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# Oil bonds seen to make 'economic breakthrough'

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© File photo

## Putin says Russia is 'first' to develop coronavirus vaccine

Russia President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that Russia had become the first country to approve a vaccine offering "sustainable immunity" against the coronavirus and that one of his daughters has been inoculated.

The announcement came after scientists in the West raised concerns about the speed of development of Russian vaccines, suggesting that researchers might be cutting corners after coming under pressure from authorities to deliver.

"This morning, for the first time in the world, a vaccine against the new coronavirus was registered" in Russia, he said during a televised video conference call with government ministers.

"I know that it is quite effective, that it gives sustainable immunity," he said.

He said one of his daughters had been inoculated with the vaccine, developed by the Gamaleya research institute in coordination with the Russian defence ministry. **->10**

## Car manufacturing rises over 20% in 4 months on year

**TEHRAN** — Car manufacturing in Iran rose 20.3 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to an official with Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry.

Soheil Memarabashi, the director-general of transportation industries department of the ministry, announced that Iranian carmakers

have manufactured 323,663 vehicles during the four-month period of this year, while the figure was 268,966 in the same time span of the previous year, IRNA reported.

The official also said that manufacturing of passenger cars during the first four months of this year has increased 19.4 percent to 296,328 vehicles from 248,184 cars manufactured in the first four months of the past year. **->4**

## Coronavirus-crippled tourism industry needs national support to rebound: official

**TEHRAN** — The domestic tourism industry crippled by the coronavirus pandemic needs national support to make a rebound, deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri has said.

Teymouri made the remarks on Monday in a meeting with Mohammadreza Dashti Ardakani, the head of the tourism-and-cultural-heritage parliamentary group, saying "The tourism industry,

affected by the coronavirus crisis needs national support to survive."

"Tourism industry of the country has suffered a decline at the national, regional and global levels, following the unpleasant events and incidents happened in the second half of past [Iranian calendar] year (1398), as the outbreak of coronavirus disease, which led to the cancellation of international tours and travels to our country..." **->8**

**EDITORIAL**  
**Mahdi Shojaeian**  
Journalist

## Lebanese are punished for backing resistance movement

The corruption and issues that we face today in Lebanon are consequences of a 30-year legacy inherited by Hassan Diab's government. The problems in Lebanon, especially the massive explosion at Beirut's port on August 4, all are rooted in one thing and that is that the U.S., Israel, and Saudi Arabia are venting their anger against the Lebanese nation who endorsed the resistance movements in Lebanon and Iraq.

The biggest Shia victory during the history happened in these two countries as the resistance movement won the elections last year.

In Iraq, Adil Abdul-Mahdi came into power, and simultaneously some protests began in the country. No wonder that the U.S. Israel and Saudi Arabia are angry for dollars that they have spent in these countries to install their own government, not the resistance movement who won the elections without a little financial support.

There is a point here that the minority in Lebanon and Iraq try to force the majority to accept their favored governments. In Lebanon, a minority with 500 to 600 people, comes into the street and sparks unrest and destroys everything to oust the government; in other words, to force the prime minister and all his ministers to resign.

It is also true in Iraq. They have committed several crimes. It can be said that Abdul-Mahdi was the best prime minister after the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003. Killing a 16-year-old and stringing up the corpse by his feet from a traffic pole, brutally killing two brothers, and setting an ambulance on fire are amongst the crimes that were committed by attacker in Iraq.

In Lebanon, they punish people. They have spent millions of dollars and cannot tolerate the winning of the resistance movement who reveals their 30 years of corruption. The Westerners and Israel do not want anybody do anything for the Lebanese. In their view, no government should provide facilities for the Lebanese people. They should not have electricity and potable water. **->7**

## U.S. would face major defeat at UN

**TEHRAN** — As the U.S. prepares to turn up the heat on Iran at the UN Security Council, a "major defeat" for the U.S. administration's foreign policy looms large on the horizon, a university professor told the Tehran Times.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced last week that the U.S. was going to call for a vote on extending a UN arms embargo on Iran at the Security Council.

"The United States will put forward a resolution in the Security Council to extend the arms embargo on Iran," the U.S. chief diplomat said, adding, "The proposal we put forward is eminently reasonable. One way or another we will do the right thing. We will ensure that the arms embargo is extended."

The U.S. measure comes against a backdrop of heightened diplomatic tensions between Tehran and Washington over the arms embargo, with Iran warning that it would "decisively respond"

to any effort by the U.S. to extend restrictions on Iran.

In a briefing on Tuesday, government spokesman Ali Rabiei said, "Iran won't hesitate to respond decisively and proportionately to any provocative and unlawful act to extend the arms embargo."

Tehran has previously warned that the extension of the arms embargo could spell the end of the 2015 nuclear deal - officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - that Tehran signed with world powers.

In a tweet on May 3, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani wrote: "#JCPOA will die forever by circumventing 2231 Resolution & continuing #Iran's illegal weapons sanctions. Sanctions' virus is the U.S. tool for survival of its declining hegemony. What will #EU do: Save dignity & support multilateralism or Accept humiliation & help unilateralism?" **->3**

## U.S. protests: Chicago braces for more looting after chaotic night

By staff & agencies

Downtown Chicago was hit by widespread looting late on Sunday and early Monday morning, hours after police shot a young man in a predominantly black neighborhood.

About 100 people have been arrested and 13 police officers were injured as they tried to contain the looting, according to David Brown, Chicago police superintendent, FT reported.

The Chicago Transit Authority cut off trains and buses to the downtown area known as the Loop during the Monday morning rush hour, and the city raised all but one bridge over the Chicago River, further restricting access to the city Centre.

Chicago officials said police would maintain a perimeter around the downtown area until further notice. All people entering would be required to show identification at police checkpoints and only those who

live and work in the area would be allowed in between 8pm and 6am, they said. "This was an assault on our city that undermines public safety and breeds a sense of insecurity among our residents," said Lori Lightfoot, the city's Democratic mayor.

Chicago's downtown was looted in late May when riots accompanied widespread protests over racial injustice sparked by the killing of George Floyd by a white police officer.

Chicago has seen a rise in homicides this year, even as other crime has fallen. The US Department of Justice has dedicated about 300 federal agents to "Operation Legend", which it says will combat violent crime in the city. But the increased federal manpower prompted a lawsuit from Chicago activists who fear that law enforcement will interfere with their right to protest, as has happened in Portland, Oregon. **->10**

## Opportunities still exist to rebuild Lebanon: retired general

By Mohammad Mazhari

**TEHRAN** — A retired Lebanese brigadier general says there is still opportunity to make the required reforms to restore confidence and ability in Lebanon by learning from mistakes and rise again from the ashes.

Lebanon's prime minister announced his government's resignation late on Monday. The resignation followed a huge explosion in downtown Beirut on August 4 that triggered public outrage amid endemic corruption.

"The solution is the unity of people in the country over one goal, which is to preserve civil peace and restore the trust of the whole world in the ability of the Lebanese to overcome difficulties," Azikiwe tells the Tehran Times.

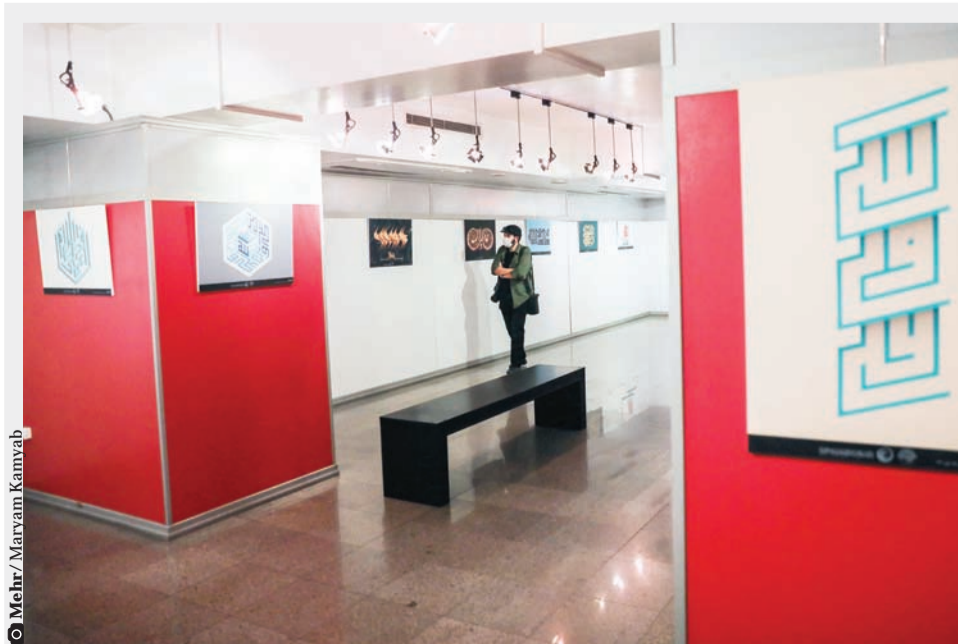
The text of the interview with Azikiwe is as follows:

■ What are the next scenarios in the aftermath of the resignation of the Diab government?

A: After August 4, it is not the same as before.

Beirut, before August 4, was a glorious city on the Mediterranean coast. After the blast, the city was ruined and lost its prosperity. This is an event that will create a new phase. Here we are facing one of two scenarios:

First respond to the visit of the French president; it is expected that President Aoun to immediately conduct parliamentary consultations to name a new prime minister who will be internationally and domestically acceptable to head a national unity government. **->7**



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## Ali un-Waliullah typography exhibition opens at Tehran center

An art aficionado visits an exhibition displaying a collection typography works of the phrase Ali un-Waliullah (Ali Is God's Appointed Wali) by Iranian graphic designers at the Art Bureau in Tehran on August 11, 2020.

The showcase, which will be running until August 19, has been organized to observe Eid al-Ghadir, which was celebrated Saturday.

Eid al-Ghadir is the anniversary of the day on which Imam Ali (AS) was appointed as successor to the Prophet Muhammad (S).

## Iranian scientific journals among highly cited worldwide

**TEHRAN** — Journal of Nanostructure in Chemistry (JNSC) affiliated to Islamic Azad University was ranked forty-fifth among 103 top nanotechnology journals in Journal Citation Reports 2020 published by Clarivate Analytics.

The journal impact factor (JIF) of an academic journal is a scientometric index that reflects the yearly average number of citations that articles published in the last two years in a given journal received. It is frequently used as a proxy for the relative importance of a journal within its field; journals with higher impact factors are often deemed to be more important than those with lower ones.

The impact factor was devised by Eugene Garfield, the founder of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI). Impact factors are calculated yearly starting from 1975 for journals listed in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR). ISI was acquired by Thomson Scientific & Healthcare in 1992 and became known as Thomson ISI. In 2018, Thomson ISI was sold to Onex Corporation and Baring Private Equity Asia. They founded a new corporation, Clarivate, which is now the publisher of the JCR.

JNSC also ranked first among the Iranian scientific journals present in the list.

Accordingly, in the JCR 2019 ranking, 12,838 journals in the fields of Science and Social Sciences from different countries and publications were assessed, and in this ranking, the Journal of Nanostructure in Chemistry obtained the highest IF coefficient among Iranian journals. **->9**

## Five arrested in Iran for spying

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN — Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili announced on Tuesday that authorities have arrested five Iranian nationals on charges of spying for Israel, Britain and Germany.

Talking to reporters at a regular weekly press briefing, Esmaili said that two of the four arrested persons have been convicted and received final sentences.

Esmaili stated a national named Shahram Shirkhani spied for British intelligence services and tried to recruit some Iranian officials for Britain's MI6 agency.

He added that Shirkhani had passed on classified information about Iran's Central Bank and Defense Ministry contracts.

Also, Masoud Mosaheb, who was secretary-general of the Iran-Austria friendship association, has been sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for spying for Israel's Mossad and the German intelligence services, the spokesman said.

He gave no details on the other three detainees, but indicated that they were working in state bodies.

"We had the arrests in the foreign, defense and energy ministries as well as in the Atomic Energy Organization," Esmaili stated.

## Iran rejects claims about partial removal of sanctions

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has rejected claims that the so-called non-targeted sanctions have been partially removed.

"Based on the JCPOA [the 2015 nuclear deal] and Resolution 2231 [of the UN Security Council which endorses the JCPOA], the United States is duty bound to lift all the sanctions it has imposed after withdrawal from the JCPOA," he told reporters.

Mousavi described claims about partial removal of sanctions as fake and called the U.S. unilateral sanctions "cruel" and "illegal".

U.S. President Donald Trump quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions in history on Iran as part of his administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

President Hassan Rouhani said on August 5 that enemy must know that the Iranians cannot be brought to their knees through sanctions.

"We have to make the enemies understand that they cannot bring us to knees by sanctions and they have no other way but to accept the logic and truth. That day will not be far and we will gain success through patience and resistance," Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

## JCPOA turned negative-sum game into benefit for all parties, Zarif says

**TEHRAN (Press TV)** — Iran's foreign minister says the conclusion of a nuclear deal with world powers in 2015 helped turn a negative-sum game among various players into something that benefited all of them.

Mohammad Javad Zarif made the remarks in a speech delivered at the Faculty of World Studies at the University of Tehran on Monday, the third part of a five-part course in international relations entitled, "World in Transition," which is being offered by Iran's top diplomat.

Explaining about the conclusion of the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed by Iran and six world powers, Zarif said, "At that time, we were on the verge of a negative-sum game...but we succeeded in turning that negative-sum game into something that benefited all parties."

He added, "At the time, the United States claimed that it had stripped us of our nuclear capability, while we only pursued the peaceful use of nuclear energy from the very beginning."

The historic deal was reached between Iran and the P5+1 — which included the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany — on July 14, 2015. However, in May 2018, President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of the JCPOA and re-imposed the sanctions that had been lifted under the deal.

As verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran remained fully compliant with the JCPOA for an entire year, waiting for the co-signatories to honor their commitments and offset the impacts of the U.S. withdrawal.

But, as the European parties continued to renege on their obligations, the Islamic Republic moved in May 2019 to suspend some of its JCPOA commitments under articles of the deal covering Tehran's legal rights in case of non-compliance by the other side.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi said late last month that the Islamic Republic will continue its peaceful nuclear program according to the terms of agreement with the IAEA since Tehran sees the peaceful use of nuclear energy as an inalienable right of the nation.

"We will go on with our peaceful nuclear program according to the rules and regulations set and agreed upon with the IAEA," Araqchi wrote in an article for a Polish periodical.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif criticized efforts by some countries to turn military might into dominant power, saying, "Since the end of Cold War, the U.S. has been trying to make things a matter of security in order to use its military superiority. Military might is important, but power is not unipolar anymore."

The top Iranian diplomat added that the Islamic Republic enjoys different sources of power, including military might, but "military power is not considered a determining factor of a country's overall power anymore."

He emphasized that tanks and warships do not represent a country's power.

The United States is no more regarded as the "epicenter of technology" as it used to be in the past, he noted, adding that a fundamental change has been made and countries do not merely use the American technology, but are advancing their own.

Zarif pointed to "legitimacy" as another factor of power, saying, "Legitimacy means popularity of a country in the world and among its own people."

He highlighted the significance of providing inspiration for other countries, saying, "If a country is a source of inspiration for others, it will gain major power."



# Trump had four years for successful diplomacy with Iran: government

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN — Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday that U.S. President Donald Trump had four years of time to start a successful diplomacy with Iran by adopting a right and legal path.

"He not only did not do that, but made the worst mistakes in the past decades," Rabiei said during a press conference.

He added that the policy of pressure will never yield result even if Trump is reelected in the November elections.

"In case of continuing hostile policy against the Iranian people, we are ready to exercise maximum resistance until it is needed," the government spokesman stated.

On Sunday, Trump said he will "have a deal" with Iran a month after possible victory in the presidential election.

While Tehran has maintained that it would not negotiate under pressure, Trump made the comment as his country was about to introduce a resolution at the United Nations to extend an arms embargo against Iran.

The Republican nominee, who is set to face former Vice President Joe Biden in November, made the claim at a campaign fundraiser in the state of New Jersey.

"When we win, we will have a deal within four weeks," Trump was cited as saying by several media outlets.



Iranian government spokesman said, "If Trump be serious about making up for past mistakes, we will welcome it. However, it does not seem that his claims be anything more than gaining votes."

**Iran will respond to any provocative action by U.S.**

Rabiei also said that Iran will not

show the least tolerance in case of any provocative act by the United States.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said last Wednesday that the UN Security Council will vote this week on a U.S. bid to extend the arms embargo on Iran, despite warnings by some diplomats that the measure lacks support,

Reuters reported.

Rabiei said that any resolution that violates the 2231 resolution, which endorses the 2015 nuclear deal, will be a mockery of international law.

"The United States' regime is well aware that this destructive and unlawful attempt will be another catastrophic and isolating failure. The United States' insistence on continuing this path cannot mean anything but refraining to accept realities," he pointed out.

Since the U.S. has quit the JCPOA it has no legal right to demand extension of arms embargo against Iran or invoke a snapback of UN sanctions. However, since the U.S. is acting like a bully, it has threatened to return UN sanction if its push for arms embargo fails.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has said that the UN Security Council should reject the United States' bullying and unilateralism.

"At the #UNSC, the US is actively resorting to Iran-phobia & coercion to gain support for its unlawful anti-2231-resolution, illegally seeking to extend an arms embargo on Iran. The Council must reject bullying & unilateralism—again—as it did when US first introduced its draft," Takht-Ravanchi tweeted on Monday.

## Chinese diplomat says extending arms embargo on Iran lacks legal basis



By staff and agency

A Chinese diplomat at the United Nations, speaking on condition of anonymity, has told Reuters that the United States' attempt to extend arms embargo on Iran lacks legal basis and will undermine efforts to

preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA.

The diplomat added that there is "no chance" the U.S. text will be adopted.

A European diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, also said, "This U.S. administration's goal is to terminate the Iran nuclear deal."

Richard Gowan, UN director for conflict prevention advocacy body the International Crisis Group, said there was "zero chance" the U.S. attempt to extend the arms embargo would be adopted and that it was "a ploy to get to snapback."

"Everyone at the UN understands that this resolution is just the curtain-raiser for a much bigger fight over the Iranian nuclear deal," said Gowan.

"It's highly likely ... a number of countries will be saying they have no intention of implementing further sanctions, until the UN Security Council decides whether or not snapback has been carried out legally," said a senior council diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"I don't see how the council can decide that given the divisions that will be within it," the diplomat said. "I don't see any rush to re-establish sanctions regimes therefore around the world."

The UN Security Council is preparing to vote this week on a U.S. proposal to extend an arms embargo on Iran, a move that some diplomats say is bound to fail and put the fate of a nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers further at risk.

Russia and China, allies of Iran, have long-signaled opposition to the U.S. measure.

The embargo is due to expire in October under a 2015 deal among Iran, Russia, China, Germany, Britain, France and the United States.

