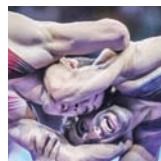




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Envoy calls hype against partnership agreement with China 'farcical'

TEHRAN — The Iranian Ambassador to China, Mohammad Keshavarz-Zadeh, said on Saturday that the hype created against a long-term partnership agreement between Iran and China is "farcical".

In an interview with IRNA, Keshavarz-Zadeh said that the commotion is guided by certain TV channels based in the West and countries which do not want a growing of Iran's relations with other countries.

Officials in Tehran have said the 25-year comprehensive cooperation agreement between Iran and China has not been finalized yet.

"Countries like the United States which has imposed cruel sanctions on us and has even blocked our money in other countries such as Japan and South Korea and prevent us from using it to purchase medicine and food are making claims which are farcical," the ambassador stated. ➔2

Russia, China veto Western-backed UNSC resolution on Syria aid

Russia and China have for the second time this week blocked a Western-sponsored UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution to extend aid deliveries across the border from Turkey into northwest Syria amid concerns that the move violates the war-torn country's sovereignty.

On Friday, Russia and China vetoed the Belgian-German draft resolution, which would have kept two border crossings from

Turkey - Bab al-Hawa and Bab al-Salam - open for an additional six months.

It came hours before the expiry of the UN cross-border delivery mechanism to Syria, which was set up in 2014 and renewed ever since, Press TV reported.

Moscow and Beijing argue that the mechanism violates Syria's sovereignty and that aid should be channeled through the government of President Bashar al-Assad. ➔10

"Autumn of Age Fifty" on Commander Soleimani's comrade published in Turkish

TEHRAN — "Autumn of Age Fifty", a book about Mohammad Jamali, one of Commander Qassem Soleimani's comrades who was martyred in the Syrian war, has been published in Turkish.

The book has been published by Feta Publishing in Istanbul under the title of "Ellinci Payiz".

"Autumn of Age Fifty" recounts the memories of Jamali's wife, Maryam Jamali,

from her years of marriage to him who had also fought beside Soleimani during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

An Arabic translation of the book is also scheduled to be released by a Lebanese publishing house in Beirut in the near future.

In addition, the book has also been translated into Azerbaijani and will be published soon. ➔12



ARTICLE

Salman Parviz
Journalist

Arrears from crude export blocked in S.Korean banks

In his recent reaction to Seoul's blockage of Iranian assets, President Hassan Rouhani said South Korea's seizure of Iranian assets "is by no means acceptable and we expect Seoul to lift the restrictions as soon as possible."

South Korea's somber consideration of this just demand should allow Iran to buy the basic humanitarian supplies to fight the Covid-19 pandemic utilizing these frozen accounts.

The U.S. campaign is now frugally following the step-by-step brochure on "maximum pressure" campaign. Certainly, the Iranian nation is suffering from this economic suffocation. Remember "I can't breathe". This is Trump administration's true intention for Iran, by hook or crook to topple the regime.

The U.S. campaign to use its own financial regulations to pressure Iran and other countries with economic ties with the Islamic Republic, has been a mix of implicit threats backed by explicit action. An example at hand is South Korea, once one of the main buyers of Iranian crude and one of the key trading partners of Iran.

When U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018, his administration adopted a new and more aggressive "maximum pressure" strategy against Iran and every country with economic ties with Tehran. Under pressure of threats from the U.S., many countries stopped buying Iranian crude.

Initially, the Trump administration granted six-month waivers to seven countries importing crude from Iran, including India and South Korea and China. The waivers ended in May 2019 and the payments for the Iranian crude accumulated in the buyers' banks.

Another example of U.S. sanctions at hand is India. After sanctions were lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran managed to unlock over \$6.4 billion of oil payments trapped in Indian accounts, using European banks as a clearing agent, Bloomberg reported. ➔7

Countless Bosnians lost lives as Western powers failed to act fast: Sarajevo University professor

TEHRAN — Joseph J. Kaminski, an assistant professor at the International University of Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, tells the Tehran times that failure of Western powers and the United Nations led to loss of "countless lives" in the Bosnian War.

On the Srebrenica massacre and the disappearing role of the Dutch peacekeepers, Kaminski notes, "Srebrenica was most certainly the largest scale and most well-known genocide during the war in Bosnia. From what I have gathered in my own visits to the Srebrenica Memorial and through my interactions with local Bosnians who lived during the war, the general consensus seems to be that Dutch troops were more interested in their own safety rather than the safety of the local Bosnians who were being targeted."

The professor says, "It wasn't that the Dutch troops were incompetent fighters; rather it was that they were unwilling."

The academic also says Western media outlets largely ignore Iran's help to the Bosnians during the war.

