative reconstruction but has a good chance of verisimilitude.

(Source: Encyclopaedia Iranica)

COVID-19 UPDATES ON AUGUST 7

New cases	26,439
New deaths	387
Total cases	4,119,110
Total deaths	93,473
New hospitalized patients	3,705
Patients in critical condition	6,375
Total recovered patients	3,515,263
Diagnostic tests conducted	26,399,374
Doses of vaccine injected	15,133,810

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

All-Iranian COVID-19 diagnostic kits to be released within month

Iran will commercialize domestically-made COVID-19 diagnostic kits by the Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 22), secretary of biotechnology development of Vice Presidency for Science and Technology announced.

Following a call by the headquarters for the production of COVID-19 diagnostic kits, a contract was signed with five knowledge-based companies and manufacturing process began, ISNA quoted Mostafa Qan'ei as saying on Monday.

Diagnosis is the most important part of coronavirus treatment, he highlighted. Patients suspected to coronavirus are currently being identified by diagnostic kits that have entered Iran in the form of assistance and purchases by the World Health Organization, China and UNICEF, he said.

So, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology decided to manufacture the kits domestically, he noted.

Existing imported kits are sufficient for the next two months but after this period we will be faced with shortages of kits, however, the domestic ones will enter the market, he concluded.

کیت‌های ایرانی تشخیص کووید ۱۹ ماه آینده روانه بازار می‌شوند

دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری گفت: کیت‌های تشخیصی کووید ۱۹، فروردین ماه وارد بازار می‌شوند.

مصطفی قائمی، دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، اظهار داشت: به دنبال فراخوان این ستاد برای ساخت کیت‌های آزمایشگاهی تشخیص کووید ۱۹، با پنج شرکت دانش‌بنیان برای ساخت این کیت‌ها قرارداد منعقد شده است. تشخیص، مهم‌ترین راه ورود به درمان بیماری کرونا است.

در حال حاضر بیماران مبتلا به کرونا به وسیله کیت‌های تشخیصی که در قالب مساعدت و خرید از طریق سازمان بهداشت جهانی، کشور چین و یونیسف وارد ایران شده‌اند شناسایی می‌شوند؛ اما ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری با انتشار فراخوانی از دانش‌بنیان‌های توانمند دعوت کرد تا به حوزه ساخت این کیت‌ها ورود کنند.

به گزارش از مرکز ارتباطات و اطلاع رسانی معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، وی افزود: کیت‌های وارد شده تا دو ماه آینده کافی هستند اما بعد از این مدت با کمبود کیت‌های تشخیص کرونا مواجه خواهیم شد. به همین دلیل با کمک توانمندی‌های داخلی این نیاز را مرتفع می‌کنیم.