Even though U.S. President Donald Trump's administration quit the accord in 2018, Washington has threatened to use a provision in the agreement to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran if the Security Council does not extend the arms embargo indefinitely.

## Tehran advises PGCC not to obey U.S.

**POLITICAL** TEHRAN — Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said on Tuesday that the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council should not obey the United States whose presence in the region has brought nothing except instability.

"Protecting security and interests of the regional nations depends on trust building and intra-regional cooperation. The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council should not obey the United States whose illegitimate presence in the region has had nothing but insecurity and instability," Vaezi wrote in a tweet.

He added, "Recent action by this council causes distrust and will be harmful to itself."

In a letter to the Security Council sent Saturday and obtained by Bloomberg News, the PGCC called on the Security Council to extend the embargo and "further impose any additional measures necessary to prevent the destabilizing proliferation of Iranian weapons, such as a targeted asset freeze and travel ban on individuals involved in the supply, sale or transfer of arms or related materiel to or from Iran."

Sunday's letter is the first significant joint statement released by the group since the rift, said a person familiar with the matter.

The statement is completely in line with the relentless campaign launched by the Trump administration to extend arms embargo against Iran in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 which endorses the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Late on Sunday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi denounced the PGCC's move as



"irresponsible" and said the council has turned "into a mouthpiece for anti-Iran elements".

"Unfortunately, it seems that the so-called Persian Gulf Cooperation Council has turned into a spokesperson for some narrow-minded people both inside the council and outside the region and that the council's secretariat, swayed by the wrong and destructive policies and behavior of certain member states, has turned into a mouthpiece for anti-Iran elements," the spokesman said, according to the Foreign Ministry website.

The PGCC includes the six Arab countries of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain that lie on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf.

Analysts and politicians are unanimous in their views that the PGCC is under the influence of Saudi Arabia. In fact, Saudi Arabia bullies small countries in the council to give in to its demands.

Under Resolution 2231, arms embargo against Iran expires in October.

The UN council plans to vote on the U.S. draft resolution for extending arms embargo this week.

International affairs expert Sabah Zanganeh has said that the world's arms industry will not heed the PGCC's call for extending arms embargo on Iran.

In an interview with IRNA published on Monday, Zanganeh said that the attempt is just propaganda and will not affect Russia and China's approach.

Zanganeh, a former Iran's representative at the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), also said, "The Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region have economic interaction with China and Russia, and Saudi Arabia has close ties with Russia in oil industry, however, these countries are rivals in arms race."

"When arms embargo on Iran expires, China and Russia are willing to have a market in Iran and the region. So, they will not listen to position adopted by secretary general of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council," he noted.

He added, "In a situation in which the United States seeks to own all the world's arms industry, China and Russia will not lose the market because it is profitable."

Zanganeh also said that the PGCC member states seek to continue tension with Iran.

They should know that these methods will not have positive effect on the region, he noted.

## Source denies rumor of Iran-U.S. talks

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — An informed source in Iran denied rumors that the Islamic Republic and the U.S. have started a series of negotiations with the help of a mediator.

Speaking to Tasnim on Tuesday, the source dismissed reports of secret talks between Tehran and Washington, adding, "Despite what has been claimed these days, Iran is not involved in any secret negotiations with the U.S. behind the scene, nor are there any ongoing talks with the mediation of Germany, the UK or any other country. Thus, such claims are basically false."

Asked why certain foreign media have spread such rumors, the source said the U.S. government's policy of maximum pressure on Iran has ended in failure, as Washington itself admits that it has failed to achieve the objectives against Tehran.

The resignation of U.S. special representative for Iran Brian Hook was a result of his failure to pursue

the policy of maximum pressure on Iran, and such a defeat is awaiting his successor too, the source noted.

As a result, the Americans are willing to hide their defeats behind rumors and false news about secret negotiations and contacts with Iran, the source added.

Iranian officials have repeatedly rejected the idea of direct negotiations with the U.S., stressing that Washington must first resume honoring its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and lift the sanctions on Tehran.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has ruled out the notion that 'settlement of Iran's problems hinges on rapprochement with the U.S.'

Negotiation with the U.S. will by no means solve Iran's woes as Washington's main objective is to hinder Iran's progress, American officials are liar and deceitful, and, moreover, the U.S. itself is plagued with crises, Imam Khamenei said in 2016.



# Trump risks crisis at UN by trying to use Iran deal he shredded: Bloomberg

By staff and agency

In an article published by Bloomberg on Tuesday, it is said that two years after quitting the 2015 nuclear deal, Donald Trump's administration is risking a crisis at the United Nations by threatening to reimpose international sanctions on Iran that were eased under the agreement.

"It's a threat that could produce an outcome that once was unthinkable: pushing allies such as Germany and France to side with Russia and China in the UN Security Council, leaving the U.S. isolated," Bloomberg said in its article.

Following is an excerpt of the article: Russia and China have threatened to exercise their veto power to kill the resolution. Diplomats say they don't expect the U.S. will even muster the required nine votes in the 15-member council that would force them to do so.

People familiar with the matter, who asked not to be identified discussing private deliberations, said Security Council members still hoped to forestall a crisis through a compromise, perhaps by extending the arms embargo for a certain period, even if the initial resolution is rejected.

The real flash point will come if efforts at compromise fail: Pompeo [U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo] and Craft [U.S.



Ambassador to UN Kelly Craft] have said the U.S. can -- and will -- invoke a provision in the Iran accord that lets participants "snap back" UN sanctions that were eased in return for constraints on Iran's nuclear program.

The result would be a significant expansion of the crippling sanctions on Iran that the U.S. already has imposed under

the administration's "maximum pressure" campaign. Less than three months before the U.S. presidential election, it would be a major escalation of U.S. pressure on Iran, much like the increasingly sharp measures the Trump administration has been taking against China.

"If the Trump administration takes this action and everyone else is on the other

side of table, then the administration has once again isolated itself and it will fail," said Wendy Sherman, who was lead negotiator on the Iran accord as undersecretary of state for political affairs under President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry.

The prospect of the U.S. being isolated in the Security Council was laid bare when Pompeo made an online appearance in June to lobby member nations to support the U.S. move to extend the embargo on Iranian arms purchases and sales. While European countries agreed it's problematic to let the embargo expire, they rejected the American snapback threat.

Europe will not "support unilateral proposals leading to the return of sanctions," French Ambassador Nicolas de Riviere said during the meeting. "They would only deepen divisions in the Security Council and beyond and would not be likely to improve the situation on the ground of nuclear nonproliferation."

"By the time November elections come around, we could be dealing with a crisis" at the UN, said Ellie Geranmayeh, an Iran expert with the European Council on Foreign Relations. "We are going to be in a very, very perilous moment for the nuclear program."

## What's at stake in the upcoming presidential elections in the U.S. and Iran

By Seyed Hossein Mousavian

The U.S. presidential election will take place in less than 100 days and analysts in both Washington and Tehran are speculating about the future of U.S.-Iran relations. There are those who think that if elected, Joe Biden and his administration will seek a more "balanced" approach to Iran by re-joining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and providing sanctions relief. And then there are those who think that if Trump is re-elected, his administration will continue implementing the pernicious "maximum pressure" strategy. What's clear is that both Trump and Tehran are not seeking a military confrontation although the Trump administration, guided by Iran hawks, is more unpredictable.

Predicting the outcomes of the U.S. election, and the upcoming presidential election in Iran, is no easy task. But it's more important to ask what Iran's current political calculations are given that it has experienced Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement. Having a clear account of what is Iran's current political calculation is necessary for any credible analysis of possible outcomes.

The truth is that there is a tremendous distrust and cynicism accompanied with disappointment in the U.S. policies among Iranian officials. After 12 years of intensive negotiations, Iran and the world powers succeeded in agreeing to one of the most comprehensive nuclear agreements.

Under the JCPOA, Iran accepted the highest level of maximum transparency and limits in its nuclear activities that no other country has ever accepted, according to the IAEA's reports. To be sure, the JCPOA was an international agreement ratified by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 2231. Iran fully implemented each and every part of the JCPOA with zero failure for three years with maximum transparency.

But in return, Trump has rewarded Iran with the most comprehensive sanctions ever since the revolution in 1979 after he withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018. He also enforced the travel ban executive order to prevent Iranian nationals from traveling to the U.S., even visit their relatives. Trump sanctioned Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei as well as its Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and he bullied the European companies who were legally allowed to do business with Iran and punished them for doing so. Trump also designated a branch of Iran's national army namely, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization, among others.



Hence, the Trump administration's policies and actions have turned into a narrative among Iranian officials. The conclusions that Iranian officials have drawn has four major elements.

First, Iranian officials believe that the United States can never be trusted because it has no hesitation to violate bilateral and international agreements with Iran -- or to withdraw from them if it sees fit. From Tehran's point of view, no matter how much Iran shows good will and transparency, it makes no difference to the United States to change the course of action.

Even with the highest level of commitments and compliance, Iran would be rewarded by highest level of pressures and sanctions. Iranian officials believe, now more than ever, that negotiations with the U.S. are doomed to failure and not safeguard Iranian interests.

Second, the Trump administration's withdrawal doctrine and the frequency by which it pulls out of important international accords is indeed a new phenomenon in international relations which confirmed Iranian pessimism about the U.S. commitment to international norms and rules. The U.S. not only withdrew from the JCPOA, but it also pulled out of other important international agreements and treaties like 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the 2012 South Korean trade deal (KORUS), the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the 1945 UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others.

Third, Iranian officials have been convinced that Israel always plays the key role in the U.S. foreign policy with respect to the Middle East. For instance, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu bragged that he convinced Trump to pull out of Iran nuke deal. Netanyahu also disclosed that

he asked President Trump to label the IRGC a terrorist organization. Israeli intelligence also reportedly helped the U.S. assassinate Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani. Iranian officials find this magnitude of involvement of Israel in U.S. foreign policy worthy of blocking any attempt for possible rapprochement.

Fourth, Iranian officials have been surprised by the complacency of other world powers, mainly the European Union, in the face of the American bullying. Knowing that Iran has fully complied with the deal, Europe did next to nothing in safeguarding the deal and in making sure that its economic benefits are at least partially delivered to Iran.

Europe's Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) as a special-purpose vehicle to facilitate transactions with Iran to avoid the U.S. sanctions has been a total failure. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei reflected this sentiment, saying in his Eid speech that the "Europeans did nothing" to hold its part of the bargain in the nuclear deal and therefore they cannot be trusted.

### What's next?

With two important presidential elections are coming up in the U.S. and Iran, expectations are that Iran's next president will be from the Principlists (conservative) faction, just like the result of recent parliamentary elections. The conservative faction's ascendancy is largely due to the fact that Western powers backed away from the JCPOA. The Principlists have always been extremely suspicious of any negotiations with the United States given its dishonest record.

That said, rapprochement may be possible, particularly with a change in administration in January 2021. The U.S. must show goodwill in three areas.

First, re-join the JCPOA and in accordance with the UN Resolution 2231, to dismantle all of its illegal nuclear related sanctions that it imposed after its withdrawal from the deal.

Second, remove all of sanctions that it imposed beyond the nuclear issue on Iran such as key state officials namely the Supreme Leader and its Foreign Minister, and the designation of IRGC as a terrorist organization.

Third, terminate the triangle alliance with Israel and Saudi Arabia to bring regime change in Iran and even to disintegrate Iran.

It is important that the U.S. demonstrate goodwill and its commitment to the UN resolution and international rules and regulations by rejoining the JCPOA and removing all sanctions Trump imposed prior to the Iranian election in summer 2021.

(Source: Responsible Statecraft)

## Lavrov says Russia made proposals to ensure JCPOA participants resume cooperation

**MOSCOW (UrduPoint News)** — Moscow has made proposals to help the Iranian nuclear deal signatories resume cooperation and break the deadlock the agreement has been in since the U.S. withdrawal, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Tuesday after talks with his German counterpart, Heiko Maas.

"Among other topics on which Russia and Germany are actively cooperating, I will highlight the situation around

the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to settle the issue of the Iranian nuclear program. There is a number of ideas put forward by our European colleagues. Russia, in turn, made some proposals that, in our opinion, would help to resume cooperation of all JCPOA signatories without exception," Lavrov said.

In July 2015, Iran signed a nuclear agreement with China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States,



Germany and the European Union. The JCPOA stipulates that Iran must scale back its nuclear program and downgrade

its uranium reserves in exchange for sanctions relief, including the lifting of the UN arms embargo five years after the accord was adopted.

The agreement has been in crisis since May 2018, when the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from it and reintroduced sanctions on Tehran. Nevertheless, during the last visit of Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to Russia last month, Lavrov said that chances keep the deal in force still remained.

## Commander: Iran self-sufficient in manufacturing ultra-heavy tank transporters

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Deputy Commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force Brigadier General Amir Nozar Nemati lauded the country's young experts for building ultra-heavy tank transporters.

"Today, we have been able to attain self-sufficiency in production of ultra-heavy tank transporters and stop dependence (on foreign states) with efforts of the faithful and specialized youth," General Nemati said on Tuesday.

He added that the country's experts could end the foreign states' monopoly by manufacturing the ultra-heavy tank transporters, stressing that the Army's Ground Force is now able to build any defensive tools it needs.

Last November, Iran unveiled a new home-made tank transporter named 'Kian 700' in a ceremony participated by Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri.

The tank transporter has been manufactured by the Army's Ground Force experts and enjoys 700/hp engine power and 200 tons of tensile strength.

It is also able to carry two 60-ton tanks on the ultra-heavy home-made 'Soleiman 3' towing vehicle.

Kian 700 weighs 17,799kg and runs in 12 gears. Iran had also in 2016 unveiled another ultra-heavy tank transporter named 'Pouria' and 'Fallagh' optimized tank.

The two new army achievements were unveiled during Beit ul-Muqaddas 28 wargames in the Central province of Isfahan.

"Pouria ultra-heavy tank carrier and Fallagh tanks were unveiled during Beit ul-Muqaddas drills," General Massoud Reza Zawarei, the head of the Iranian Ground Force's Research and Self-Sufficiency Jihad, told reporters at the time.



He said that Fallagh is equipped with automatic and stabilized Dushka weapon which is controlled by the crew inside.

## U.S. would face major defeat at UN

**I →** According to the terms of the JCPOA, the UN arms embargo will expire on October 18. However, the U.S. has launched a diplomatic campaign to extend the arms embargo despite the fact that it has ceased its participation in the nuclear deal and thus it has no right to extend the arms embargo or trigger a snapback of all UN sanctions on Iran.



The U.S. has circulated a resolution calling for an indefinite extension of the arms embargo, even though its legal argument to do so is very much under doubt at the moment. While other parties to the nuclear deal say that the U.S. is no longer a participant to the deal and thus it has no authority to extend the embargo, U.S. officials seem to be preparing to trigger the snapback of UN sanctions on Iran if their resolution is rejected or vetoed.

In order for the U.S. resolution to be passed, at least nine members of the Security Council must vote in its favor. The U.S. officials made efforts to win the support of countries, which currently hold a seat on the Security Council. Brian Hook, the former U.S. special representative for Iran, paid visits to Tunisia, Estonia and the UK in a bid to get them to support the U.S. push to extend the arms embargo.

"My visit today to Tunisia is to advance the U.S. - Tunisia partnership on the United Nations Security Council, and to discuss the very urgent need for the Security Council to extend its Arms Embargo on Iran, which expires in October," Hook said during his visit to Tunisia, which took place on July 24.

However, it seems that Hook failed to win the support of Tunisia and maybe the support of other countries. Nearly two weeks after Hook's visit to Tunisia, Pompeo found himself obliged to hold talks with the Tunisian leadership.

In a tweet on August 8, Pompeo said that he held "productive conversation with President [Kais] Saied of Tunisia today about the issues we face at the United Nations and at home."

For his part, President Saied said in a tweet that he held talks with Pompeo on "bilateral relations as well as a number of international and regional issues."

It's safe to say that the two officials have discussed the idea of extending the arms embargo on Iran.

Hook announced his resignation weeks after his visits to Tunisia and the UK. Analysts believe that his failure to mobilize countries against Iran was probably the reason behind his surprise resignation.

"Probably one reason that Brian Hook left the Trump administration was because he realized that his efforts are not really paying off the way they expected," Fowad Izadi, a professor of American studies at the University of Tehran, told the Tehran Times. Izadi said U.S. officials have made efforts to bring the members of the Security Council on board, but they failed.

"They worked very hard. They traveled a lot. They called a lot of people to advance their goals," the professor stated, noting that the failure of these efforts "could be one reason for Brian Hook leaving the Trump administration."

However, even if the U.S. gains enough votes to pass its resolution, it still could face the vetoes of Russia or China. The U.S. officials have already implied that their resolution had a zero chance to be adopted, and they managed to put it forward in a bid to put Russia and China "in a corner and shine the light on them," according to Kelly Craft, the U.S. ambassador to the UN.

"I think it's going to be a major defeat for the United States. The Trump administration has worked very hard to make sure that this portion of the UN resolution 2231 is not implemented and they have done their utmost to basically force a lot of countries and the UN Security Council to violate the resolution and extend the UN arms embargo [on Iran]. And if they fail, this is going to be a major defeat for the United States, and this is going to have ramifications both internationally and domestically," Izadi pointed out.

He added, "They are in the election year and thus they are going to also pay a price in the presidential competitions that they have."

Regardless of the legal arguments regarding the snapback mechanism, the United States could resort to triggering the snapback of UN sanctions even though its legal stance is ambiguous. Whether other countries will implement the arms embargo if it is extended remains an open question.

Izadi believes that any U.S. move to trigger a return of UN sanctions on Iran, would divide the world into two blocs: some countries would be obliged to follow the U.S. and others could ignore the U.S. pressure.

"We know that the United States doesn't follow international law and they use different instruments that they have to engage in illegal activities. So the end result is going to be some countries follow the U.S. dictates because they have no other choice, and some countries are going to be more independent and able to withstand the U.S. pressure," the professor told the Tehran Times.

## Trump vows to 'have a deal' with Iran 4 weeks after 2020 reelection

**(Press TV)** — U.S. President Donald Trump says he will "have a deal" with Iran a month after possible victory in the 2020 presidential election.

While Tehran has maintained that it would not negotiate under pressure, Trump made the comment as his country was about to introduce a resolution at the United Nations to extend an arms embargo against Iran.

The Republican nominee, who is set to face former Vice President Joe Biden in November, made the claim at a campaign fundraiser in the state of New Jersey on Sunday.

"When we win, we will have a deal within four weeks," Trump was cited as saying by several media outlets.

His remarks were reportedly cheered by the crowd at the home of the late Stanley Chera, a real estate mogul, in Long Branch.

The president has also launched a so-called "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran spearheaded by war hawks such as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

In January, the U.S. president also ordered assassination of Iran's General Qassem Soleimani.

Trump unilaterally withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal -- clinched under his predecessor in 2018 -- despite opposition from its allies as well as Russia and China.