"Iran's role in the Bosnian liberation struggle has been largely ignored by Western media, but any Bosnian you speak with who lived during that time is fully aware of the help Iran provided during the war. Iran was one of the very first countries to offer direct meaningful assistance to the Bosnian Muslim cause," explains Kaminski, author of "the Contemporary Islamic Governed State".

The text of the interview with Kaminski is as follows:

■ A new investigation into the Srebrenica massacre shows that the British, American and French governments were prepared to cede UN-protected safe areas to armed Serb militia during the war in Bosnia. How do you assess the role of Western powers in the massacre? ➔7

Utah governor declares state of emergency after protests over police shooting

Gov. Gary Herbert of Utah declared a state of emergency in response to protests in Salt Lake City that erupted after the authorities said the fatal police shooting of a 22-year-old man in May was justified.

The Salt Lake County district attorney, Sim Gill, announced on Thursday that there would be no criminal charges against the two Salt Lake City Police Department officers who shot the man, Bernardo Palacios-Carbajal, on May 23.

After the announcement, protesters who had gathered for weeks in front of the district attorney's office, part of the nationwide movement against police violence and racism, marched on 500 S, a major street in the downtown area. The police said that the protests disrupted traffic and broke windows, and that officers were sprayed with pepper spray. The officers tried several times to disperse the protests, the department said, NY times reported.

The Salt Lake Tribune reported that some demonstrators spilled red paint on the road in front of the district attorney's office and that others threw bottles at police officers in riot gear. Officers pushed protesters to the ground and hit them with clubs, and a police car rammed into a protester's vehicle that was being used as a barricade, the newspaper reported.

At least one officer was injured and at least two people were arrested, the Police Department said.

The governor's order, in effect until midnight on Monday, closed the State Capitol building and its grounds to everyone except for employees and officers.

The district attorney's announcement and the demonstrations came as the protests around the country, following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody in May, have called for funding cuts, policy changes and accountability for the police. ➔10

Coronavirus halves road accident casualties in Iran

TEHRAN — Traffic-related accidents and mortalities have decreased by 50 percent over the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 20) compared to the same period last year due to the outbreak of coronavirus which has slashed travels across the country.

"Of course, this is not a proper indicator, and we need to look at the real causes of the country's road crashes, but with the onset of the outbreak the mortality rate of car crashes halved," said

Mohammad Esmail Motlaq, head of the disaster risk management department of the Ministry of Health.

In fact, if the pandemic did not infect the people, there would have been an increasing trend in road crashes and deaths this year, he stated, IRNA reported.

He went on to say that in the first two months of this year, 1,973 people lost their lives in traffic accidents, of whom 1,636 were men and 337 were women which shows a

declining trend of 23.4 percent compared to the same period last year with a death toll of 2,575 people.

Also, 35,869 people were injured in traffic accidents during the aforesaid period, of which 27,291 were men and 8,578 were women, which was reported 58,377 in the first two months of last year, thus traffic accidents in the first two months of this year compared to the same period last year decreased by 38.6 percent, he explained. ➔9



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Abandoned craft of Sofreh-bafi revived in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Sofreh-bafi (traditional spread weaving), a handicraft field that was obsolete, has been revived in Lordegan, western Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province.

To revive the handicraft field, some 60 rural women were trained in this field for free, CHTN quoted provincial tourism chief Mehrdad Raeisi as saying on Saturday.

Sofreh-bafi was mostly for self-consumption, but with the production of similar industrial goods, this field had been fallen into oblivion, the official added. ➔8

Pentagon claims Iran-Syria defense deal won't stop its efforts to fight ISIS

TEHRAN — The U.S. military has claimed that it will continue to fight Daesh (ISIS) terrorist group despite the new Iran-Syria defense deal which aims to counter increasing challenges and threats, including the threat of the terrorist groups which were initially supported by the U.S. and its allies at the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011 in order to oust Syrian President Bashar al Assad.

"The mission of U.S. Forces in Syria today remains the same as it was when they first began operations in 2014: to enable the enduring defeat of ISIS," Newsweek on Friday quoted Pentagon spokesperson Navy Commander Jessica L. McNulty as saying.

"U.S. service members will continue to execute the Defeat ISIS mission in Syria, working in conjunction with vetted local forces in northeast Syria and around At Tanf Garrison," she added.

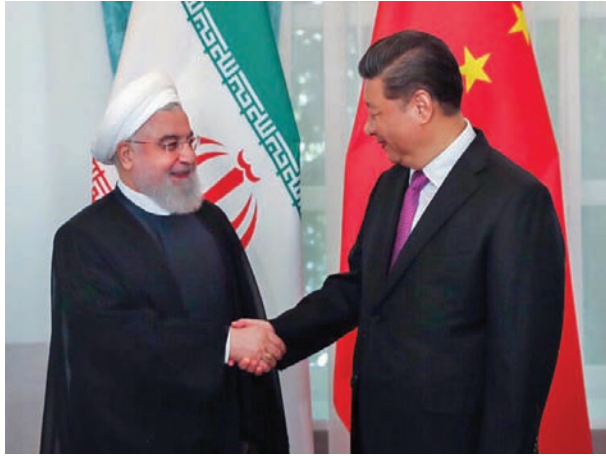
Her comments come after Major General Mohammad Bagheri, the chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, touted the new deal this week that would strengthen Syria's air defense systems. The deal is expected to boost bilateral ties between two countries united in their fight against ISIS and in their opposition to unwelcome U.S. intervention in the region.

"The peoples and countries of the region do not welcome the American presence, and our strong responses to American hostilities continue," Bagheri said during a Wednesday meeting with Syrian Defense Minister Ali Ayoub in Damascus, according to Lebanese and Syrian media. ➔3

25-year deal with China is a shrewd, opportune move by Iran: analyst

(Press TV) — The potential 25-year trade and strategic cooperation deal with China is a shrewd, opportune, and necessary move by Iran given the Atlantic world's betrayal of the Islamic Republic, an international lawyer and political analyst says.

Barry Grossman, who is based on the Indonesian island of Bali, made the remarks in an interview with Press TV on Friday. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif reportedly told Parliament last week that Iran and China were working on a 25-year trade agreement. China has said it will invest US\$400 billion in the Iranian economy.



The U.S. State Department and anti-Iran Farsi media outlets based outside Iran have denounced the possible deal between Iran and China that seeks to expand economic and strategic partnership between the two powers.

The U.S. State Department went on to issue tweets in Farsi, comparing the potential Iran-China accord to the 1828 Treaty of Turkmenchay which was an agreement between Persia and the Russian Empire. By the treaty, Persia had to cede to Russia control of some areas in the South Caucasus.

Iran has rejected the criticism saying is it aimed at appeasing the enemies of the Islamic republic.

"Unfortunately, a destructive line of propaganda has been initiated and directed from outside Iran against the expansion of Iran's relations with neighbors and especially (with) China and Russia," Iranian president's chief of staff, Mahmoud Vaezi, said on Wednesday.

The senior official, a close aide to President Hassan Rouhani, said Iran is seeking to set up a roadmap for its future strategic ties with China, a move he said was absolutely normal under the current diplomatic practices.

Gholam-Reza Ansari, the Iranian deputy foreign minister for economic affairs, said on Friday that it comes as no surprise to see Western countries expressing concern about Tehran's strategic cooperation with Beijing, as they are terrified that Iran would be linked to China's global potentialities.

Ansari said some of the criticisms recently raised about a 25-year strategic cooperation deal between Tehran and Beijing are "ridiculous".

Following is the text of Grossman's interview with Press TV: As for the trade deal itself personally, I see it as a shrewd probably even necessary move given the Atlantic world's betrayal of Iran, and they're continuing asymmetric warfare against Iran.

I just like to say I generally avoid making comments on Iran's internal affairs but having been asked I will offer some thoughts on the matter, and that simply is this:

Look there cannot be any doubt that the unexpected U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and the betrayal of Iran by the EU position has left Iran in a very difficult position, and in an economic crisis.

Personally I consider it somewhat foolhardy and counterproductive to assume, as some people seem to that it was Iran's commitment to the JCPOA that triggered this economic crisis or that the situation would have been any less severe had Iran not come to the table under U.S. and Atlantic world pressure to negotiate the JCPOA.

So, to suggest that some people are that the Rouhani government's policies are somehow responsible for the economic crisis in Iran seems to me to fall, very far, wide off the mark.

As for the trade deal itself personally, I see it as a shrewd probably even necessary move given the Atlantic world's betrayal of Iran, and they're continuing asymmetric warfare against Iran.

After all, there can't be any doubt that in terms of priorities in Iran national security and defense, as well as the basic economic expectations of Iranians have to come first.

And certainly well before any speculative concerns about China's politics and such matters and both of those matters that is national security, defense on the one hand and the economic expectations of Iranians on the other are in no small part connected with a need for hard currency and that's of course where this deal comes in since, Iran, unfortunately, is being somewhat effectively shut out from trade and other markets.

And I certainly see no reason to be critical of a trade deal, which in any case falls well short of a sort of unqualified comprehensive alliance with China on all regional issues, bearing in mind that it seems to be supported by the IRGC, and by Iran's ultimate leadership which wisely as always has so far declined to comment on the matter.

In fact, it seems to me that all things considered is far better that the Rouhani government should be left to either take the political benefit of any advantages that flow from the deal or as the case may be to pay the political price if those benefits don't materialize.

As for those who disagree and vehemently criticize this perspective deal they would I think do very well to rethink their position given that the pretender-in-exile Reza Pahlavi has himself strongly expressed the same view in condemning the prospects of a bilateral Iran-China trade deal.