## Car manufacturing rises over 20% in 4 months on year

**1 →** He further said 106,018 cars have been manufactured in the fourth month of this year, indicating 52.8 percent growth from 69,402 cars manufactured in the same month of the previous year.

As previously reported, the carmakers have manufactured 203,146 vehicles during the first quarter of the current year (March 20-June 20).

Of the mentioned figure, 96,490 vehicles were manufactured by Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), 79,520 by SAIPA Group, and 27,136 by Pars Khodro.



Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 863,263 vehicles during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

During the previous year, IKCO manufactured 393,812 vehicles, of which 35,953 were produced in the last month Esfand (February 20-March 19).

Production by SAIPA stood at 363,379, of which 23,696 vehicles were manufactured during the last month.

Pars Khodro manufactured 106,072 cars during the past year. Production in Esfand reached 9,300 vehicles.

Iran has been following a program for supporting domestic manufacturing of auto parts since due to the U.S. sanctions the country's automakers have been facing some problems in supplying their needed parts and equipment.

## Infrastructures developed in Maku FTZ to expand trade with neighboring countries

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Infrastructures have been developed in Maku Free Trade and Industrial Zone in northwest Iran in a bid to increase the country's trade with its neighbors, Managing Director of Maku Zone Organization Mohammadreza Abdolrahimi said on Monday.

The official said that Maku Free Trade and Industrial Zone was established in order to ease trade exchange with the neighboring states, IRNA reported.

The infrastructure of the free trade zone has undergone major development to boost capacity for economic development, foreign investment and increasing public income, creating jobs, regulating labor and commodity markets, active presence in the global and regional markets, offering public services, and setting up manufacturing units to produce industrial and technology-based products.

"With effective engagement and benefitting from technology and knowledge, we can achieve great success in boosting trade relations with the neighboring states and investment in the manufacturing sector", the official noted.

Maku Free Zone in northwestern province of West Azarbaijan has 140 kilometers of border with Azerbaijan Republic and 130 kilometers border with Turkey.

As previously announced by Maku Zone Organization's managing director, the value of exports from this Zone hit 60\$ million in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

## Over \$172m paid for agricultural mechanization since March

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — The head of Iran's Agricultural Mechanization Development Center said the government has paid 7.23 trillion rials (about \$172.14 million) of the allocated budget for agricultural mechanization during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21).



"With the support of the Agricultural Ministry and the Agricultural Bank, more than 723 billion tomans [7.23 trillion rials] of funding was absorbed by the end of [the Iranian calendar month of] Tir (July 21)," IRNA quoted Kambiz Abbasi as saying. "Despite all the restrictions, more than 7,100 tractors have been added to the agricultural sector's fleet," Abbasi said.

According to the official, the agriculture ministry has been allocating a separate credit line for the mechanization of the agriculture sector every year, so that since the Iranian calendar year of 1392 (started on March 21, 2013) so far, eight credit lines have been opened for this sector.

As reported, statistics show that there is an annual demand for 25 trillion rials (about \$595 million) of facilities for the development and modernization of agricultural machinery.

According to Abbasi since over 95 percent of the technology and knowledge in this area is domestic, despite the U.S. sanctions most of the goals in the mechanization of various agriculture sectors will be achieved without any problems.

In the past forty years, since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has witnessed a remarkable improvement in various sectors and the agriculture industry has been one of the areas in which the country has undergone huge development.

Iran's agricultural mechanization coefficient has currently reached 1.65 horsepower per hectare and this figure is set to increase to 2.1 horsepower.

Implementing billions of dollars' worth of development, research, and educational projects across the country is an indication of the significant improvements in this sector.

# Oil bonds seen to make 'economic breakthrough'

By Mahnaz Abdi

**TEHRAN**— Last week, President Hassan Rouhani announced that the heads of the three branches of the government, namely the executive, legislative and judicial powers, would make decision on a plan that would bring about an "economic breakthrough" for the country.

The term "economic breakthrough" was then used by the Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, and raised many questions among the officials and also the people, who wanted to know what an "economic breakthrough" it would be exactly.

As the president had announced, during a meeting of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination on Monday afternoon, Rouhani, Ghalibaf, and Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi, the administration's top economic figures including Central Bank of Iran (CBI)'s Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati, Head of Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Mohammad-Bagher Nobakht, Vice-President for Economic Affairs Mohammad Nahavandian, and Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh decided to draw up plans to counter oil embargo and redirect the high liquidity, which is partly blamed for the high inflation rate.

First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, Presidential Chief of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi, and Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli were also present at the economic coordination council meeting.

Also, Raisi's top deputies attended the session. Two top MPs also were present.

At the session, Rouhani elaborated on the ways to counter oil sanctions and manage liquidity.



The proposal by the government's Economic Task Force to counter oil sanctions and manage liquidity was discussed and welcomed. Necessary decisions were also made to finalize it.

After the meeting, Eghtesad News website quoted an informed source as saying that the heads of three branches had made an agreement on the plan for the pre-selling of oil, which should be approved by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to be implemented.

It is said that based on this plan, the government is to sell 220 million barrels of oil through issuing parallel salaf bonds in a course of one year.

Standard parallel salaf is an Islamic contract similar to futures, with the difference being that the contract's total price must be paid in advance.

While the details of the mentioned plan have not been still announced, it has drawn many criticisms.

It is highly doubtful that the people would risk their savings in order to invest in oil transactions. Practical feasibility is another question.

But some of those who support the plan say that the government will guarantee that there is no risk of loss for the investors.

They also say that the parallel salaf bonds make it possible for the investors to sell the bonds in the secondary market if needed.

The other criticism to this plan is that it will transfer the commitments made by the present administration to the next one.

Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi, the chairman of the parliament's economic committee, who is also an advocate of the plan, says, "This

plan is for selling the oil through IRENEX (Iran Energy Exchange) and based on the salaf bonds, but we should not transfer the current administration's commitments to the next administration".

Speaking in a live TV program on Monday night, Pour-Ebrahimi said, "We should benefit from the capacity of the capital market to reduce the pressure due to the sanctions on the oil exports."

"This plan helps us to resolve the problems related to the sales of oil in cash, also in collecting the liquidity, which is one of the main concerns of the officials, and leading it toward productive activities, and in this way it helps the country's economy", the MP noted.

But, Ahmad Tavakoli, a former MP, is of the opinion that this plan is "selling the future". "It's just moving today's problems to tomorrow."

And Hadi Haqshenas, an economic expert, says that selling oil through bonds is a short-term solution to reduce budget deficit and the main breakthrough is achieved just through modifying the ways for foreign currency's entrance to the country.

Receiving all the criticisms and supports, the general outlines of the plan for selling oil in IRENEX based on the salaf bonds has been already approved in the Monday meeting of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination, as announced by President Rouhani on Tuesday.

Rouhani expressed hope that the government can implement it after receiving the final approval, IRNA reported.

Some say that if just half of the government's planned amount of financing through selling oil salaf bonds is materialized, it will be a big step to reduce the budget deficit.

## Iran, EAEU representatives to hold meeting to discuss PTA

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Deputy Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) for International Affairs Mohammad-Reza Karbasi has announced holding of a meeting between Iran and representatives of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in the next Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (August 22-September 21) for discussing implementation of preferential trade agreement.

According to Karbasi, a working group comprised of the representative of ICCIMA, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade and Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) has been formed to prepare the information needed in the negotiations with the Eurasian member states in the forthcoming meeting.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, the official noted that various aspects of the trade between Iran and the EAEU members under the framework of the free preferential trade agreement between the two sides, especially the issuance of the certificate of origin, will be discussed at the mentioned gathering.

"We asked the provincial chambers to provide lists of goods they want for free trade with Eurasian member countries, and fortunately these lists have been prepared and sent to us," he noted.

Mentioning some of the issues that



will be talked by the said working group, the official said: "there are problems with the issuance of the certificate of origin in the country due to the lack of necessary coordination among the related bodies; It is necessary to identify such issues and provide solutions for them to make the most of the opportunity created for Iran and its presence in the Eurasian Union."

According to Karbasi, strengthening the certification units in chambers across the country is an urgent need that should be on the ICCIMA's agenda. In this regard, training courses have been provisioned by the ICCIMA and the working group will also present its proposals.

He finally called on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Industry Ministry and the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce to receive information on the mechanisms of Eurasian member states in dealing with their exporters to Iran or other Eurasian member states.

## Reviving 1,020 mines, constructing 25 mineral processing units on agenda this year

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iran Minerals Production and Supply Company (IMPASCO) has it on the agenda to revive and develop 1,020 mines, and construct 25 mineral processing units in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021).

According to the IMPASCO Head Vajihollah Jafari, the company has also signed 32 memorandums of understanding for the development of the mining sector's various fields, ISNA reported on Monday.

"These memorandums include 16 investment memoranda, eight research and training memorandums, six financing memorandums, and two memorandums related to startup development," he explained.

He mentioned holding two conferences at the national level and participating in specialized festivals and exhibitions as other measures that IMPASCO is going to take in line with the development goals of the current year and noted: "A layer called small-scale mines has been created and set up in the Company's WebGIS system and a website has also been created for the projects related to the reviving of small mines."

He also noted that a questionnaire has also been created and distributed among the owners of idle small mine to determine their problems and the reasons for the



inactivity of their mines.

IMPASCO is a subsidiary of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

Back in April, Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s Mining Committee announced that more than 146 idle small mines were revived by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020).

According to Bahram Shakouri, in addition to reviving and developing small-scale mines, 2,130 small mineral zones were also identified and 364 projects were defined for them, IRNA reported.

Earlier in January, IMIDRO Head Khodadad Gharibpour had mentioned the plan for reviving idle mines as one of the most significant plans of "Resistance Economy", saying that his organization was strongly determined to pursue it.

## 4-month copper anode output reaches 121,200 tons

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Production of copper anode in Iran hit 121,202 tons during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), indicating three percent rise compared to the output in the same period of time in the past year, IRNA reported.

As reported, Sarcheshmeh Copper Investment Company in the southeastern Kerman province accounted for the lion's share of the production during the mentioned time span. The company produced 79,083 tons of copper anode.

By producing 41, 371 tons of the product, Khatoon Abad

Copper Complex, located in Kerman as well, registered the highest amount of production growth, which was four percent, in the first four months of the year.

In early May, four development projects worth 40 trillion rials (about \$952.3 million) were inaugurated in the copper sector of Kerman Province. President Hassan Rouhani put the projects into operation through video conference.

The projects inaugurated in Khatoon Abad Copper Complex included increasing the capacity of copper smelting in the complex, building a copper concentrate storage,

construction of a sulfuric acid production plant, and an oxygen supplying unit.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO)'s Managing Director Khodadad Gharibpour was present in the inaugural ceremony of the projects.

By putting the first project into operation, the complex's capacity for producing copper anode rises by 50 percent to 120,000 tons, and the country's copper smelting capacity rose to 400,000 tons. This project creates jobs for 120 persons.

## Parliament is ready to help the private sector, so should be the government: MP

By Hanie Khakpour

**TEHRAN**— Since starting its job, the new parliament of Iran has announced in different occasions as being ready to confirm comprehensive packages proposed by the private sector to expand economic exchanges during hard times of pandemic, global economic depression and unilateral sanctions. The parliament has also called on the government, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to strengthen itself in the field of economic diplomacy.

The 11th parliament seeks to present contemporary effective measures in variety of fields regarding the motto of "paying attention to the people's economic climate."

"The Economic Committee of the Parliament has suggested to the members of the Chamber of Commerce to provide a comprehensive proposal for expanding the

economic exchanges in the market of target countries to turn into a practical law in this field," Mehdi Toghiani, Spokesman for the Economic Committee of the Parliament told the Tehran Times.

"Iran must establish trade centers in target markets to collect crucial economic information regarding the opportunities of investment in foreign markets for obtaining economic benefits for the country," he explained.

According to the MP, the pivotal points of this proposal are: management of these centers by the private sector and creating a competition among the chambers of commerce of large cities to find a suitable market for investment in target countries.

Toghiani believes due to the absence of an influential and adequate structure in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, our presence in many international markets is based on businessmen's experiences, not on an or-

ganized cohesive structure like other active countries. "Therefore, we have suggested to the Chamber of Commerce to comment on how Iran can activate its capabilities in neighboring countries, other countries in the region, Africa or elsewhere," Toghiani highlighted.

The official expressed hope that either by passing a bill in the parliament or forming a procedure in the chamber of Commerce, the country would determine the duties of other units of the country regarding the subject.

On the other hand, another member of parliament, referred to Iran's geopolitical situation as a major power point for boosting trade with neighboring countries. "Our country has extraordinary sea and land borders so that 16 provinces are adjacent to neighboring countries," Fada Hossein Maleki, a member of the Economic Committee told the Tehran Times.

"Unfortunately, this capacity has not been utilized properly so far," he went on to say. Maleki also explained once these borders are activated, most of the economic issues in the bordering provinces will be solved.

The new approach towards trade with regional countries is also embraced by the government so that the Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif emphasized on activating the economic diplomacy in the national security and foreign policy Committee of the Parliament.

Emphasizing on launching cross-border trade with different countries, Maleki called "border market" as a proper economic space for the people living in border areas. "While Iran and Pakistan can have 5 billion dollars in economic exchanges, the number is only 1 billion dollars at the moment. This is not acceptable and border markets should be activated as soon as possible," this lawmaker said.

# Electricity consumption in Iran soars once again

**E N E R G Y** TEHRAN — Iran's daily electricity consumption once again exceeded the 57,000 megawatts (MW) red line on Monday evening to settle at 57,2019 MW, IRNA reported.

According to the data released by the Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC), electricity consumption at 20:58 local time increased by 1,094 MW compared to the previous night, while registering a 5,277 MW increase year-on-year.

Electricity consumption in the industrial sector at the mentioned date and time reached 4,705 MW, while the previous night the figure stood at 4,687 MW at the said time.

Last week, electricity consumption in Iran which had exceeded 58,000 MW (58 GW) in late July to register the highest power consumption recorded in the history of the country's electricity industry, retreated from the peak high to settle below 57,000 as the weather started to get cooler.

Based on the data released by Iran's Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution Management Company,



known as TAVANIR, the recorded figure was 333 MW more than the last year's peak consumption. With the beginning of the hot season

in Iran, the electricity consumption increased unprecedentedly so that several new records were registered for the power consumption since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21).

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and the significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

In this regard, the Energy Ministry has been following new strategies in recent years to manage the consumption and lessen the electricity losses in the national grid.

In late July, Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said that his ministry was considering new incentive packages for low-consuming households and industrial electricity subscribers.

"Last year, nearly 10.6 trillion rials (about \$25.2 million) was paid to low-consuming households and industrial subscribers, and this year too, new incentive packages have been considered for awarding such consumers," Ardakanian said on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting.

## Big Oil forced to change strategy after the oil price crash

By Tsvetana Paraskova

In one of the most challenging quarters for the oil industry in recent memory, the five Big Oil firms wrote down nearly \$50 billion from the value of their oil and gas assets as commodity prices crashed and as some of them strategically reset their expectations of oil prices going forward. The five international oil majors — ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, BP, and Total — also reduced capital expenditure (capex) plans as well as their oil and gas production as demand crashed in the second quarter due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All majors — apart from the notable exception of Exxon — recalibrated the value of their oil and gas assets in the second quarter due to the crash in oil prices and expectations of depressed demand for at least several more quarters.

The second quarter saw some of the worst quarterly figures at Big Oil in decades, and while the overall impression was that of a dismal quarter, the majors responded in different ways to the crash in oil prices and demand.

At one end of the range, Exxon didn't book any major write-downs this past quarter and kept its dividend. At the other end of the range of responses to the crash, BP not only slashed its dividend in half and booked billions of U.S. dollars of impairments, but it also announced a strategic shift to cut its oil production by 40 percent and increase investments in low-carbon energy tenfold within a decade.

Exxon reported its second consecutive quarterly loss, which was the worst loss for the U.S. supermajor in its modern history. It reiterated its commitment to dividend payouts while evaluating its businesses on a country-by-country basis after having identified "significant potential for additional reductions."

A week after the results release, Exxon said in an SEC filing that the low oil prices could result in 20-percent reductions

to its proved reserves at end 2020, compared to 22.4 billion oil-equivalent barrels reported at year-end 2019.

"If average prices seen thus far in 2020 persist for the remainder of the year, under the SEC definition of proved reserves, certain quantities of crude oil, bitumen and natural gas will not qualify as proved reserves at year-end 2020," Exxon said.

Unlike Exxon, the other U.S. supermajor, Chevron, booked impairments — at a total of \$5 billion — as it also reported its worst quarterly results in three decades. Chevron's charges include \$1.8 billion mostly associated with downward revisions to its commodity price outlook, full impairment of its \$2.6 billion investment in Venezuela, and a \$780 million charge due to severance accruals as it plans to cut 13 percent, or around 6,000 jobs, of its workforce.

Across the Atlantic, European majors Shell and Total managed to avoid adjusted losses thanks to their keen oil trading businesses that cushioned the blow from the low oil prices.

Yet, both Shell and Total also booked impairments connected to their revised oil price outlooks. Shell booked an impairment charge of \$16.8 billion post-tax as it revised its price assumptions and market fundamentals. Total booked \$8.1 billion impairments — of which \$7 billion in Canada's oil sands — as it cut its short-term price expectations.

"Beyond 2030, given technological developments, particularly in the transportation sector, Total anticipates oil demand will have reached its peak and Brent prices should tend toward the long-term price of \$05/b, in line with the IEA SDS scenario," Total said.

Total, however, kept its dividend intact, becoming the only European major to not resort to dividend cuts so far this year. Equinor and Shell slashed dividends as early as reporting their first-quarter results at end-April-early May, while Eni and BP announced dividend cuts with the Q2 results in the past two weeks.



BP halved its dividend, reducing the payout to shareholders for the first time since the Deepwater Horizon disaster in 2010. The dividend cut was not a surprise—it was widely expected by analysts. While the dividend was one headline-grabbing story, the other was the fact that BP pledged to reduce its oil and gas production by 40 percent by 2030 as part of its strategy to reinvent itself from an International Oil Company (IOC) to an Integrated Energy Company (IEC). BP had pledged to become a net-zero energy business by 2050 in early February before the COVID-19 pandemic swept through the world and led to analysts thinking whether oil demand will ever return to pre-crisis levels.

Commenting on BP's strategy unveiled last week, Luke Parker, Wood Mackenzie Vice President, Corporate Analysis, said:

"But if ever there was a moment to reset, this was it. Several factors have converged to make it possible: coronavirus and everything that comes with it; a strategic pivot to net-zero on the horizon; Shell's dividend reset; a new leadership with credit in the bank. Our view is that BP has taken the prudent course of action."

## Saudi Aramco sees Asian crude oil demand recovering. But is it?

By Clyde Russell

Saudi Aramco sees a recovery in global oil demand, a view that would justify the paltry reduction in the price the world's biggest crude exporter will charge refiners in Asia for cargoes loading in September.