Having said all of that ultimately the proposed deal can only be properly assessed based on the fine print of the deal itself. And of course any steps which are taken and will invariably be taken to make sure that there's no room for any kind of corruption to creep into the administration of this deal.

Both of those things I think demand a measure of patience from would-be critics since after all, Iran is in a very difficult position, needs to be able to bring its goods and in particular its own to market, and while the Chinese seem to drive always a very hard deal. That seems to be the best prospect on the table at this point in time.

Parliament prepares plan to stop Additional Protocol in Iran

POLITICAL
desk

TEHRAN — The Iranian parliament has prepared a plan to stop the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the NPT in Iran by the International Atomic Energy Agency, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

"This plan has been prepared in the format of urgency based on which voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol will be stopped and the government is obliged to observe it," said Abbas Moghtadaei, the deputy chairman of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

Moghtadaei said that the plan has been drawn up in response to the United States and Europe's excessive demands.

Iran's parliament issued a statement in June strongly condemning an anti-Iran resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors, asking the government to stop implementing the Additional Protocol, which allows surprise inspections of nuclear sites.



"The Islamic Consultative Assembly strongly condemns resolution of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors which was proposed by three

European countries of England, France and Germany under the pressure of the ruling regime in the United States and the fake Zionist regime. It [the parliament] considers

Envoy calls hype against partnership agreement with China 'farcical'

➔ He added, "Claims about leasing some islands to the Chinese or deploying Chinese military forces in Iran are farcical and negative propaganda."

The diplomat also noted that the U.S. has made any effort to isolate Iran and cripple its economy and obviously opposes partnership agreement with China.

Elsewhere, he said that the cooperation plan is a "roadmap" to expand ties and cooperation.

"The roadmap we prepare for relations with China is a lamp which shows the path. Within the framework of this agreement, we will not just import commodities; development of the country's infrastructure in land, air and space areas is included in the 25-year plan," Iran's top diplomat to Beijing stated.

Ambassador added, "All details of the plan have been studied by experts in various ministries and the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament). It will not be accepted if any part of it runs contrary to the country's interests."

He also said that China has a growing economy and all countries are interested in expanding relations with China.

Iranian presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said on Wednesday that foreign media outlets have created a commotion over the draft agreement between Iran and China.

Vaezi said the partnership cooperation is a "conventional agreement".

"This document is a conventional document to strengthen relations between the (two) countries," he told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

He noted that speculation has been spread in social networks claiming "something like leasing Kish or Qeshm [islands to China]. This [hype] is being supported from



outside. Our executive bodies are making efforts to make everything transparent."

Also, secretariat of the Supreme Council of Iran's Free Trade, Industrial, and Special Economic Zones announced on Wednesday that Iran will not lease any port to China.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Thursday that the 25-year plan for cooperation is "honorable", calling relations "strategic".

"We have prepared draft of a strategic document with China and we are holding consultations with the other side and nothing has been finalized yet. Negotiations about this document shows that we have strategic ties and this document shows a 25-year prospect. There has been a hype against this issue in social media, however, this document is honorable," Mousavi said in a press conference in Isfahan.

Hook says U.S. concerned about 'energized' Iran-Venezuela ties

By staff and agency

Washington's Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook said on Friday that the United States is concerned about growing relations between Iran and Venezuela.

"As we look at the newly energized ties between Iran and Venezuela in our hemisphere we are very concerned about it," Hook said during an online briefing at the Hudson Institute, according to UrduPoint News.

He added, "We are determined to [ensure] that this relationship doesn't become a new form of instability in our hemisphere."

Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi said last week that Iran respects the Venezuela government and people and welcomes expansion of ties and cooperation with the Latin American country.

"Iran's political determination is supporting the legal Venezuelan government and helping the people of this country solve their problems," he said during a meeting with Venezuelan president special envoy Jorge Marquez.

The special envoy delivered a written message of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to President Hassan Rouhani.



Marquez said that Iran and Venezuela have very good relations, calling for expansion of ties.

He also praised Iran's supports for Venezuela.

Rouhani has said that Iran and Venezuela should deepen "strategic" and "friendly" ties.

He made the remarks in a message to President Maduro on the occasion of the anniversary of Venezuela's independence.

"Stressing the necessity of deepening friendly and strategic relations between the two countries, I am sure that we will witness the Venezuelan people's victory in overcoming the current problems in near future," Rouhani predicted.

U.S. has gained no benefit by quitting nuclear deal: ex-British diplomat

POLITICAL
desk

TEHRAN — Peter Jenkins, a former British ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, has said that the United States has gained no benefit by withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA.

Jenkins told IRNA in an interview published on Saturday that the U.S. lost its soft power after pullout from the JCPOA.

He also noted that the U.S. may return to the JCPOA if Trump fails to be reelected president in the November elections.

The former diplomat added Iran has gained no economic benefits from the nuclear deal.

Donald Trump unilaterally 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" strategy against Iran.