Customers probably have a different view. Aramco Chief Executive Amin Nasser told reporters on Aug. 9 that demand was recovering as countries try to restart economies after lockdowns aimed at curbing the spread of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"Look at China, their gasoline and diesel demand is almost at pre-COVID 19 levels. We are seeing that Asia is picking up and other markets (too)," he said, after announcing the state-controlled oil giant's quarterly results.

Asia is the key market for Saudi crude, but while there are some signs demand is past its lowest point, it is also likely that it is well short of pre-coronavirus levels, with the exception of China.

Nasser's comments on demand can be viewed in the context of Aramco's decision last week to cut the Official Selling Price (OSP) for its flagship Arab Light crude for September-loading cargoes for Asian customers by 30 U.S. cents to a premium of 90 U.S. cents over the Oman/Dubai average.

The reduction was at the lower end of expectations in a Reuters survey of Asian

refiners polled ahead of the announcement, and the modest price cut will do little to relieve pressure on already weak refinery profit margins.

Some refiners were reported by Bloomberg to have cut the amount of crude they will buy from Aramco in September under their term contracts, which typically allow some variation in contracted volumes by either the seller or buyer.

There are various measures of refinery margins, but all of them are telling the same story, namely that Asian refiners are doing it tough.

One such measure is the profit of processing a barrel at a Singapore hydrocracking refinery, which dropped to just 75 U.S. cents a barrel on Monday, not far off the low this year of 10 cents on June 30.

The margin is well below profits of around \$3-\$5 a barrel that prevailed in the first quarter of the year.

For the main individual products, gasoline remains weak, with the profit from processing a barrel of Brent crude at a Singapore refinery just \$1.93 a barrel on Monday, which is better than the losses that were being incurred from mid-March to mid-May, but still well below the \$3-\$10 range from the second half of 2019.

The profit on producing a barrel of gasoil, the building block for diesel and kerosene, was at \$5.80 a barrel on Monday, higher



than the low this year of \$1.77 on May 5, but also well short of the \$13-\$19 range from the second half of 2019.

**■ Demand recovery: reality or hope?** While refinery margins are weak currently, is Aramco's view that demand is recovering in Asia correct? If so, is that recovery enough to drive refinery margins back to levels that allow the businesses to operate sustainably?

To answer this, it's best to separate China from the rest of Asia currently, given its different set of dynamics.

China appears to be achieving the much-vaunted V-shaped economic recovery, and given it was the first to be hit by the coronavirus and the first to recover, it's ahead of the rest of the region.

But China's super-strong run of crude oil imports comes with a caveat, insofar as they are likely coming to end as the last of the super cheap oil snapped up during the brief Saudi Arabia-Russia price war

arrives this month.

China's imports in July were 12.08 million barrels per day (bpd), down from June's record 12.94 million bpd, but still the second-highest. In fact, the three biggest monthly imports have been the last three months.

But while August is likely to see China's import strength continue, the bigger question is what happens from September onwards, given that China is unlikely to buy crude for storage at the same rate, now that prices have recovered.

With regional markets for refined fuels also still well supplied, Chinese refiners may struggle to sell excess product overseas, and even if they do it will be at the expense of refinery margins.

India, the second biggest importer in Asia behind China, is showing some signs of recovery in demand, with Refinitiv Oil Research estimating July imports at 3.75 million bpd, up from 3.44 million bpd in June.

But these are well down on levels prior to the coronavirus lockdowns in India, with March imports at 4.8 million bpd and February's at 4.78 million bpd.

Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore all show similar patterns to India, with some recovery in import demand, but still short of levels prior to the coronavirus.

This makes Aramco's decision to deliver only a modest price cut to its Asian customers risky.

## Oil Ministry supports domestic manufacturing with int'l standards: Zanganeh

TEHRAN (Shana) — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said his ministry would support domestic manufacturing by observing international standards in the oil industry.

Speaking on the sidelines of a ceremony to offer the first certificate of oil industry goods and equipment, Zanganeh told reporters on Monday that issuance of equipment quality certification is an important step for the development of national technology and support for domestic manufacturing in accordance with international standards.

He said: "Today the first certificate of quality of goods and equipment of the oil industry was awarded to Iran Quality Certification Foundation. This will be an important step to develop domestic technology and support for domestic manufacturing in accordance with international standards."

The Minister said that the issuance of quality certificates for equipment and goods will open the way for the use of Iranian equipment, adding: "Iranian companies had many problems to obtain equipment quality certificates after the sanctions were imposed."

## Australia aims to become renewable energy export superpower

Australia has shipped vast quantities of coal and gas to fuel Asia's rapid growth for decades. But amid global concerns over climate change, investors and a previously skeptical conservative government are now backing plans to build a renewable energy export industry to help diversify its economy.

According to Financial Times, last month the Australian government awarded "major project status" to Sun Cable, a \$22 billion (\$16 billion) solar power project in Northern Territory, a remote region more typically known as a source of liquefied natural gas. The designation aims to fast track construction of the world's largest battery, a solar farm and a 3,700km electricity cable to supply AS2 billion a year of green energy to Singapore by 2027.

"We are creating a new industry by building these high-voltage direct current submarine cable networks that enable the development of massive scale renewable energy, wherever the resource is most abundant," said David Griffin, chief executive of Sun Cable.

"Ultimately we are looking at a network that extends from India to New Zealand."

Despite a bruising decade-long political debate in Australia over the future of fossil fuels, the Liberal-National government has begun preparing for a future without its AS55 billion-a-year coal industry.

Sun Cable is one of several green energy export projects planned in Australia, which is deploying solar and wind capacity at a rate four to five times faster than in the EU, US, Japan and China on a per capita basis, according to a report by Australian National University.

Macquarie Bank and energy groups Vestas, CWP Energy and InterContinental Energy are backing the Asian Renewable Energy Hub, a rival project, which aims to use wind and solar power in Western Australia state to make hydrogen products for export to Asian markets.

In Victoria, the government is co-funding a \$500m pilot project to generate hydrogen from coal and store the emissions produced in an undersea basin.

"As technologies change, we can capitalize on our strengths in renewables to continue to lead the world in energy exports," said Angus Taylor, Australia's energy minister, when announcing Canberra would support Sun Cable in gaining state and federal approvals.

Sun Cable backers include two of Australia's richest men: Mike Cannon-Brookes, co-founder of software company Atlassian, and Andrew Forrest, founder of mining group Fortescue. It aims to disrupt Asia's heavy reliance on fossil fuels by making large amounts of renewable energy generated in Australia available at reasonable cost.

Proposals to export renewable energy across vast regions date back at least a century when German architect Herman Sörgel proposed building a hydroelectric dam across the Strait of Gibraltar. Sharp falls in solar and wind costs and technical advances in cabling are turning this vision into reality. The UK, for example, is constructing the longest subsea power cable in the world — a €2 billion electricity interconnector to Denmark, which stretches for 765km with a capacity of 1.4GW.

Sun Cable's proposed cable is almost five times that length and double the capacity of the UK's Viking Link, which would enable it to supply a fifth of Singapore's total electricity demand. It must be laid at a depth of 1,700m below sea level — eight times that of the UK-Denmark interconnector — which will pose technical and financial challenges.

"For such long distances it is quite likely we have to go for multiple lines increasing the cost and complexity," said Srinivas Siripurapu, chief R&D officer at Prysmian, a world leader in subsea cabling.

He said the deepest cable sits at depth of 1,600m, linking Sardinia to the Italian mainland but Prysmian is developing new technology that can go down to 3,000m.

The Asian Renewable Energy Hub initially planned to build a subsea cable to supply Indonesia with green power generated at massive 15GW solar and wind farms based in the Pilbara, a desert region in Western Australia. But it changed its approach about two years ago due to the estimated AS20 billion-plus costs and because it limited the customers it could supply.

"We've pivoted our vision to exporting energy in chemical form primarily in the form of hydrogen derivatives including ammonia," said Andrew Dickson, development manager. "Shipping product means we have a much wider range of potential customers."

The hub plans to use low-cost renewable energy to make green hydrogen and ammonia, which can be stored and transported to energy hungry markets such as South Korea and Japan.

Dickson said ammonia can already be used in coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions by a fifth and there were opportunities in multiple sectors from power generation to shipping fuels.

The hub plans to sell power to iron ore mines and LNG facilities in the Pilbara to "unlock electrification at a large scale" and provide extra revenue to help it realize its export potential, he added.

Both projects must still prove to investors they are bankable and the technical challenges are not insurmountable. But advocates believe Australia's abundant wind and solar resources and the pace of technological development puts the nation in pole position to create a viable renewables export industry.

"We have a rich energy export history and renewables is our next big step," said Cannon-Brookes. "We have the technology. We have the economics. And we have an opportunity to become a renewable energy superpower."

## Germany expresses 'displeasure' at U.S. threat over Russia pipeline

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has expressed "displeasure" to his U.S. counterpart Mike Pompeo about Washington's threat of sanctions against a German port over a gas pipeline from Russia, Aljazeera reported.

Speaking in Berlin on Monday as transatlantic tensions spike, Maas was asked by a reporter about last week's letter from three U.S. senators, which pledged tough sanctions against the operators of a key German port involved in the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

"I mentioned it in a telephone call with (Secretary of State) Mike Pompeo yesterday and expressed my surprise

and displeasure," he said.

Nord Stream 2, a 10 billion-euro (\$11bn) pipeline nearing completion beneath the Baltic Sea, is set to double Russian natural gas shipments to Germany, the EU's largest economy.

U.S. President Donald Trump last year signed legislation against contractors working on Nord Stream 2 and another Russian gas project, TurkStream, which goes through the Black Sea.

But while those sanctions focused on technical assistance, the separate Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act lays out harsh measures that can include severing access to the U.S. financial system.

Pompeo announced guidelines last month stipulating that German companies could suffer sanctions even for small investments in the project.

Germany had voiced anger over the earlier sanctions law, saying that it interfered in its internal affairs.

But Ukraine, Poland and Baltic states fear that Nord Stream 2 will further embolden Russian President Vladimir Putin by giving Moscow more control over crucial energy flows.

Germany, despite political differences with Russia, sees Nord Stream 2 as ensuring a more stable and cleaner source of energy as it pivots away from coal and nuclear power.

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**Oil min. holds phone talk with Russia's energy min. on reducing oil output**

TEHRAN, Feb. 20 (MNA) – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh held a phone conversation with the Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak on Thu. with regards to the cooperation of the two countries within the framework of OPEC Plus.

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# Saudi austerity measures: an end to lavish times?

Kingdom boosts taxes to make up for lower oil revenues, risks fueling discontent

By Salman Parviz

The Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic has spread around the world with lightning speed, surprising most governments, and pushing the global economy in deep recession. The collapse of oil prices, hovering just over \$40 a barrel, has especially pushed the world's largest crude exporter's economy deeper into the abyss.

Saudi Arabia posted a \$29.12 billion deficit, with oil revenues falling 45 percent in the second quarter this year (on a year-on-year basis) to \$25.5 billion. Total revenues dropped 49 percent to nearly \$36 billion, according to the country's Finance Ministry report published on July 28.

The slump in oil prices, along with the Covid-19 pandemic, has placed a unique pressure on the Saudi economy. In March, Saudi net foreign assets fell by almost \$27 billion to \$464 billion, the lowest in 19 years. The Ministry of Finance has increased its debt ceiling from 30 percent of GDP to 50 percent, according to Carnegie Institute.

On Friday, Saudi Arabia's health ministry reported 1,567 new Covid-19 cases, along with 1,859 recoveries, taking the total number of cases in the Kingdom to 285,793, and recoveries to 248,948. The death toll has now risen to 3,093.

According to an August 3rd report by MEED (Middle East business intelligence), Covid-19 cases crossed 1.24 million-mark in West Asia and North Africa (MENA) with the six Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) member-states accounting for 51.4 percent of all regional infections, with Iran comprising 24.9 percent.

The annual Hajj season took place between July 28 and August 2, was open to just a few thousand people living in Saudi Arabia. Typically, nearly two million Muslims visit Mecca for the annual pilgrimage, a pillar of the Islamic faith. Another 1.8 million come through the year for smaller pilgrims (umrah). Covid-19 related restrictions are creating a gap in what is one of the most important sources of revenue, besides oil for the Saudi Kingdom. Religious tourism typically makes up about 20 percent of the country's non-oil GDP.

Saudi Arabia has implemented harsh price hikes, and a two-pronged crisis roils spending cuts as the Kingdom. Oil revenues represent over 40 percent of Saudi GDP and almost 80 percent of exports, employing two-thirds of the population.

As the country's budget deficit climbed, the Kingdom has taken austerity measures that have not been welcomed by the general population. Saudi Arabia increased VAT from five to 15 percent on July 1, with consumers rushing to the shopping malls to stock up on goods before the price hike. The price of petrol also increased by 34 percent in July, with Gasoline 91 now costing \$0.34 per liter, up from \$0.26.

The "Citizens Account" is a vital economic assistance program that originally covered over twelve million low-income citizens of the 35 million population. After changes started to the program, by July, 1.3 million people lost the assistance payment.



The program started in December 2017. By February 2018, some 12.7 million people were registered for the benefits. By this July, only 10.7 million people were eligible, reports Bloomberg. This income has averaged \$245 per family has now been cut-off for some two million citizens.

"It feels like death," Bandar Awad, a 34-year-old courier, said after losing his monthly stipend. "Even recharging my cell-phone has become difficult."

Despite the cuts, between March and April, the Kingdom used \$40 billion in foreign reserves to back overseas investments of its sovereign fund, the Public Investment Fund.

In the face of these drastic policies, Riyadh has pursued lavish spending sprees. From its faltering attempt to buy English Premier League Football Club, Newcastle United, to purchasing more weapons to fuel the deadly Yemen war, and now an announcement for launching a \$20 billion culture and tourism project in the capital city of Riyadh.

On social media, some Saudis responded with resignation or patriotism. Others questioned why the Saudi sovereign wealth fund was financing the \$370 million takeovers of the English Premier League football team.

**Foreign workers**  
Migrants account for a third of Saudi Arabia's 35 million population and make-up more than 80 percent of the private sector workforce. Hundreds of thousands of expatriate workers left the PGCC states due to Covid-19 job losses reports MEED in August.

Since the beginning of 2017, more than 667,000 foreign workers left as the Kingdom imposed higher fees on expatriates and companies were grappling with a sluggish economy. The imposition of higher fees was a move to encourage domestic workers to take a more active role in running the economy. But labor market reports revealed Saudis are not filling the void left by foreign workers as unemployment hit its highest on record at 12.9 percent in 2018.

Now with the Covid-19 pandemic, another wave of migrants is returning home. At the outbreak of the pandemic, many migrant workers found themselves without work and

unable to return home during the lockdowns.

In its latest effort to wean the country off the crude export revenue, an initiative started to entice skilled foreign workers; the Kingdom approved a new residency scheme in May 2019. The new law allows two types of residencies: one would be permanent while the other could be renewed annually. The new law would allow expatriates to own property, invest, and bring their family members with them to reside in the country. The new special residency scheme similar to green card systems, aimed at attracting wealthy and high-skilled ex-pats.

The permanent residency is granted after the investor pays a lump sum of 800,000 Saudi riyals (\$213,000) to Saudi authorities. The annually renewable residency permitted is granted after the investor pays \$26,000.

According to statistics from 2019, over 10 million ex-pats work and live in Saudi Arabia under a system that required sponsorship from a Saudi employer and be issued an exit and re-entry visa whenever they want to leave the country.

## ■ Vision 2030

In the midst of all the austerity measures, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's expensive Saudi Vision 2030 development plan, across a wide range of sectors such as infrastructure, tourism, and entertainment, is at risk of being delayed or shelved altogether. One of vision's most high-profile objectives, the construction of a \$500 billion mega-city called NEOM. Encompassing 26,500 square kilometers, NEOM is estimated to be 33 times the size of New York City. The city's future may no longer be feasible.

"I think Vision 2030 is more or less over," said Michael Stephens, a Middle East analyst at the Royal United Services Institute of London. "I think it's finished."

After an almost four-year delay, listing Aramco last year was one of the pillars of Vision 2030. Instead of five percent originally planned, only 1.5 percent of Aramco's shares were floated only at the domestic Tadawul stock exchange. The clientele was also domestic with reports many investors were coerced to invest.

Saudi Aramco, the world's largest public company, reported a 25 percent drop in net income in the first quarter of 2020.

Aramco listing last year did not go well due to many reasons, including the murder of journalist Jamal Kashoggi in October 2018 in Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, tanker attacks in the Persian Gulf last summer, September 14 attack on world's largest oil processing facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais (owned by Aramco), the Yemen war which has now put millions of Yemenis at risk of starvation and has been identified by the UN as the worst humanitarian crisis of our times.

In February, Aramco announced plans to launch the biggest shale gas development outside of the United States after having fought a losing price war with the U.S. shale industry for six years. Now Saudis have adopted techniques developed in the U.S. fields for the huge \$110 billion investment in the Jafurah shale gas field project.

The objective is to develop the country into the world's third-largest shale gas producer by 2030 with a priority to supply domestic demand.

## ■ Austerity measures

According to the International Monetary Fund forecast, the Kingdom's budget deficit is expected to balloon to nearly 13 percent of output. Despite the Saudi austerity measures, the budget deficit is set to rise to \$50 billion in 2020 from \$35 billion in 2019.

Such austerity measures can worsen pre-existing societal tensions and inequalities in the Kingdom. In January, Saudi authorities arrested 11 princes for protesting austerity measures at a royal palace in Riyadh's capital city. Although, what difference austerity measures make for the rich princes remains a question.

The 84-year-old King Salman bin Abdulaziz's reign started in January 2015. It was first jeopardized in 2018 by large protests against austerity, which followed military crackdown, with reports of mass executions and beheadings. Now the ill king's legacy is beyond repair with expectations that he will depart, leaving Saud's house shattered beyond repair.

An unusual rebellion erupted in 2019 on social media over 100 percent of tax bills at restaurants with water pipes or hookahs.

Crown prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) deployed most humiliating methods against his rivals, an act that might haunt him in the future should he secure the throne.

Saudi citizens have been endowed with lavish oil subsidies and welfare services so far. Taking away all the social benefits like guaranteed income, subsidization on everything, and other luxuries in life will not come without protests, even where the threat of government repression makes public protests practically unthinkable.

With fewer oil revenues to silence potential dissenting voices and ongoing threats from global hazards such as Covid-19, the future for the Kingdom has never looked bleaker. It is doubtful that MBS will be able to correct the record after his father passes away.

## Lebanese are punished for backing resistance movement

1 → They should always be concerned about their daily life since if they do not have any problem they would think about the freedom of Quds, independence, and development. In this case, they turn from a consumer to a producer. Hence, they are not in favor of a government that years for economic development and provides people with basic services like electricity, water, and gas, which are provided in almost all countries worldwide.



During the past 30 years, the Lebanese have been fighting with these problems and they do not have time to think about their goals in tranquility.

Lebanon also experienced 30 years of corruption. Diab yearned to fight with corruption inherited from Gemayel, Hariri, and others over the past decades. Lebanon's money and capital were being looted and Diab wanted to reveal these facts, which is not approved by others.

Six months ago, they [opponents in Lebanon] created some economic problems and asked the U.S. to impose sanctions on Lebanon just like Syria. Lebanon is a consumer country and its national market share is about 10 percent, and all items are imported. They asked companies not to provide some items for the Lebanese market, which threaten the economy of the country. Then there were some banking problems and the sharp fall of lira against dollar (which has reached from 1500 to 10,000 lira per one dollar). The 8-month government confronted several obstacles since it sought to be a producer instead of a consumer. It also wants to fight corruption. The government aims to implement a resistance economy just like Iran.

On the other hand, the U.S. imposed an ambassador on Lebanon to order the government not to buy goods and fuels from Iran and China. Chinese companies should not invest in the country and they should not cooperate in building dams and power plants. Fortunately, the U.S. has no embassy in Iran and it is one of the blessings for the Islamic Republic. It is due to this fact that the U.S. cannot interfere in the domestic affairs of Iran.

The victory of the resistance movement annoys the U.S. since it is a political defeat in addition to their several military failures in recent years.

In Yemen, they have been struggling for five years, although they wanted to restore their favored government in a few months. Yemenis are resisting during these years. In Syria, the U.S. along with the rest of the world made serious attempts to overthrow the government of Bashar al-Assad, however the resistance movement stood strong and today the Assad government is in power and the U.S., Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey have suffered humiliating defeats. In 2006, Israel was defeated in Lebanon. Hence, they decided not to engage in military conflicts anymore and replace it with economic and media war. Now they are on the economic war in Iran. Unfortunately, the media war is their strength but our weak point.

The most savage terrorist group in the world, Daesh, just like the Coronavirus, terrified the entire world. However, Iran defeated Daesh but unfortunately our media did not cover it correctly. We should commemorate the defeat day of Daesh but nobody knows such a date. On the other hand, flying of an American plane in the sky of each country is covered by the U.S. media as their victory. Iranians celebrate winning of Iran Football National Team in World Cup 2018 but nobody informs them about the victory of Iran against Daesh.

As you see in Lebanon and Syria, people voted for the resistance movement and demonstrated one of the biggest Shia victories. However, a minority of 5 to 10 percent protested and wanted to decide about the government on the streets by pushing for another election. Their activities are well covered by the media. Unfortunately, we do not have such a media power.

The massive explosion at Beirut's port would not be the last action they take to weaken the resistance movement. Investigation into the assassination of Rafiq Hariri is going on for 15 years to convict Hezbollah to initiate a civil war.

The recent explosion in Beirut is related to Najib Mikati and Saad Hariri and Tammam Salam. However, those media that are supported by the U.S., Israel, and Saudi Arabia claimed that the place where the explosion took place was used as a chemicals stockpile by Hezbollah, which is thoroughly nonsense. It is nonsensical because Hezbollah never built a stockpile in such a place. The warehouse is seven years old. The media and cyberspace are so powerful that they can portray the government as against the nation's will.

In Iraq and Lebanon people voted for the resistance movement. The opponents revolted against people for their votes. They weaken the economy and create an unsafe and insecure situation to make people not to vote for the resistance movement next time. There was no fraud in Lebanon's election, however they began to take vent their anger against people for their election failure.

This is a big picture of what is going on in Lebanon these days. Diab's government was forced to resign because all ministers wanted to resign. The 10 percent minority which controls the media influences public opinion in Lebanon and Iraq.

We pray for the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Iran and Hezbollah Secretary-General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon who stand against provocations in the region. Nasrallah asked people not to confront protestors despite all the insults against him since he believed that any confrontation would be not benefit the resistance movement.

All these problems are because Israel considers the victory of the resistance movement as an immediate threat. Their investment on the election was not fruitful hence they want to repeat the election to bring their favored government into power. However, God vows that Hezbollah will be the winner.

## Opportunities still exist to rebuild Lebanon: retired general

1 → In this scenario, the new government should begin serious work with Western countries and the International Monetary Fund to take the necessary actions to save Lebanon. In this context the visit by David Hill (the United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs) implies the same direction as the visit by Macron.

In the second scenario, after parliamentary resignations amid uproar over the Beirut blast, which has led to violent actions, it will be difficult to choose a consensual personality between the Lebanese parties, as the gap widens between the rival March 8 and March 14 blocs.

However, a caretaker government will be incomplete due to the resignation of some of ministers and protests with a new characteristic, as the August version differs from the October version, given the violent path that it is going to take.

Some parties express their political opposition by inciting people to pour into the street, which may push the country towards civil strife if it continues in this manner. Moreover, the caretaker phase will last longer in the shadow of a burning street.

Given the declaration of a state of emergency in Beirut for a period of two weeks, while the army is carrying out its tasks at all levels, the question is that will the country will resort to a military government to manage a transitional phase?

■ How do you see the role of foreign interference in the resignation of government?

A: Some foreign countries have a fundamental role as the French president's visit marginalized Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab. Macron said that he is not here to support the government, but he did not urge it to resign. I think that some of the parties supporting the government abandoned it at a critical moment.

There are parties influenced by Macron's visit, which led to resignations in the parliament, followed



by resignations of the government.

The next foreign interference, I think, is not like 2005, rather it will show itself as a protective umbrella.

■ Do you think that Lebanon as a state has collapsed or failed? Is there a way out of the crisis?

A: No, I do not see Lebanon as a collapsed and failed state. We are undoubtedly suffering harshly of successive economic and financial, as well as political and even health crises (Coronavirus).

However, the opportunity still remains to make the required reforms to restore confidence and ability by learning from mistakes and rise again from the ashes.

The solution is the unity of people in the country over one goal, which is to preserve civil peace and restore the trust of the whole world in the ability of the Lebanese to overcome difficulties, by undertaking the required reforms to fight corruption.

The new government should be capable of dealing with urgent problems while preserving the country's

dignity and sovereignty.

■ Do you expect chaos in the next phase in Lebanon, which may pave the way for formation of a military government?

A: I do not believe that chaos on the street will lead to a military government. But I think that one of the proposed solutions is to form a government that includes military members whose mission is to calm the street and restore the citizen's trust in the state through effective accountability. To make this process a transitional phase, we need a dialogue between the country's different groups, with the addition of representatives of the protestors within this dialogue framework to create a new political consensus instead of generating successive crises.

■ Do you think that an internationalization of the issue of the Beirut explosion will help Lebanon to overcome the current crisis?

A: Internationalization is a far-fetched matter and is not at least seriously discussed at the official levels. But if you mean international demands to play a role in this issue, I do not see any regional, Arab, or international enthusiasm for internationalization of the case. The conditions today are completely different from 2005, when Lebanon's former prime minister Rafic Hariri was killed in a bomb attack.

The internationalization of cases would not help Lebanon and its citizens, with what they hope for dialogue inside the country, to create realistic and constitutional opportunities for their children to live in dignity and freedom within the eternal homeland. It is noteworthy to remember that the international investigation of the Rafic al-Hariri case has lasted for a period of 15 years, without a final result.

Internationalization requires a consensus between the Lebanese constitutional mechanisms that are not available today, not to mention the international and regional conditions.

## UNESCO to maintain cooperation with Iran on national tourism plan

**T**OURISM TEHRAN — Iran, UNESCO, and its agency UNWTO, which is responsible for the promotion of sustainable and universally accessible tourism, will be starting another round of joint effort to help develop a national comprehensive tourism plan for the Islamic Republic.

The second phase of the project, which is financed by the European Union, has recently been approved by the UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran, CHTN quoted Alireza Rahimi, the director of Iran's tourism planning and development as saying on Tuesday.

The official also noted that the UNESCO Cluster Office has announced its readiness to implement the project with technical assistance from the World Tourism Organization and covering the cost of international experts.

Last December, Gilan was selected as the first Iranian province to be subject to the comprehensive tourism plan developed under the auspices of the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

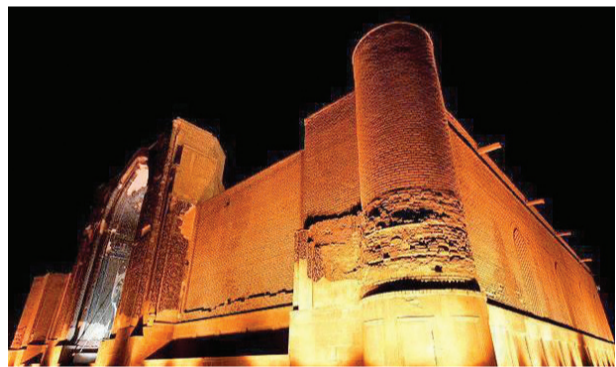
In another effort this year, the UN cultural body paid six billion rials (nearly \$142,000 at the official rate of 42,000 rials) for the restoration of the historic caravansary of Yengi Imam, which was once thriving on the legendary Silk Road.

The project, according to organizers, focuses not only on local communities but also on international tourism, aiming to portray a roadmap for tourists from all over the globe to achieve a sustainable and competitive tourism market.

The UNWTO says that tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification over the past six decades, and it has become one of the fastest-growing and most important economic sectors in the world, benefiting destinations and communities worldwide. "International tourist arrivals worldwide have grown from 25 million in 1950 to nearly 1.3 billion today. Similarly, international tourism revenues earned by destinations around the world have grown from 2 billion U.S. dollars in 1950 to 1260 trillion in 2015. The sector represents an estimated 10 percent of the world's GDP and 1 in 10 jobs globally."

## Blue Mosque, Alishah Citadel shine more after lighting projects

**T**OURISM TEHRAN — Exterior lighting of Blue Mosque and Alishah Citadel in the northwestern city of Tabriz, East Azarbaijan province, have been completed, provincial tourism chief has said.



With a budget of four billion rials (about \$95,000), the lighting projects of the historical monuments have been done in coordination with the texture and color of the buildings' materials, Ahmad Hamzadeh said on Tuesday, CHTN reported.

He also noted that the exterior lighting of historic buildings can reflect their beauty and splendor more properly.

Blue Mosque, known as Masjed-e Kabud in Farsi, has long been distinguished for the grandeur of its intricate blue tilework and calligraphy for which it is nicknamed. The ornament took artists about a quarter-century to cover every surface.

Completed in c. 1465 it is remarkable for its simplicity, brickwork, and a great size as well. The mosque survived a devastating earthquake in 1727.

However, many parts of it caved in due to a quake struck later in the same century. Many parts of the structure were rebuilt in 1973.

In the southern part of the mosque lies a time-honored mausoleum, itself a source of splendor. It is entirely covered with massive marble slabs on which verses from the holy Quran have been engraved with a background of fine arabesques.

Arg Alishah or Alishah Citadel, also known as Arg of Tabriz, is one of the tallest and oldest historical city walls in the country. However, a huge part of it has been destroyed either by natural causes such as earthquakes or several wars it witnessed during its 700-year lifetime.

The original construction was made between 1318 and 1339, during the Ilkhanid era. During the construction, the main barrel vault collapsed and the construction was stopped afterward. Centuries later, between the eruption of the Russo-Persian War (1804-1813) and the Russo-Persian War (1826-1828), the structure was quickly reconstructed as a military compound.

The citadel, which is a great representation of Iranian architecture, was inscribed on the National Heritage list in 1931.

Capital of East Azarbaijan province, Tabriz, which is well-soaked in history and culture for millennia, embraces several historical and religious sites, including Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex to name a few.

The ancient city was declared a world craft city of carpet weaving by the World Craft in 2016. It also bore the title of the 2018 Islamic Tourism Capital.

Mahmud Ghazan, who was the seventh ruler of the Mongol Empire's Ilkhanate, made Tabriz his capital in the late 13th century.

In 1392, the city was taken by a Turkic conqueror named Timur (Tamerlane) and some decades later the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen chose it as their capital.

Tabriz retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548, when Shah Tahmasb I who enjoyed the longest reign of any member of the dynasty, moved his capital westward to Qazvin.

During the next two centuries, Tabriz changed hands several times between Iran and the Ottoman Empire.

# Coronavirus-crippled tourism industry needs national support to rebound: official

**→ 1** The deputy tourism minister demanded the urged to gain the support of all trans-sectoral institutions, which in any way are connected with the traveling and hospitality industry.

"To revitalize this sector, there is a need to take various measures, including tax exemptions and [the compensation of] costs of tourism facilities affected by the coronavirus pandemic, which to be realized, requires national-scale support and assistance of all trans-sectoral institutions related to traveling," Teymouri explained.

Futures, such as an uncertainty situation that is now being felt [among travel-related personnel and businesses], and having a vague general outlook, have greatly dejected tourism and handicrafts people in the country, and it is feared that the process of downsizing and firing employees and experts in this field will further disrupt the existing business environment, he said.

Dashti Ardakani for his part reminded that the tourism industry is of high importance for the country, saying: "Travel industry is a source for foreign currency revenues, therefore, this sector should be considered separated from political issues [that may sometimes be between the parliament and the government], and the main priority of the



Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Vali Teymouri (L) meets with MP Mohammadreza Dashti Ardakani in Tehran on August 10, 2020.

country should be directed in this direction."

"In next year's [national] budget, a segment should be considered for gratuitous assistance to the affected tourism activists, and I will personally follow up on this issue and the suggestions of the deputy tourism minister through the parliamentary tourism group."

Iran will soon be unveiling sets of all-inclusive health protocols for inbound travelers as it, like many other states across the globe, is still fighting the virus pandemic. In the new health protocol, inbound traveler refers to both foreign tourists entering Iran and Iranians returning from a foreign trip to the

country and it is to take effect in all borders and entry terminals, including airports, ports, and land terminals.

Back in July, Iran extended a ban on inbound group tours, while travel agencies were allowed to organize business tours for individuals. The national headquarters for the coronavirus control issued a permit for solo travelers to enter the country following health protocols, but group tours were prohibited.

Mohammad Ali Vaeqefi, the vice president of the Iranian Tour Operators Association, warned earlier in June that the coronavirus pandemic may turn tours and travels in Iran into luxury items as observing health protocols will raise the cost of travel in the country.

The Islamic Republic has suffered an average 15.8 percent fall in foreign arrivals during the first three months of 2020 compared to the same period last year, according to data released by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that analyzes the impact of the COVID-19 on international tourism. However, the latest available data show eight million tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2019).

## 20 wonderful must-see cultural sites in Iran

By Afshin Majlesi

(Part 3/3)

### 13. Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, Isfahan

The 17th-century Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque punctuates the middle of the two-story arcades, which are encircling the enormous Imam Square, itself a UNESCO World Heritage site in Isfahan.

Built during the reign of Shah Abbas I, the mosque was dedicated to the ruler's father-in-law, Sheikh Lotfollah, a revered Lebanese scholar of Islam who was invited to Isfahan to oversee the king's mosque (now the Imam Mosque).

In comparison to many mosques scattered across the country, the Sheikh Lotfollah appears to be relatively unusual, having neither a minaret nor a courtyard probably because the mosque was never intended for public use, but rather served as a worship place for women.

The mosque is very famous for having a very picturesque dome that makes extensive use of delicate yet very intricate cream-colored tiles, changing color throughout the day from cream to pink. Some say the sunset is usually the best time to witness the change. Inside the sanctuary, there are thousands of mosaics that adorn the walls and its extraordinarily gorgeous ceiling that features a series of shrinking, yellow motifs, itself a masterpiece of design. Photography is allowed but using a flash is not.

### 14. Tomb of Daniel, Susa

The traditional burial place of the Biblical prophet Daniel, which is located in the town Shush (Susa), is known for its distinctive conical dome.

The tomb of Daniel is not imposing from the outside, but is awesome once entering. There are mirrors reflecting light everywhere. The mausoleum cannot be missed while traversing southwest Iran, though its architecture is of no great antiquity. It contains two courtyards, each encircled by adjoining chambers and porches. The pilgrimage also offers some accommodations to visitors willing for an overnight stay.

Over the course of history, according to sources, several cities lay claim to the biblical Daniel's last resting place, within Iran both Jews and Muslims agree that this lavish dome (pine-cone-shaped tower) marks the spot.

Shush, once a crossroads of various civilizations, is sprawled on parts of an ancient Susa at the edge of the Iranian plateau in the lower Zagros mountain range.

### 15. Bazaar, Tabriz

The centuries-old bazaar of Tabriz, a labyrinth of interconnected covered passages that adds up to about 5 km, embraces countless shops, over 20 caravanserais, and inns, some 20 vast domed halls, bathhouses, and mosques, as well as other brick structures and enclosed spaces for different functions.

The bazaar has been a melting pot of cultural exchange since antiquity and once a hot spot on the ancient Silk Road. Its history dates back to over a millennium ago, however the majority of fine brick vaults that capture most visitor's eyes date from the 15th century. Most mazes and passages offer certain commodities such as carpets, metalwork, toys, clothing, jewelry, and kitchen appliances, traditional spices, herbal remedies, and natural perfumes.

One can also bump into colorful grocery stores, bookbinders, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, tobacconists, tailors, flag sellers, broodcloth sellers, carpenters, shoemakers, and knife-makers. There are several divided carpet sections across the bazaar that enable visitors to watch or buy hand-woven Persian carpets and rugs with different knot density and other features.

### 16. Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble, Ardebil

It's well worth to explore a microcosm of Sufism where arrays of harmonious sun-scorched domes, well-preserved and richly-ornamented facades and interiors and, above all, an atmosphere of peace and tranquility have all made a must-see stopover while traversing northwest Iran.

The ensemble is named after Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardebili (1253-1334), who was a Sufi philosopher and leader of Islamic mystic practices. Developed between the early 16th century and the end of the 18th century, this place of spiritual retreat enjoys principal elements of traditional Iranian architecture to make the best use of existing space for accommodating a variety of functions.

It embodies the essence of Sufi traditions by having a microcosmic 'city', which embraces a mosque, a madrasa, a library, a cistern, a bathhouse, kitchens, a hospital, as well as religious houses amongst others. The place also boasts a remarkable collection of antique artifacts.

### 17. Sultan Amir Ahmad Bathhouse, Kashan

This centuries-old hammam, located in the ancient city of Kashan, is a superb example of a traditional Iranian bathhouse. Richly colored tiles and delicate painting feature throughout, and a further highlight is the panorama of the town's minarets and badgirs viewed from the roof. Outstandingly, then, the glazed glass in the domes allowed light to filter in while keeping peeping toms out.

Its bricks are said to have stuck together using a plaster made of milk, egg white, soy flour, and lime traditionally thought to be stronger than cement.

Twisting corridors is a feature of indigenous architecture, designed to maximize the privacy of the household with the aim of keeping in the steam.

Hammams were never just about ablutions, though; they primarily functioned as a meeting place where politics would be discussed and marriages made and where men and women, assigned access at different times, could relax in their own company.