■ 'U.S. cannot expect extension of arms embargo on Iran'

Jenkins also said the United States cannot expect the UN Security Council to extend arms embargo on Iran within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses the JCPOA.



He noted that China and Russia have the right to veto the U.S. move.

The Trump administration has also stepped up calls for the extension of UN arms embargo on Iran. The administration has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snapback of UN sanctions on Iran if its attempts to extend the arms embargo fail.

Under the JCPOA backed by Resolution 2231, the UN must lift its arms embargo on Iran five years after the implementation of the nuclear deal. Despite its withdrawal from the JCPOA, the U.S. is pushing for the extension of the arms embargo, which is scheduled to expire on October 18.

Arab analyst says Iran-Syria military agreement will change regional regulations

POLITICAL
desk

TEHRAN — Abdel Bari Atwan, the editor-in-chief of the Rai al-Youm website, has said the military agreement between Iran and Syria will change regulations in the West Asia region.

Writing in the website, Atwan said according to the agreement Iran has agreed to deliver Bavar 373 and Khordad 3 missile systems which compete with Russia's S300 air defense system, ISNA reported on Saturday.

He also said based on the agreement, Iran's military presence in Syria is legalized and even will be increased

It also sends this message to the United States that Iran and Syria have formed a long-lasting coalition, Atwan pointed out.

Elsewhere, the senior Arab analyst said the agreement bears this message to Turkey that holding negotiations and reaching agreement with Syria are only ways to settle security issues.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has said that that the military cooperation signed between Tehran and Damascus is the result of years of cooperation in fighting



terrorism.

"This agreement is the result of years of cooperation in confronting terrorism in Syria and hostile policies against Tehran and Damascus," Assad said during a meeting with Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri on Thursday, al Mayadeen

the resolution another example of structural discrimination by the international agency," the statement read.

The statement was signed by 240 MPs.

It called the resolution "excessive demand" despite the fact that Iran has cooperated with the agency transparently.

"The Islamic Republic has implemented the Additional Protocol voluntarily and not based on its safeguards duties. According to reports of the Agency's director general, the Agency has carried out most precise inspections, including 30 surprise inspections annually," the MPs stated.

The 35-member IAEA board passed the resolution on June 19, demanding access to two old places they claim nuclear work may have been done there.

Nine countries out of 35 members to the IAEA board did not vote for the resolution. China and Russia voted against the resolution and Thailand, Mongolia, Niger, South Africa, India, Pakistan and the Republic of Azerbaijani abstained.

Nikki Haley politicizing the Iranian people's health: researcher

Alireza Ahmadi, a researcher and analyst focused on U.S. foreign policy towards West Asia, has said Ambassador Nikki Haley's push for blocking an IMF loan to Iran to fight the coronavirus pandemic is a "politicization" of Iranian people's health, which is typical of Trump administration officials.

Ahmadi made the comments in an article published in the National Interest on July 11.

The text of the article titled "Nikki Haley's astounding claims about Iran" is as follows:

The specter of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) extending a loan to Iran to assist with the challenges of the coronavirus epidemic has raised objections from many U.S. officials. In an opinion article, Ambassador Nikki Haley argued that the United States should do everything in its power to block the IMF loan based on Iran's policies in the region. Her arguments in favor of a political response to a public health emergency is typical of Trump administration officials and speak to a broader politicization with the lives of innocent people hanging in the balance. So is this an effort to block funds from an unruly actor or a cynical ploy to use the circumstances created by an epidemic for political gain as Iran has charged?

Some of Haley's claims require addressing. First, despite her claim, the IMF is not a "subsidiary" of the UN. These organizations do not function as privately-owned corporate entities do. The IMF is an independently developed intergovernmental organization that is only part of the "UN System" because of a negotiated agreement between the two in which the IMF retains its legal independence including a separate budget, staff and decisionmaking structure. Second, the notion that they would provide a loan to Iran at the current juncture is also not an anti-American conspiracy. For decades now, the IMF has made a mission of extending financial assistance in the form of loans to countries experiencing public health crises. In this context, Iran requested a \$5 billion loan from the IMF to better deal with the coronavirus crisis.

Haley's problems with understanding the structure and roles of international organizations were readily apparent during her time in office as well as afterward. Haley uses her book, published in 2019, to make her dislike of Secretary Rex Tillerson very clear. She has a cabinet-level position and a direct line to the president. This, she feels, should mean that she is ostensibly an independent organ of the U.S. government wholly separate from the State Department—or a "free electron" as former National Security Advisor John Bolton called her. She has no interest in the State Department having any input in her staffing, policy positions, or formal statements. Her connection to Trump may be direct but it seems too irregular and unsystematic to be an effective mechanism of policy coordination between the American Embassy in Turtle Bay and the White House.