### 18. Vank Cathedral, Isfahan

Built in the first half of the 17th century, with the encouragement of the Safavid rulers, Kelisa-ye (the Cathedral of) Vank is a historic focal point of the Armenian Church in Iran. The cathedral is widely referred to as an endless masterpiece of architecture as it harmoniously blends Islamic motifs and elements with those of Armenian traditions. Vank means "monastery" or "convent" in the Armenian language.

The construction is said to begin in 1606 by the first arrivals being completed with major alterations to design between 1655 and 1664 under the supervision of Archbishop David. Hundreds of Armenians, who migrated to Isfahan during the Ottoman-Safavid War (1603-18), contributed to the cathedral being completed.



People visit the modest mausoleum of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae, southcentral Iran.

The Armenian quarter of Isfahan dates from the time of Shah Abbas I, who transported a colony of Christians from the town of Jolfa (now on Iran's northern border) en masse, and named the village 'New Jolfa'. Shah Abbas sought their skills as merchants, entrepreneurs, and artists and he ensured that their religious freedom was respected — albeit at a distance from the city's Islamic center.

**19. Takht-e Soleyman, Takab**  
Takht-e Soleyman (which literally translates into "Solomon's Throne"), is an ancient isolated sanctuary on the outskirts of Takab, northwest Iran.

Situated in the southeastern highlands of West Azarbaijan province overlooking a lake with a backdrop of a snowcapped mountain range, the sanctuary bears testimony to various eras of the nation's history.

The surrounding landscape of the sanctuary was probably first inhabited sometime in the 1st millennium BC. Some construction on the mound itself dates from the early Achaemenian dynasty (559-330 BC), and there are traces of settlement activity from the Parthian period.

The historical ensemble was established in a geologically anomalous location as the base of the temple complex sits on an oval mound roughly 350 by 550 meters. Inspired by natural context, the rich harmonious composition draws local and foreign travelers who want even for minutes revel in its peaceful atmosphere.

### 20. Pasargadae, Shiraz

The magnificent Pasargadae, which is situated in about 50 km north of Persepolis, bears exceptional examples of the first phase of royal Achaemenid art and architecture and brilliant testimonies of Persian civilization.

Cyrus was the founder of Achaemenid Empire which at its greatest extent stretched from the Balkans to the Indus Valley, spanning 5.5 million square kilometers. The Persian king declared world's first charter of human rights, also known as the Cyrus Cylinder.

The name may have been derived from that of the chief Persian tribe, the Pasargadae, though, according to some experts, it is possible that the original form of the name was Parsagadeh ("Throne of Pars").

## Skeleton of another 'Parthian lady' discovered in Isfahan

**H**ERITAGE TEHRAN — A team of Iranian archaeologists has found what they say is the skeleton of the second Parthian-era (247 BC - 224 CE) lady at the ancient Tepe Ashraf in Isfahan, hoping new range of discoveries offer novel clues about the history of the central Iranian city.

The team, led by senior archaeologist Alireza Jafari-Zand, unearthed the remains of the first 'Parthian lady' last month in a place they believe is likely to be an ancient cemetery.

"At a distance of 10 meters from the body of [the first] Parthian lady, we found the burial [place] of a teenage girl. She is buried in the form of an open arch and on the ground. Evidence shows that the body belonged to a teenager of about 12 to 13 years old with a height of about 160, but unfortunately the skeleton is damaged due to high humidity," Jafari-Zand said on Tuesday.

Talking about the new discovery, he explained



"It is clear from the burial that the tomb was designed [based on a special ritual]. Next to this corpse, there was a platform on which the remains of a large broken jar and a part of a horse's spinal cord were placed."

However, he proposed a hypothesis that the

tombs were probably opened in very distant history, IRNA reported.

"Around the burial of this teenaged Parthian girl, a stone hedge was erected and a platform was set up. Remnants of this type of platform had already been found in the Parthian lady's grave and a blue-colored jug was placed on it. The archaeologist believes that due to the confusion of architectural evidence and objects of these two tombs, the tombs were probably opened in very distant history," he explained.

Earlier this year, an ancient burial containing the remains of a horse -- estimated to be four years old was found near a place where a giant jar-tomb was unearthed weeks ago, which researchers believe could shed new light on ancient human life in Isfahan.

"Tepe Ashraf is the second place after the Tepe Sialk (in Isfahan province) that has yielded the discovery of such jar tombs that offers valuable clues to uncover the obscure

history of pre-Islamic Isfahan," according to the archaeologist.

Excavations at Tepe Ashraf initially began in 2010 when Jafari-Zand announced his team found evidence at the site suggesting that the Sassanid site had also been used during the Buyid dynasty (945-1055). "We stumbled upon a reconstructed part in the ruins of the castle, which suggests that the structure had been used during the Buyid dynasty."

The Parthian Empire (247 BC - 224 CE), also known as the Arsacid Empire, was a major Iranian political and cultural power in ancient Iran. The Parthians largely adopted the art, architecture, religious beliefs, and royal insignia of their culturally heterogeneous empire, which encompassed Persian, Hellenistic, and regional cultures. At its height, the Parthian Empire stretched from the northern reaches of the Euphrates, in what is now central-eastern Turkey, to eastern Iran.



# Iranian researchers invent smart chip for visual detection of pathogenic bacteria

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — Researchers at Tehran's Sharif University of Technology developed an electrochromic biosensor which is a portable, simple, inexpensive, sensitive, and fast tool for ocular detection of pathogenic bacteria.

The article, entitled "Smart Chip for Visual Detection of Bacteria Using the Electrochromic Properties of Polyaniline", was published in the journal Analytical Chemistry in 2020.

The research was conducted in collaboration with researchers of Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain, IRNA news agency reported on Tuesday.

Finding a fast and reliable way to detect pathogenic bacteria played a significant role in addressing serious public health issues in clinical, environmental, and food settings, Saba Ranjbar, Sharif University of Technology researcher said.

The study aimed to achieve a portable, simple, fast and without the need for expensive and sophisticated equipment to visually identify pathogenic bacteria in environmental samples to be able to accurately measure environmental samples containing bacteria in a wide range of concentrations, she explained.

In this study, different samples of collected water have been used to evaluate the



performance of the biosensor, she added.

Ranjbar went on to say that with the proposed technology, it is possible to distinguish healthy water from water contaminated by bacteria online, which can be used as an efficient and effective method in various fields of the environment.

The biosensor acts as a smart chip by

which each color indicates a specific concentration of bacteria, for example, purple indicates water without bacteria, while blue indicates low bacterial concentrations and yellow indicates high levels of bacteria, she also added.

Given that the field of health is one of the most basic and challenging areas in any

country, so the need for research in this field in the early stages, i.e. identification and diagnosis of pathogens is very necessary and important, one of the most important and complex factors, she highlighted.

Pathogens are bacteria that include a wide variety of microorganisms and affect various parts and aspects of human life such as health, food industry, and product quality control, as well as the control of microbial environmental contaminants, Ranjbar said.

Therefore, it is important to find methods that are able to study these factors with high accuracy, as well as low cost and short analysis time, she stated, highlighting, the design and construction of biosensors with the possibility of selective and fast responses is very helpful.

She further explained that we turned an electrochemical signal into a more convenient optical readout for the visual detection of Escherichia coli; Electropolymerizing polyaniline (PANI) on an indium tin oxide screen-printed electrode (ITO SPE), we achieved not only the desired electrochromic behavior but also a convenient way to modify the electrode surface with antibodies (taking advantage of the many amine groups of PANI).

## UK Shia centers stress observing health protocols in Muharram rituals

**ENVIRONMENT** TEHRAN — Shia centers in the United Kingdom in a statement emphasized the need for observing health protocols during Muharram rituals to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Shia Muslims, hold special ceremonies during the first ten days of the lunar month of Muharram, which falls from August 21 to 30 this year to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hossein (AS), the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his 72 loyal companions.

The representatives of the Ayatollahs HA and leaders of then Shia centers in England wrote a statement mentioning the regulations for holding the mourning ceremonies of the martyrdom of Imam Hossein (AS) in the month of Muharram.

According to the statement, preserving and keeping alive the annual mourning ceremonies for the martyrdom of Imam Hossein (AS) and his comrades in Karbala alive is essential in transferring the Ashura culture for our future generations in transmitting the voice of oppression of Imam



to all corners of history.

Throughout history, the mourning ceremonies of Imam Hossein (AS) have grown year on year due to the personality

of Imam and the tragedy that he endured.

But on the other hand, the special condition due to COVID-19 pandemic, we advise everybody to take the necessary precautions, as causing the re-infection of the virus through breaking the related rules is impermissible according to the Islamic law.

According to the new rules issued, it is prohibited to hold an indoor gathering of more than 30 people.

Moreover, as the doctors and specialists have persistently stressed the importance of social distancing and warned of the second wave of the epidemic, so it is needed to act accordingly to prevent the spread of the disease.

Following the above, it is advised that the special programs in the coming Muharram are held online; and we invite all the Muslims to abide by the medical advice and to follow the rituals through social media platforms.

Since Tuesday, 311,641 coronavirus patients have been identified in the United Kingdom, of whom 46,526 lost their lives.

## Iranian scientific journals among highly cited worldwide

He went on to add that in this regard, various specialized workshops in the field of scientific publishing, consulting and reviewing the layout of journals, evaluation of journals after publication, training, and support were conducted and currently, 12 specialized journals in the field of nanotechnology are published in English in the country.

These journals can play an effective role in determining the path of scientific development of the country by publishing effective

articles, he highlighted.

The JCR 2019 ranking report includes 42 journals from Iran, including the Journal of Nanostructure in Chemistry with an impact factor of 4.077, he emphasized.

The editorial board of the Journal of Nanostructure in Chemistry includes well-known researchers from Iran, Italy, China, Australia, USA, Finland, Spain, India, Brazil, Mexico, and South Korea, he stated.

Iranian scientific journals such as the

Journal of Nanostructures (affiliated to Kashan University), Nanomedicine Journal (Mashhad University of Medical Sciences), Journal of Nanoanalysis (Tehran University of Medical Sciences) were listed in the ESCI index of WOS database.

Moreover, the Journal of Water and Environmental Nanotechnology, Nanomedicine Research Journal, and International Nanoscience and Nanotechnology were also listed in the Scopus Index.



## Amazon deforestation up by a third, sparking calls for urgent action

Deforestation in the Amazon is leading to greater numbers of devastating fires, and much more needs to be done to protect the vital tropical rainforest, conservationists have said.

Between 1 August 2019 and July 31 2020, 9,125 sq km (3,500 square miles) of rainforest were cleared - a rise of 33 per cent compared to the same period in 2018/19.

The surge in deforestation under Jair Bolsonaro's right-wing government has caused widespread alarm amid the

worsening climate crisis, leading to calls for tougher action to tackle the habitat destruction and resultant fires.

WWF Brazil has called on the country's government to ban all deforestation for five years as a matter of emergency.

It has also called for strict enforcement and major penalties for environmental crimes and deforestation, as well as clear demarcation for indigenous peoples' lands, restructuring of the environmental authorities and the creation of a coherent system of parks, national forests

and extractive reserves.

Using data from Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE), the WWF noted that fires in the Brazilian Amazon in the first two days of August 2020 alone were 55 per cent higher than the same period last year - making the need to protect it increasingly urgent.

The organisation said "this follows a pattern, as July 2020 had the highest rate of fires in the Brazilian Amazon for the last 10 years, the Independent reported.

### ENGLISH IN USE

#### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

## Motorcyclists responsible for 63% of accidents in Tehran

Motorcycle riders are the highest contributors to road fatality being responsible for 63 percent of the accidents happened in the Iranian capital in the first 10 months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (starting on March 21, 2018), head of accidents department of Tehran Traffic Police has said.

Unfortunately, motorcycle users represent over 38 percent of the total traffic fatalities happened in the aforementioned period, Tasnim quoted Ehsan Momeni as saying on Tuesday.

As per the figures revealed by forensics, young motorcyclists aged 18-28 years constituted 33 percent of the fatal crashes resulted in their deaths, while being blamed for over 63 percent of the total accidents, he lamented.

## راکبان موتورسیکت در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات تهران مقصر بودند

رئیس اداره تصادفات پلیس راهور تهران بزرگ گفت: در ده ماهه نخست سال ۹۷ راکبان موتورسیکت در تهران در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات به عنوان مقصر حادثه شناخته شده‌اند.

به گزارش روز سه شنبه خبرگزاری تسنیم؛ سرهنگ احسان مؤمنی در تشریح تصادفات منجر به فوت شهر تهران گفت: ۲۸ درصد کل متوفیان حوادث رانندگی مربوط به موتورسیکت سواران بوده است.

وی اظهار کرد: با توجه به آمار پزشکی قانونی ۲۳ درصد راکبان موتورسیکت فوتی ۱۸ تا ۲۸ سال سن داشته‌اند و در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات به عنوان مقصر حادثه شناخته شده‌اند.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### "galacto-, gala-, galact-"

■ **Meaning:** milk

■ **For example:** The Milky Way is the *galaxy* which is the home of our Solar System.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Have (got) something against somebody/something

■ **Meaning:** to dislike or be opposed to someone or something for a particular reason:

■ **For example:** I can't see what you've got against the idea.

### IDIOM

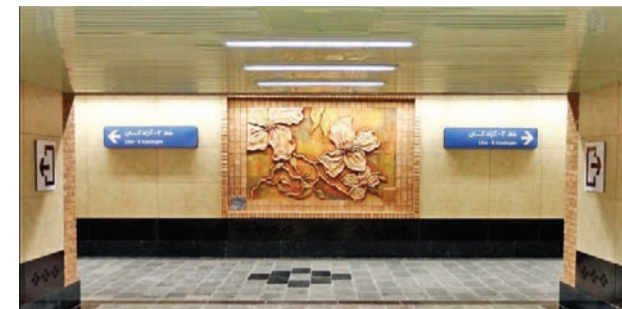
#### Bucket list

■ **Explanation:** a list of things a person would like to do or achieve before a certain age or before dying

■ **For example:** I have never visited the pyramids of Egypt but they're on my bucket list.

## World's first 'subway library' to open in Tehran

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — For the first time in the underground transportation system worldwide, a public library will be opened in Tehran subway, Farnoush Nobakht, director of Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operations Company, said.



According to the memorandum signed between the Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operations Company and the Tehran public libraries foundation, libraries will be launched in seven selected stations, first of which will be inaugurated on August 12, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The library, called "Metro Book", is in line with the cultural programs to promote the culture of reading and increase per capita reading among subway passengers during intra-city trips, the library with a capacity of more than 5,000 books provides services continuously from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., she explained.

Those who are interested in referring to "Metro Book" while receiving the desired book can, after reading it, deliver it to all libraries connected to Public Libraries Institution, she noted, adding, also, book lovers can receive the audio and electronic files of their requested books.

## Iranian field hospital provides care for hundreds injured in Beirut explosion

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — The field hospital set up by the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has so far provided medical services for around 350 people who were injured by the recent explosion in Beirut, Mohammad Baqer Mohammadi, the hospital's director has announced.

These people have been referred to this hospital since Saturday, when the hospital officially started operating to provide various medical services to the victims of the recent explosion in the Dahieh, south of the Lebanese capital Beirut, until Monday.

The hospital offers various services including orthopedics, anesthesiology, surgery, pediatrics, neurology, emergency, and nursing Services including bandaging, injections, sutures, removal of objects from the eyes, hands, and feet in different wards, he explained.

Most of the people who received services in the hospital were women, children, the elderly and the injured military forces, he stated, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The field hospital, in addition to the mentioned specialties, offers free COVID-19 screening and a pharmacy. Since Monday, a gynecologist, midwife, and internal medicine specialist have been added to the hospital's medical staff to provide better services, he highlighted.

He went on to say that the altruistic service to the victims of accidents, disasters, and wars is one of the goals and tasks of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in which the IRCS has also fulfilled its moral and human duty like other nations that have helped us in crises.

"The number of victims of the explosion in the port of Beirut has increased to 220 so far," Marwan Abboud, the governor of Beirut, told the Egyptian Ministry Sadi El Balad on Sunday.

Earlier, the Lebanese Ministry of Health reported the death toll at 158 and the injured at 6,000.

### WORDS IN THE NEWS

## UK referendum on EU constitution

(April 2004, 19)

The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, is expected to overturn his existing policy and announce a nationwide referendum on the European Union's new constitution. The EU member states are working towards finishing the constitution by June and until now the British government has been resisting calls for a referendum. This report from Jon Devitt:

Agreeing to a referendum would mark a complete u-turn in government policy. Until now, ministers have been arguing that the constitution does not make the fundamental changes which would warrant a referendum and that it could simply be ratified by parliament. This has been the procedure in the past with major EU treaties, such as the single European act in 1987 and the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.

But opponents argue that the constitution by its very name is different. They say it's likely to compromise Britain's sovereignty. The strongest opposition has been from the Conservative party, although a significant group within the governing Labour party are sceptical too. There is, though, a broader coalition in favour of a referendum, including some who support the constitution. The third party, the Liberal Democrats for example, believe a nationwide vote would be the best way to make the pro-European argument.

The government will clearly have a struggle on its hands to win over an argument which has been dominated by a Euro-sceptic press and they wouldn't want to lose a referendum shortly before a general election which is expected in a year's time.

■ **Words**

■ **referendum:** a vote in which all the people in a country who have the right to vote are asked if they agree with a particular policy

■ **complete u-turn:** abandoning of a previous policy and doing the opposite

■ **warrant a referendum:** make a referendum seem necessary, justify it; (warrant is a formal word)

■ **by its very name:** here refers to the fact that a constitution is by definition a fundamental system of laws which formally states people's rights and duties

■ **in favour of:** supporting

■ **a nationwide vote:** another way of saying 'a referendum'

■ **have a struggle on its hands:** if you have something on your hands, you have to deal with it

■ **win over:** here, persuade people to support their policy

(Source: BBC)

## Greece seeks emergency EU meeting on Turkey

Greece wants the EU to hold an emergency foreign ministers' meeting, the prime minister's office said Tuesday amid a burgeoning row with Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean.

Tensions were stoked Monday when Ankara sent the research ship Oruc Reis off the Greek island of Kastellorizo, where Turkey disputes Greek maritime rights, AFP reported.

"The foreign minister (will) request an emergency meeting of the European Union foreign affairs council," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' office said.

A spokesman for EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the situation was "extremely worrying and needs to be solved in a dialogue."

"I cannot tell you if there will be decision made today. But, of course, we agree that the situation in the eastern Mediterranean is extremely worrying and needs to be solved in a dialogue, not in series and sequence of steps that are increasing the escalation and the tensions," spokesman Peter Stano told reporters.

"Apparently the developments on the ground unfortunately show that... more needs to be done in order to defuse the tensions and reverse the very negative and unfortunate trend of escalation."

"That's why (Borrell) stated that he is deploying all efforts necessary to re-establish the dialogue, positive constructive dialogue and to facilitate the re-engagement, and these efforts are ongoing," the spokesman said.

Marine tracking on Tuesday located the vessel southeast of the island of Crete. It is escorted by a Turkish navy flotilla and shadowed by Greek warships.

An official Turkish picture shows the Oruc Reis escorted by five warships.

Turkey has announced the vessel would carry out activities between August 10 and 23.

A similar crisis last month was averted after Turkey pulled the ship back to hold talks with Greece and rotating EU chair Germany.

## U.S. protests: Chicago braces for more looting after chaotic night

→ 1 Another Portland protest broken up after activist's arrest

Meanwhile, the arrest during a Portland, Oregon protest of a Black woman who became a leading activist in the racial justice movement after she was assaulted by a white supremacist three years ago has galvanized local and national Black Lives Matter groups.

Demonstrators took to the streets again Monday night and police broke up a protest outside a police precinct substation after they said protesters shined strobe lights at officers and hurled eggs and water bottles at them, AP reported.

Nine people were arrested when clashes broke out, with some protesters throwing rocks and golf balls in the mayhem. One officer suffered an arm injury in a scuffle for which she was treated and released from a hospital, Portland police said in a statement Tuesday morning.

Portland has endured more than two months of often violent, nightly protests since George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis.

Authorities said Demetria Hester, 46, won't be charged following her pre-dawn Monday arrest after a protest that started Sunday night and turned violent outside the union headquarters for Portland's police.

She had been booked on suspicion of disorderly conduct and interfering with a police officer during the protest. Hester's arrest drew a sharp rebuke from national Black Lives Matter activists, who are increasingly focusing on demonstrations in Oregon's largest city.

After her release, Hester told reporters that she would keep protesting and joined others in announcing plans for a fundraiser to send Black mothers to Washington, D.C.

"I was born and bred to do this. This is a dream come true," Hester said. "This is a revolution and we're getting reparations."

Hester and 15 other people were arrested during Portland's 73rd consecutive nights of protest, when a group of about 200 demonstrators gathered at a park and then marched to the union headquarters building, where some people set fires outside the building and launched fireworks at officers.

Two officers were injured, including one who was burned on the neck when a firework exploded, police said. Police declared that the event was a riot shortly after 10 p.m. and began arresting people, including Hester.

## Resistance News

### Hamas launches missiles toward Mediterranean Sea 'in warning to Israel'

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — The Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has launched a barrage of missiles towards the sea in what is seen as another warning to the Israeli regime in the face of the ongoing blockade on the Gaza Strip and repeated acts of aggression against the impoverished enclave.

At least eight rockets were seen in the sky to cheers from residents of the besieged coastal sliver on Monday, and headed toward the Mediterranean Sea.

The rockets were a "message" to Israel to let it know that resistance groups in Gaza will not "remain silent" in the face of the Israeli blockade and "aggression," an unnamed source close to Hamas told AFP.

The source noted that the rocket fire coincided with the recent launch of incendiary balloons from the Strip into the occupied territories.

The Hamas-run Interior Ministry later hailed the rockets as "an act of resistance" in a statement.

The Gaza Strip has been under Israeli land, air and sea blockade since June 2007, after Hamas, which has vowed to resist Israeli occupation, rose to power in the enclave, where two million people live.

Since then, the regime has been launching incessant aerial attacks on the territory for, what observers call, self-serving reasons. Since imposing the siege, it has also brought Gaza under three wholesale wars, killing thousands of Palestinians in each.

The crippling Gaza blockade has caused a sharp decline in the standard of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty in the strip.

# Putin says Russia is 'first' to develop coronavirus vaccine

→ 1 "In this sense she took part in the experiment," Putin said, adding that she had a slight temperature after a second injection and "that's all".

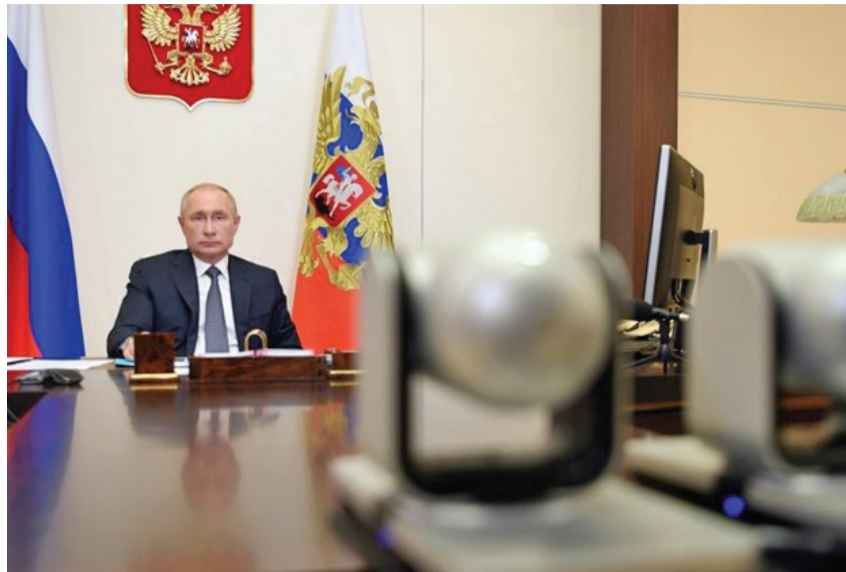
"What counts most is for us to be able to ensure the unconditional safety of the use of this vaccine and its efficiency in the future. I hope that this will be accomplished," Putin said.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said that clinical trials involving several thousand participants would continue.

Tatyana Golikova, a deputy prime minister in charge of health issues, said officials hoped that vaccinations of medical staff could begin soon.

"We really hope that the vaccine can be produced in September, or even at the end of August or beginning of September, and the first category to be vaccinated will be medical personnel," she said, quoted by Russian news agencies.

According to AFP, Russia has been pushing hard to quickly develop a coronavirus vaccine and said earlier this month it hoped to launch mass production within weeks and turn out "several million" doses per month by next year.



The World Health Organization last week urged Russia to follow established guidelines and go "through all the stages" necessary to develop a safe vaccine. Spokesman Christian Lindmeier told

reporters at the time that the WHO had not been officially notified of any Russian vaccine on the verge of being deployed. The pandemic has seen an unprecedented mobilisation of funding and

research to rush through a vaccine that can protect billions of people worldwide.

The vaccine developed by Russia is a so-called viral vector vaccine, meaning it employs another virus to carry the DNA encoding of the needed immune response into cells.

Gamaleya's vaccine is based on the adenovirus, a similar technology to the coronavirus vaccine prototype developed by China's CanSino.

The state-run Gamaleya institute came under fire after researchers and its director injected themselves with the prototype several months ago, with specialists criticising the move as an unorthodox and rushed way of starting human trials.

Moscow has dismissed allegations from Britain, the United States and Canada that a hacking group linked to Russian intelligence services tried to steal information about a coronavirus vaccine from labs in the West.

With more than 897,000 confirmed infections, Russia's coronavirus caseload is currently fourth in the world after the United States, Brazil and India.

## Explosions hit U.S. coalition supply convoys in Iraq

At least two explosions have hit convoys supplying U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq in the last 24 hours, security sources said, the first Monday evening near the southern border with Kuwait and the second Tuesday north of Baghdad.

The explosions, which caused no casualties but did some material damage, are the latest in a string of such incidents in recent weeks. An attack in southern Iraq Sunday hit a convoy carrying supplies to coalition forces, the military said, Reuters reported.

Several thousand U.S. forces are still based in Iraq, leading a coalition whose mission is to fight Sunni Muslim Islamic State militants.

Tuesday's explosion near the Taji military base north of Baghdad caused a fire to a container on one vehicle, the Iraqi military said in a statement. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast.

The explosion on Monday night near the Jraishan border crossing between Iraq and Kuwait targeted a convoy carrying equipment for U.S. forces, three sources



from different branches of Iraq's security services and military said.

The Iraqi military denied that incident took place.

Kuwait's military on Twitter also denied any attack along its border with Iraq. Vehicles are regularly loaded with military equipment at the crossing, the security sources said, and cargo is usually loaded or unloaded before entering or exiting Iraq.

Foreign companies are contracted by U.S. forces to provide security in the area, the Iraqi security sources said.

## Netanyahu blames Washington for stalled West Bank annexation

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed frustration over stalled plans to annex the West Bank, blaming the hold-up on Washington's reluctance to approve the move.

"It was clear from the start that the application of sovereignty would be done only with agreement from the United States. Otherwise, I would have already done it a while ago," Netanyahu told Israel's Channel 20. He claimed that U.S. President Donald Trump was now "busy with other things" and that "issues of importance to Israel" were not a top priority for Washington at the moment.

According to RT, the annexation, which is part of Trump's 'peace plan' for the region, was originally slated to begin in July. Under the White House plan, Israel would absorb 30 percent of the occupied territory that it captured from Jordan during the 1967 Six Day War. The rest of the West Bank would be governed by Palestinians, but security and border policy would be decided by Israel.



More than 460,000 Israelis live in these settlements, built in violation of international laws, and the annexation will strip the Palestinians of a significant chunk of their territory. Palestinian factions denounced the proposal as dead on arrival.

However, the Trump administration has reportedly been unwilling to give final approval to push forward with annexation. Netanyahu said at the start of August that he was waiting for Washington's signal to "apply sovereignty" to the West Bank.

## UN says Facebook has not shared 'evidence' of Myanmar crime

The head of a UN investigative body on Myanmar said Facebook has not released evidence of "serious international crimes", despite promising to work with investigators looking into abuses in the country including against the majority-Muslim Rohingya.

Nicholas Koumjian, head of the Independent Investigative Mechanism on Myanmar (IIMM), told the Reuters news agency the social media giant was holding material "highly relevant and probative of serious international crimes" but had not shared any during year-long talks.

He declined to give details of the material the IIMM had asked for.

Facebook did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Myanmar is facing charges of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over a 2017 military crackdown on the Rohingya that forced more than 730,000 people to flee into neighbouring Bangladesh. Myanmar denies genocide and says its armed forces



were conducting legitimate operations against armed fighters who attacked police posts.

UN investigators said Facebook had played a key role in spreading hate speech that drove the violence.

The company says it is working to stop hate speech and has deleted accounts linked to the military, including senior army officials, but preserved data.

## China accused of seeking to turn Taiwan into 'the next Hong Kong'

Taiwan faces an increasingly difficult position as China pressures the democratic island to accept conditions that would turn it into the next Hong Kong, its top diplomat told visiting U.S. Health Secretary Alex Azar on Tuesday.

Azar arrived in Taiwan on Sunday as the highest-level U.S. official to visit in four decades, a trip condemned by China which claims the island as its own.

According to al Jazeera, Chinese fighter jets on Monday briefly crossed the median line of the sensitive Taiwan Strait, and were tracked by Taiwanese anti-aircraft missiles, part of what Taipei sees as a pattern of harassment by Beijing.

Azar's trip to Taiwan has also coincided with a further crackdown in Chinese-ruled Hong Kong, where, on Monday, police arrested media tycoon Jimmy Lai under a tough new national security law.

"Our life has become increasingly difficult as China continues to pressure Taiwan into accepting its political conditions, conditions that will turn Taiwan into the next Hong Kong,"



Foreign Minister Joseph Wu said at a joint media appearance with Azar in Taipei.

China has proposed a "one country, two systems" model of autonomy to get Taiwan to accept its rule, much as it uses in Hong Kong.

The proposal has been rejected in Taiwan by all major parties and the government.

Wu said Taiwan was lucky to have friends like Azar in the United States to help fight for Taiwan's international space.

"We know this is not just about Taiwan's status, but about sustaining democracy in the face of authoritarian aggression. Taiwan must win these battles so democracy prevails."

## Germany warns U.S. against imposing sanctions on Nord Stream 2

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has warned the United States not to interfere with the completion of the Russian-led Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project, stressing that Europe has the right to choose its own energy sources.

"Sanctions between partners are definitely the wrong way to go," Maas said during a joint press conference with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow, adding that any attempt to prevent the pipeline from completion would be a violation of his country's sovereignty.

On Monday, Maas said he expressed his "displeasure" to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo after U.S. lawmakers threatened "crushing legal and economic sanctions" against a German firm involved in the energy initiative.

German media reported last month that the U.S. Department of State, the Treasury Department and the Department of Energy warned European contractors about the potential consequences of participating in the pipeline's construction.

Washington has been vocal about its fierce opposition to Nord Stream 2, which was temporarily halted last year after the



U.S. threatened vessels involved in the project with sanctions.

U.S. President Donald Trump recently complained that Germany was being ungrateful by pursuing energy deals with Russia.

"Germany pays Russia billions of dollars a year for Energy, and we are supposed to protect Germany from Russia. What's that all about?" the president tweeted.

The \$11 billion pipeline, owned by Russia's Gazprom, will double the amount of Russian natural gas transported to Germany. Moscow has denounced Washington's posturing as unfair competition and vowed to develop a new strategy to complete the pipeline if the U.S. moves forward with sanctions.

# Ivankovic denies claims he has received 60 percent of his salary from Persepolis

**S P O R T S** TEHRAN — Former coach of Persepolis, Branko Ivankovic, says he has not received more than 30 percent of his unpaid salary from the Iranian club, contrary to what the club's officials have claimed.

Persepolis acting general manager, Mehdi Rasoul Panah, claimed on Friday that the Tehran based club have paid about 60 percent of former coach Branko Ivankovic's unpaid salary.

However, the Croatian coach, now at the helm of Oman national football team, insisted that he has only received 30 percent of his money and nothing more.

"They paid 30 percent of what they are obliged to pay," said Branko Ivankovic to Tehran Times.

Rasoul Panah said that Persepolis directors had paid € 230,000 to Branko at the first phase and then when the club received \$515,000 from Alireza Beiranvand's transfer fee to Antwerp, they had immediately transferred it to an Omani bank in order to pay Branko's remaining demands.

"I don't know and I have no idea about such an issue because I did not receive any money from Alireza Beiranvand's new club," the 66-year-old trainer denied such a payment from Persepolis or Antwerp.



Asked if he has received any letter from FIFA in relation to the process of the payment

of his unpaid salary by his former club, Branko said: "I have not received any letter from FIFA and I don't know anything about it."

Ivankovic, was a revelation at Persepolis in his four seasons at the club, winning three consecutive league title, and seven titles in all competitions. Many people consider him as the creator of the Persepolis Dream Team.

"I thank Persepolis's fans for the great years we had together. I served the club with honesty and with full emotions and professionalism," he said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

The much-decorated Croatian coach, who is currently in his hometown in Croatia due to coronavirus pandemic and flight restrictions, made history with the Reds and is happy with what he has done at Persepolis.

"Yes, I am very proud of it. It's too much pride for me to be part of Persepolis history," he confirmed.

Persepolis won the Iran Professional League (IPL) title for a record fourth consecutive year 10 days ago. Persepolis's fans, players, and staff including Yahya Golmohammadi, current head coach of the team, have mentioned Branko in their interviews as one of the main reasons for the Persepolis's unprecedented success.

"I thank them a lot and congratulate everybody on the great job they have done. Say hello to everybody!" added Branko.

## Hazfi Cup Semis: Persepolis to meet Esteghlal

**S P O R T S** TEHRAN — Defending champions Persepolis will face Esteghlal in Iran's Hazfi Cup semifinals.

Tractor will also meet Naft Masjed Soleyman in another semis.

All matches in the competition will be played behind closed doors due to social distancing measures around the coronavirus crisis.

The 93rd match between Persepolis and Esteghlal will be held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium. The semifinals matches will be held on Aug. 25 and 26.

Esteghlal are the most decorated team in Hazfi Cup competition, winning the titles seven times.

Persepolis have won the title six times.



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

The competition was founded in 1975. The final match will be held at the Pars Stadium in Shiraz.

## Amir Ghalenoei resigns as Sepahan coach

**S P O R T S** TEHRAN — Amir Ghalenoei stepped down as Sepahan football club coach after his team were eliminated from Iran's Hazfi Cup on Monday.

Sepahan lost to Esteghlal 2-0 in quarterfinals in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Ghalenoei is the most successful coach in the Iran Professional League and has coached eight Iranian clubs, including Esteghlal, Mes, Zob Ahan and Tractor, with two of which he has won a total of five championships and two Hazfi Cup titles.

Ghalenoei also headed Iran national football team from August 2006 to July 2007 where he managed the team for the 2007 AFC Asian Cup. Iran were eliminated



in the quarterfinals after losing to South Korea in penalty shootout.

Sepahan football club will introduce the new head coach on Tuesday.

Ghalenoei was named as head coach of Sepahan in May 2018 but failed to meet expectations.

## The Iranian globetrotter; what's next?

Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Indonesia: so many travels, futsal leagues and adventures for Persian player Hamed Khodaei. We've been in talks with him to know more about his journey in futsal and next destinations and projects.

■ Hamed, please tell us about your beginning in futsal in Iran. When and why did you start with futsal? And what do you like the most about this sport?

I started playing futsal when I was 14 years old. In Iran futsal is taught in schools and this causes a big interest in children and boys. And the same happened to me, so I fell in love with it.

■ Have you ever been selected for young or adult national teams in Iran? Is this still a dream for you and do you think you can achieve it?

Yes, I was invited to the national youth team in 2008-2009, while I have not been selected yet for the senior national team. But I have a lot of motivation and ambition for the national team and I keep on pursuing my goal. I hope that the coaching staff of the national team will give young and others players a chance to be seen and evaluated.

■ What's the current situation of futsal in Iran right now? We have watched the finals few weeks ago when the league restarted and we could admire some of the best Persian players. Many people know about Giti Pasand and Mes Sungun due to recent seasons, but can you tell us something more about the Iranian league and most valuable players in your opinion?

I firmly believe that the Iranian Premier League is one of the top leagues in the world and the level of futsal there is very high. In the next season, with the "return" of Vahid Shamsaee (note: Shamsaee has recently been appointed as player/manager of Giti Pasand), you will see a better and different league because he makes the competition more attractive and he's still an amazing player as well.

There are more great players in Iran like Mohammad Reza Sangsefidi, Mehdi Javid, Ali Abedin, Mostafa Nazari, Asghar Hassanzadeh, Morteza Farahani and Hamid Ahmadi Dazaj and I'm not mentioning many others..



■ You had a lot of experiences abroad, in different countries and leagues like Iraq, Azerbaijan, Indonesia. Why have you chosen to go abroad? It's just a "work" choice or also a new adventure in your life? Can you describe what you've found in those different countries, about futsal and life in general?

One of my main reasons for leaving Iran is to gain experience and earn money for my family.

Each country has its own rules. I have experienced different leagues and played with many players and this is a great experience for me for sure.