Haley twice claims that Tillerson, trying to head off her trip to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) headquarters in Geneva, lied about having a team to look into the organization's monitoring of the Iran deal's implementation. She wanted to personally travel there to interrogate IAEA staff about the Iran nuclear deal that she vehemently opposed. Haley says that Tillerson told her that the trip is unnecessary as he has staff in Geneva meeting with IAEA officials on Iran related issues. She then writes that "I strongly suspected that Rex was making things up as he went along. I had heard nothing about his staff consulting with the IAEA about the Iran deal". The State Department has an Ambassador-level Permanent Mission to the International Organizations in Vienna which includes the IAEA.

The argument laid out by Haley would be at least somewhat understandable if Iran had neglected public healthcare. But Iran's healthcare system has been praised by the World Health Organization as one of the strongest in the region and the country's life expectancy has jumped from fifty-four years to seventy-six years over the last forty years. That is simply not something that would be possible without significant and sustained government investment in public health.

The issue Haley completely neglects is that the damage inflicted by U.S. sanctions, not



Iran's healthcare system has been praised by the World Health Organization as one of the strongest in the region and the country's life expectancy has jumped from fifty-four years to seventy-six years over the last forty years.

just on Iranian government finances but on the Iranian healthcare system, is at least an important reason why Iran felt the need to request the loan. I partially addressed these issues in a previous article on Iran's coronavirus response. But medical researchers from around the world have tracked the negative effect of sanctions on almost all aspects of the provision of healthcare in Iran ranging from cancer care and pharmaceutical scarcity to mental health and antimicrobial resistance. Here are a few examples from just the past year: Researchers in the United States, the Netherlands and Iran concluded that sanctions have harmed the growth of Iranian medical science by denying access to critical laboratory

This is why the United States was met with a flurry of calls to lift or at least amend sanctions by the United Nations, the European Union, the World Health Organization, the Vatican, former senior officials from the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations, former heads of the IAEA and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and many others. But in the United States, such international calls have little resonance. The U.S. government brushed aside the calls and at a State Department press conference just after these international demands hit a crescendo, the only Iran related question asked of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from the assembled press corps was whether Pompeo feels "satisfied"

government foundations. Obviously, if one was to believe that Ayatollah Khamenei is simply sitting on \$200 billion—or more due to appreciation of assets over years—then Iran's fiscal outlook would be substantially shielded from the "maximum pressure campaign" and these efforts would be a pointless exercise whatever their stated mission.

Iran's defense spending, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) was 2.3 percent of gross domestic product in 2019, well within the norm of global defense spending (2.2 percent of GDP for that year). Others have provided higher figures for Iranian military spending but they did so mainly by including the budgets of local police departments as defense spending. In fact, Anthony Cordesman and Nicholas Harrington of the Center for Strategic and International Studies said that Iran's military equipment is "aging, battle-worn, and mediocre weapons that make it something of a military museum." Iran's military policy in the region is certainly not beyond criticism, but it is also not a financially intensive endeavor.

Ultimately, the issue here is not Iran's expenditure of funds but rather its policies. For U.S. officials, past and present, to be professing concern for the stewardship of the Iranian people's public funds strains credulity. Iran and its allies are the primary impediments to American dominance in the region behind its own alliance network consisting of Israel and Sunni Arab states. What U.S. officials frequently characterize as "adventurism" or "bad behavior" on the part of Iran is, for Tehran, a vital process of maintaining a viable alliance network and a critical security necessity that can't be abandoned due to fiscal restraints.

In anything, the development of the Yemen conflict into what the UN termed the "worst humanitarian crisis in the world," in large part due to U.S.-backed Saudi coalition's restrictions on food import, should cast doubt on the relative benevolence the ambassador attributes to the American agenda in the Middle East.

Regardless, the funding Iran seeks is unlikely to materialize since the U.S. exercises an effective veto power over the decisions made by the IMF and has already announced its opposition to the loan. This move garnered a negative reaction from even the European Union, who expressed regret at the politicization of this public health issue by Washington. That being said, Iran is experiencing significant fiscal strain because of the coronavirus epidemic as is the entire rest of the world. International institutions like the IMF have never applied this kind of foreign policy test to decide whether to provide loans for public health and that should not be the case here.

Researchers in the United States, the Netherlands and Iran concluded that sanctions have harmed the growth of Iranian medical science by denying access to critical laboratory and medical supplies, scientific fora, information sources and even the ability to publish research findings.

and medical supplies, scientific fora, information sources and even the ability to publish research findings.

Researchers in Canada found that sanctions have had adverse consequences for public health in Iran, especially for low-income and at-risk populations, including by impairing the social determinants of health, delivery of health care and access to care. Researchers in Germany mapped the many direct and indirect ways in which U.S. sanctions have harmed Iran's medical and pharmaceutical sectors, hamstringing their effort to confront the coronavirus, and add that the effect of sanctions will "compound human losses from the epidemic."

Researchers in London wrote, the renowned academic medical journal The Lancet, that the efforts of Iranian healthcare workers fighting the coronavirus have been "thwarted" by shortages they directly tied to the "effect of sanctions on the commercial sector, reducing manufacturing and trade capacity, and on foreign exchange." Researchers in Germany argued, also in The Lancet, that sanctions have destabilized Iran's healthcare sector and added that "[s]anctions, a form of collective punishment, kill," before calling the U.S. policy a violation of international law and "barbaric."

Haley claims that Rex Tillerson lied about having a team to look into the organization's monitoring of the Iran deal's implementation.

with whether the UK, France and Germany are addressing "JCPOA violation."

■ **Iran and budgetary priorities**

Some of the arguments made by the ambassador lack proper substantiation. The claim that Iran drained a strategic fund to send the money to Syria is sourced to two publications. One is an obscure Egyptian outlet that attributes the claim to "Iranian media" without citation. The other is an article from the U.S. government's Radio Farda in which the outlet's "military analyst" makes this claim without evidence or explanation. When arguing that Iran has, in the midst of the outbreak, doubled the budget for the Basij, a military group under the IRGC's command, she cites an article that explains that President Hassan Rouhani's revised budget proposal has cut defense and security spending when adjusted for inflation and that the "Basij paramilitary received the most dramatic cut of all; its funding was cut almost in half."

The former ambassador makes several claims that seek to downplay Iran's need for such a loan. She claims, citing a State Department Facebook post, that Iran has \$200 billion in funds. This claim seems to be, at least loosely, based on a controversial 2013 Reuters claim about the valuation of assets held by Iranian

is a strategic achievement for us."

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on June 23 that Iran and China have drafted a 25-year plan for comprehensive partnership which proves failure of the plots to isolate the Islamic Republic.

"This plan proves failure of the United States' policies to isolate Iran, sever Iran's relations with the international community and also to harm Iran's will to expand relations with other countries," Rabiei said during a press conference.

He said that the plan is based on a win-win approach which "heralds long term cooperation".

"Recognizing cultural commonalities, encouraging multilateralism, supporting equal rights of the nations and insisting on domestic development are parts of this plan," the government spokesman explained.



Soleimani assassination was 'state terrorism': Takht-Ravanchi

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has said the United States' brutal assassination of General Qassem Soleimani was an obvious example of state terrorism pursued in gross violation of the fundamental principles of international law.

"The United States' brutal and cowardly assassination of Major General Qassem Soleimani, the champion of fighting terrorists in the region, and his companions, while on an official visit to neighboring Iraq, is an obvious example of state terrorism pursued in gross violation of the fundamental principles of international law, entailing criminal responsibility of its perpetrators," Takht-Ravanchi said on Friday, according to IRNA.



He made the remarks to the Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week under the theme of "Strategic and Practical Challenges of Countering Terrorism in a Global Pandemic Environment".

This tragedy was a big gift to Daesh and other terrorist groups in the region who celebrated his assassination, he said.

The ambassador said the coronavirus and terrorism have several astounding commonalities, saying, "Neither recognizes any border. Both kill innocent people in an indiscriminate manner. They spread easily and undermine the well-being of societies whilst bringing tremendous economic downturns."

"They spread fear and anxiety and can only be defeated in the spirit of global partnership, solidarity and genuine cooperation among all actors at the national, regional and international levels."

According to Takht-Ravanchi, in the fight against terrorists, there is no choice but to harness the power of the multilateral approach through enhanced information sharing and cooperation to effectively and swiftly address the vulnerabilities, mitigate the existing challenges and find practical solutions for emerging problems.

For instance, he said, the unilateral coercive measures deny essential tools for a collective response to terrorism and hinder cooperation as well as genuine efforts in this endeavor, hence providing a breeding ground for terrorism.

"The pandemic has even exacerbated the consequences of such a vicious approach," the ambassador lamented.

"The imposition by the U.S. of its laws and regulations with an extraterritorial impact on my country and others is, by definition, tantamount to terrorism," he stated.

Takht-Ravanchi further said the coercive measures are manifestations of structural violence that violate inalienable human rights, inter alia, the right to peace, right to development, right to health and above all, the right to life.

"The United States' maximum pressure policy against Iran is designed to deliberately and indiscriminately target innocent civilians with the sole purpose of causing pain and suffering among them," he said. "Therefore, these actions constitute terrorist acts and, in the broader context, economic terrorism."

He labeled the brutal suppression of Palestinian people by the Israeli regime as one of the gravest forms of terrorism, calling on the international community to condemn Israel for its atrocities.

The ambassador also pointed to foreign intervention in Iraq and Syria, saying such interventions have helped create the current violent extremist and terrorist groups.