In Iran, where I've been playing for Ahoora Behbahan FSC, there's actually not much difference between the first and last teams of the standing. But the key to win a game is sometimes given by the players experience. Iranian players are mostly technical and have a lot of talents and skills in futsal since they have spent a lot of their lives in futsal pitches since their childhood, often trained by good coaches. Also, most of the teams are looking for tactical improvement and this makes games very interesting to be watched.

As you may have seen in the last few years, Iraq has

achieved good results in the Asian Championships and this is a sign of the country's progress and importance in futsal. The Iraqi Federation has invested good money and did a great job for futsal recently. Also, the presence of many Iranian players (Note: Hamed Khodaei played for Masafi Al-Janoobi) have helped Iraqi clubs in improving their athletes' standard, above all talking about skills and creativity.

Thanks to Brazilian and Iranian players in clubs and national team Azerbaijan has proved their aim of a stronger than ever participation in European competitions, adding these "foreign" qualities to their physical futsal: something similar to what happened in Russia and Kazakhstan. They play a "hard and strong" game, but in Azerbaijan unfortunately futsal clubs are not very popular and match attendance by fans is poor.

I guess the best experience I have had in the last few years has been with the Vamos Mataram club in Indonesia. In this country everything is in place for futsal! Players have sponsors (shoes, clothes, phones) and the game is extremely popular. All games are broadcasted live, huge crowd of fans attending matches and supporting their teams. All clubs use dedicated and equipped venues for their training and with the arrival of many foreign players the standard of their futsal experienced a dramatic improvement so I'm sure in the next years we will hear good news coming from Indonesia.

■ What's your future project in futsal? Will you play in the Iranian league or are you looking for one more experience abroad?

I have some offers from domestic and foreign clubs and honestly I would love to play in the big European clubs. I have not made a decision for the future yet but if I get a good offer from Iran, I think I will come back to my native country and play in the Iranian league again. On the opposite if the situation in Iran is not good I will definitely think about foreign offers and maybe I will play outside Iran again.

(Source: Futsal Planet)

## Sepahan need to act quickly to find a replacement for Ghalenoei: AFC

Amir Ghalenoei's decision to step down from Sepahan coach means Sepahan will need to act quickly to find a replacement, not only for their two remaining Iran Pro League matches, but for next month's AFC Champions League resumption in Qatar.

The Isfahan club are due to face Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr on September 15 in the

first of four remaining Group D matches.

Ghalenoei walks away from Sepahan as a five-time league champion, winning a total of three titles as Esteghlal boss and a further two across two stints with Sepahan.

He also led Iran at the 2007 AFC Asian Cup, where they were eliminated on penalties by Korea Republic in the quarter-finals.

Sepahan finished second in the 19-2018 Iran Pro League campaign, but a poor run of recent results has seen the club drop to fifth place with two matches remaining this season.

The club has won just once in their past eight matches, suffering defeats in their last three outings.

While domestic success has eluded them, Sepahan remain in contention in Asia.

They began their AFC Champions League campaign in style with a 0-4 win away to Al Ain back in February, before falling to a 0-3 defeat against Al Sadd a week later.

(Source: the-afc)

## AC Milan legend Donadoni leaves CSL side Shenzhen

Head coach Roberto Donadoni has parted ways with Shenzhen FC, the Chinese Super League club said on Tuesday, after the AC Milan legend oversaw only two wins in 14 matches.

The 56-year-old Donadoni and Shenzhen split "after friendly negotiations", the club said.

The Italian masterminded a 3-0 win over Giovanni van

Bronckhorst's Guangzhou R&F when the coronavirus-delayed CSL season kicked off last month.

But the team from China PR's south have lost their last three matches, the latest being a 2-1 defeat to Henan Jianye on Monday.

Donadoni took over at Shenzhen in July 2019 when they were already deep in relegation trouble and he was unable

to prevent them dropping out of the CSL.

However, they were given a reprieve when Tianjin Tianhai folded in debt and Shenzhen were given their spot in the league. Donadoni, who coached Italy in 2006-2008, got his only other win at Shenzhen in his second game in charge, also against R&F.

(Source: AFP)

## Shahin on verge of relegation to Iran's First Division

**S P O R T S** TEHRAN — Shahin football team played a goalless draw against Tractor on Monday in Bushehr. It was a big blow to their hopes of remaining in Iran Professional League (IPL).

Shahin stayed at bottom of the table with 22 points and will most likely suffer relegation to the First Division (Azadegan League) next week.

Elsewhere, Machine Sazi and Pars Jonoubi shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw and both teams are in danger of relegation as well.

Struggling Paykan earned a big 1-0 win over Sanat Naft and relegation-threatened Gol Gohar defeated Naft Masjed Soleyman 3-2 in their away match.

Foolad also remained fourth with 47 points in the table after a goalless draw against Saipa.

Persepolis, who have already won the title with four matches to go, sit top with 63 points, followed by Esteghlal (49 points) and Tractor (47 points).

## Esteghlal beat Sepahan in Hazfi Cup quarters

**S P O R T S** TEHRAN — Esteghlal football team defeated Sepahan 2-0 to book a place in the semifinals round of Iran's Hazfi Cup in Tehran's empty Azadi Stadium.

On Monday, Vouria Ghafouri found the back of the net from the penalty spot before the break after Mehdi Ghaedi was tripped in the box by Sepahan defender Shayan Mosleh.

Ali Karimi scored the hosts' second goal at the hour mark. Nine days ago, Esteghlal had defeated Sepahan 2-1 in Iran Professional League.

Naft Masjed Soleyman, Persepolis and Tractor have already advanced to the semifinals.

Esteghlal are the most decorated team in Hazfi Cup competition, winning the titles seven times.

## Draw ceremony of Iran women's league to be held on Sept. 26

The Organizing Committee of Iran volleyball federation has revealed that the draw ceremony for the women's league will be held on Sept. 26.

The teams who want to participate at the 2020-21 season will have to announced their readiness until Aug. 23.

The draw ceremony for the men's competition was held on Monday at the Iran's National Olympic and Paralympic Academy in Tehran.

The 31st edition of Iran men's volleyball league will start on Sept. 5 with stringent health protocols due to a coronavirus outbreak.

A total of 14 teams will take part in the new season, Shahrnam Azimi, Director of Competition and Events of Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation, said.

(Source: Volleyball.ir)

## Pouraliganji linked with Shenzhen

**Tasnim** — Iranian international defender Morteza Pouraliganji has been reportedly linked with a move to Shenzhen Football Club.

The 28-year-old player, who currently plays for Qatari club Al-Arabi, will leave the team at the end of the season. The local media have reported that Pouraliganji will join Chinese club Shenzhen.

Pouraliganji has already played at Chinese club Tianjin Teda in 2015.

He has represented Iran at the 2015 AFC Asian Cup, 2018 FIFA World Cup and the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

## Miguel Teixeira named Sepahan interim coach

**Tasnim** — Portuguese coach Miguel Teixeira has been named as interim coach of Sepahan football club.

Teixeira, who has been working in the Isfahan-based club as Amir Ghalenoei's assistant from 2018, will lead Sepahan in the two remaining matches in Iran Professional League (IPL). Ghalenoei stepped down as coach of Sepahan Monday night after the team was eliminated from Hazfi Cup.

Sepahan lost to Esteghlal 2-0 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium. Teixeira will lead Sepahan against Shahr Khodro and Paykan.

## 6th Asian Beach Games rescheduled to April 2021

The 6th Asian Beach Games, originally slated for November in Sanya, China PR, have been postponed to 2021, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) announced on Monday.

The name of the Games "6th Asian Beach Games Sanya 2020" and the logo will remain unchanged. The OCA said the Games will now be held on April 2-10, 2021.

The decision, taken jointly with the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) and the Sanya Asian Beach Games Organizing Committee (SABGOC), is to ensure the safety of the athletes, officials and spectators due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two gold medals are at stake in beach soccer, with Japan set to defend the men's gold medal won in the 2016 edition in Da Nang, Vietnam.

The women's event will be contested for the first time in Sanya.

(Source: the-afc)

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**GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING**

Patience is a fitting cover, and wisdom is a sharp sword. So cover your ugly conduct with patience, and kill carnal desires with wisdom.

Imam Ali (AS)

## IRIB World Service to air "Mokhtarnameh" for Bosnians

**A R T** TEHRAN — The World Service of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) plans to air the TV series "Mokhtarnameh" for Bosnians during the lunar months of Muharram and Safar.

The 40-episode series directed by Davud Mirbaqeri is about an uprising organized by Mokhtar Saqafi after the events of Ashura,



Mahchehreh Khalili acts in a scene from the TV series "Mokhtarnameh".

the 10th of Muharram in 680 CE, to take revenge against the killers of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions.

The Persian-language series will be broadcast with Bosnian subtitles from August 24, IRIB World Service announced on Tuesday.

IRIB's Channel 1 aired the serial, which was made over a period of eight years, during June and July 2011.

Shortly thereafter, a group of voice actors dubbed the series for Azerbaijani viewers of the Iranian international TV network, Sahar.

It was also broadcast on Star TV, Turkey's first private TV channel.

## William S. Burroughs' "Naked Lunch" comes to Iranian bookstores

**CULTURE** TEHRAN — A Persian translation of American writer William S. Burroughs' novel "Naked Lunch" has recently been published by Hirmand Publications.

The book has been translated into Persian by Farid Qadami.

First published 50 years ago, "Naked Lunch" is a dark, wild ride through the terror of heroin addiction and withdrawal, filled with paranoia, and drug-fueled hallucinations.

In an introduction to the novel, Burroughs wrote that the book was a result of "detailed notes on sickness and delirium" that he took during his 15 years of heroin addiction.

As he explained in a 1985 interview, "It was just my character. I always was attracted to the run-down, or the old or the offbeat."

Since its original publication in Paris in 1959, "Naked Lunch" has become one of the most important novels of the twentieth century.

Exerting its influence on the relationship of art and obscenity, it is one of the books that redefined not just literature but American culture.

For the Burroughs enthusiast and the neophyte, this volume, which contains final-draft typescripts, numerous unpublished contemporaneous writings by Burroughs, his own later introductions to the book and his essay on psychoactive drugs, is a valuable and fresh experience of a novel that has lost none of its relevance or satirical bite.

Burroughs was born in St. Louis in 1914 and lived in Chicago, New York, Texas, Paris, Tangier, London and Lawrence, Kansas where he died in August 1997.

He was the author of numerous books, including "The Soft Machine", "Nova Express", "The Ticket that Exploded" and "The Wild Boys", and was inducted as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Front cover of the Persian translation of American writer William S. Burroughs' novel "Naked Lunch".

Cover of the Arabic translation of "Martyr of Science" written about Iranian nuclear scientist Majid Shahriri.

# "A Smiling Banana" selected for IBBY 2021 Collection for Young People with Disabilities

**CULTURE** TEHRAN — The **d e s k** International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) has selected the Persian story "A Smiling Banana" for its 2021 Collection for Young People with Disabilities, the Children's Book Council of Iran announced on Tuesday.

The book has been written by Hamidreza Shahabadi based on a plot by Hassan Musavi, who is also the illustrator of the book.

"Simplicity at its best is manifested in this picture book," the Pol Literary and Translation Agency, a Tehran-based institution that translates Iranian books and presents Persian-language publications around the world, has written about the book.

"The contrasting beauties of nature mingles with the imagination of author and illustrator, and creates a story children won't forget easily," it added.

"The happy banana changes the life of a gorilla and shows him another way of life. Others badger the gorilla because of his affection towards a banana, and they are forced to leave that part of the jungle in search of peace and quiet. They are united with another gorilla who has a smiling apple friend. The main message of the book is what has caused struggle and frustration for many: change, and the acceptance that change is necessary and most likely, fruitful, in every aspect of the word!"

Ofoq, a major publishing house in Tehran, which released the book in 2017,



Front cover of "A Smiling Banana" by writer Hamidreza Shahabadi and illustrator Hassan Musavi.

has congratulated Shahabadi and Musavi for the IBBY choice.

Every two years experts working with the IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities select outstanding titles for and about children and young adults with disabilities from around the world.

The IBBY headquarters is located in Basel, Switzerland.

Many young people with disabilities cannot read or enjoy a standard book, or they cannot find a suitable book among the many publications available, IBBY has said.

Therefore they need specially produced books or selected regular books of literary and artistic quality that meet their special needs regarding design, language, plot structure and pictures.

The IBBY collection located at the Toronto Public Library features a large international selection of books for and about young people with disabilities.

The books are chosen by the IBBY National Sections, as well as by independent experts and publishers.

In 2019, "Plants" by Iranian writers and designer Samaneh Naderi was selected for the IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities.

Eight different plants and their edible fruits are highlighted in this handmade book that explores two questions: what are the different parts of a plant and how do plants grow?

## "Villa Dwellers" opens Iranian Film Festival in Tokyo

**A R T** TEHRAN — The Japanese capital of **d e s k** Tokyo is hosting the 3rd Iranian Film Festival, which opened on Monday at the Akasaka Civic Hall in Minato City with screening Monir Qeidi's debut feature film "Villa Dwellers" on the Iran-Iraq 1980-1988 war.

The film tells the story of some of the families of the Iranian soldiers that stayed at residential villas near the frontline waiting to see their loved ones. Aziz and her grandchildren go the complex to get a chance to visit her son, Davud. After her arrival, new adventures begin.

"Iran and Japan have had an over 1300-year-long historical and cultural relationship," Iranian cultural attaché Hossein Divsalar said before the screening of the film.

"The cinema is one the main fields the two countries have collaborated in over the past few years, and it can help the people of the countries improve their understanding of each other," he added.

In his brief speech, Yoshihiko Yatabe, a programming director of the Tokyo International Film Festival, also

expressed his thanks to the Iranian organizers of the event and praised Iranian filmmakers for their stories and skills.

He also described Iranian filmmakers as frequent visitors to the Tokyo International Film Festival.

A lineup seven movies, including "18 Percent", a documentary by Mohammadreza Rezaian, is scheduled to be showcased during the festival, which is being organized by the Iranian Culture Center in Tokyo and Farabi Cinema Foundation in Tehran.

The Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan and UNIJAPAN, a non-profit organization that organizes the Tokyo International Film Festival and promotes Japanese films abroad, are contributing to the event.

The documentary is about Ali Jalali, an Iranian soldier who is wounded in an Iraqi chemical attack. Jalali is sent to Japan to receive treatments for his wounds.

The lineup also includes Roqieh Tavakkoli's debut film "Motherhood", Reza Mirkarimi's acclaimed drama "So Close, So Far", Mohammad Hamzei's "Azar", Kamal Tabrizi's drama "The Sweet Taste of Imagination" and



Monir Qeidi's debut feature film "Villa Dwellers" opened the 3rd Iranian Film Festival in Tokyo on August 10, 2020.

Maziar Miri's "The Painting Pool".

The Iranian Culture Center has called on Japanese Persian learners in Tokyo to attend the festival, which is open to the general public.

## Iranian Youth Cinema Society to release top short films online

**A R T** TEHRAN — The Iranian **d e s k** Youth Cinema Society plans to release a number of its top short films on Hashure and Vodio, two Iranian platforms providing video on demand (VOD) service for films.

The plan is part of the society's program "Four Ideas, Four Films" that will begin on Thursday.

"Cinderella" by Mehdi Aqajani and "Ayyub" by Amin Qavami are among the movies.

"Cinderella" is about a wedding ceremony, in which the groom does not want to attend but an insane man wants to replace him. "Ayyub" is about a couple in a remote

village. The man needs to be taken to the hospital due to a broken bone, however, there is no ambulance and he must be taken to the hospital in the city by a coffin carrier.

Amir-Masud Soheili's "Blue-Eyed Boy" has also been selected to stream through the platforms.

"Blue-Eyed Boy" is about a young boy who suffers from an unusual type of color blindness that causes him to see the world in blue.

The short film has won the award for best short film at Festival Internacional de Santo Domingo Mujeres en Corto (Femujer) in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, in 2016.



A scene from "Cinderella" by Mehdi Aqajani.

It has also won the best cinematography award at the 15th Unprecedented Cinema

International Short Film Festival, held in Estonia in 2015.

In addition, the film emerged as the big winner in May 2015 at the 1st Ahmednagar International Short Film Festival (AISFF) in India, scooping best film, best actor and best director awards.

Esmail Monsef's "Ardak" is the fourth short film in the selection.

The film is about a father waiting for the return of his son who left the country many years before.

"Ardak" received the special jury award of the 14th International Short and Independent Film Festival (ISIFF), which was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2016.

## "Unlock" joins Iranian lineup at Australian Muslim Film Festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — "Unlock", a documentary **d e s k** written and directed Maryam Mohammadi, has joined other Iranian films selected earlier to be screened at the Muslim Film Festival in Australia in September.

"The documentary aims to put a spotlight on the 300-year-old industry of making locks in the town of Chaleshtar in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari Province in the southwestern part of the country," Mohammadi said on Tuesday in a press release.

"I have closely watched the great efforts made by the kind people of Chaleshtar in making their handmade locks. I really want to promote Iranian locks and provide the ground for their import into other countries," she added.

"Unlock" will be competing with "I Am Fatou" by Amir Ramadan from Italy, "The Little Tea Shop" codirected by Molly Wexler and Matteo Servente from America, and several more.

"Better than Neil Armstrong" by Alireza Qasemi is another Iranian entry to the festival.



A scene from Iranian filmmaker Maryam Mohammadi's documentary "Unlock".

The film is about four kids who start their journey to the Moon with the mission of finding a mysterious place called "Redland", but the gates of the place are being guarded by a mischievous snake.

"Better than Neil Armstrong" scored a big success at the Southport International Short Film Festival in England by winning two major awards from the English event in late June.

The awards for best film and best drama went to the movie.

In addition, Iranian filmmaker Ali-Mohammad Egbaldar has been selected for the jury of the festival.

Due to coronavirus and the resulting unusual circumstances, the Muslim Film Festival 2020 will be held in Perth theaters on September 5 and 6, and will stream online everywhere else via Video on Demand between September 5 and 19.

The organizers have received 73 films including shorts and features this year out of which judges have selected 55 brilliant films.

The Muslim Film Festival will be running for four weekends screening independent films made by Muslims, or telling stories about Muslims anywhere in the world, by anyone Muslim or non-Muslim.

## Book on Iranian nuclear scientist Majid Shahriri published in Arabic

**CULTURE** TEHRAN — "Martyr of **d e s k** Science", a book written about Iranian nuclear scientist Majid Shahriri, has recently been published in Arabic.

The book has been translated by Hassan Matar and published by Tamkin Publications in Iraq.

The Arabic version of the book will

be distributed in Iraq and Lebanon in collaboration with the Iranian firm, Raheyar Publications.

In the book, relatives, friends, students and colleagues recount memories of Shahriri. Shahriri was born in Zanjan in 1966. He finished school in Zanjan and continued his studies in Tehran.

He graduated with a Ph.D. in nuclear engineering from the University of Amirkabir in Tehran. He was a professor at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran.

He was also collaborating with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

Shahriri was assassinated in Tehran on November 29, 2010.