Takht-Ravanchi criticized the U.S. representative for leveling unsubstantiated claims against Iran, saying it is common knowledge that Iran has been at the forefront of combating terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

"In fact, it is the U.S. who is promoting terrorism not only in our region, but almost everywhere in the world. The United States' interventionist approach in our region has created chaos and an environment fertile for terrorism to grow," he added.

Moreover, the envoy continued, the U.S. has been harboring the MKO, a notorious and dangerous terrorist organization responsible for the killing of at least 12,000 Iranians and many Iraqis.

"Through providing the deadliest weaponry to the aggressors in the conflict in Yemen, the U.S. is responsible for the continued catastrophe in that country resulting in terrorizing and killing of many innocent Yemenis," Takht-Ravanchi concluded.

Pentagon claims Iran-Syria defense deal won't stop its efforts to fight ISIS

1→ The following day, Bagheri met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who also endorsed stronger ties between Damascus and Tehran.

According to the IRIB, the agreement is aimed at boosting military and technical cooperation and coordination to counter increasing challenges and threats.

"Continuation of fighting the Takfiri terrorism which is being supported by certain regional and international powers is one of the objectives of this agreement," the two sides said in a joint statement.

"The military agreement was signed in line with implementing the two countries' political and military leaders' guidelines in order to play more effective role in countering any foreign aggression through promotion of Tehran and Damascus' defense capabilities," the statement added.

Iran and Syria have signed different military and defense cooperation over the past years.

The Islamic Republic commenced providing Syria with advisory military assistance after numerous countries, at the head of them the U.S. and its Western and regional allies, began funding and arming militants and terrorists with the aim of deposing the Syrian president's government.

Although the Syrian government initially lost considerable expanses of territory to ISIS and other terror outfits, the country rallied to retake the lost grounds and drive out terrorists from much of the country.

Guardian Council backs Iran-China partnership plan

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Guardian Council spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei said on Saturday that the council supports the Iran-China partnership plan.

"All international agreements and deals must be reviewed in the Majlis and the Guardian Council, and the same is true of Iran and China's 25-year plan," Kadkhodaei said during a press conference, according to ISNA.

"In my opinion, the totality of Iran and China's 25-year plan was good and we should support it," he said. "The enemy's stance shows that the Islamic Republic has taken the right path."

Majidreza Hariri, the president of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, has described the partnership plan as a "win-win" partnership.

Iran and China complement each other economically, Hariri said, adding, "Having a long-term economic customer

Swedish firms committed to deals in Iran: envoy

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Sweden's Ambassador to Tehran Mattis Lentz said on Saturday that Swedish companies will maintain their contracts in Iran and will fulfill their commitments, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

According to Lentz, in the current situation, the economic relations between Iran and Sweden are continuing in the fields of medicine, pharmaceuticals, food industry, telecommunications, and automobile industry.



Sweden was one of Iran's top trading partners in Europe, which had reached a good level of trade relations after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed between Iran and world powers, however, with the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions, the restrictions led to a significant decline in the two sides' trades.

"Though there are problems, there is also hope," the Swedish ambassador said, adding: "In the current situation, we may not be able to expand economic relations with Iran; but keeping the current ties alive and holding joint economic meetings will help us to continue to operate within this framework."

Lentz noted that although trade activities have become more limited due to the U.S. sanctions, Swedish companies have always been present in Iran and continue to be active.

"In many economic areas, Swedish companies are seeing the possibility of even expanding cooperation," he said.

CBI instructs banking system protocols to provide finance for SMEs

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has referred the instructions to provide required finance for the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20) to the country's banking system, IRIB reported.

The CBI is going to offer the mentioned financial support aiming to pave the way for boosting national production and to support economic enterprises in order to fulfill the slogan of the year which is "surge in production", while directing the liquidity toward the productive sectors.

According to the CBI directive, operating banks are required to pay more attention to the issue of financing small and medium-sized enterprises due to the sensitivity of economic conditions, more than before and with a greater sense of responsibility, and despite limited resources and existing credit problems prioritize the facilities in such a way that it is possible to achieve the goals of "surge in production".

As reported, some 37,462 SMEs were provided with 544.703 trillion rials (about \$13.2 billion) of facilities by the banking system in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

In early May 2019, the CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati outlined the bank's plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

CBI's plans take two major approaches, one of which is to secure finance for production activities and also to provide the working capital needed for such activities.

Iran's exhibition events down 40% due to Covid-19 outbreak

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company (IIEC) said on Saturday that the number of exhibitions in the current Iranian calendar year has declined by 40 percent due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.



"Currently, despite the observance of all health guidelines and the issuance of necessary approvals by the Health Ministry and the Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters, the number of exhibitions has dropped by up to 40 percent," Bahman Hosseinzadeh told IRNA.

Referring to the cancellation of all exhibitions in the first quarter of this year (March 20-June 20) due to the outbreak of coronavirus in the country, Hosseinzadeh said: "The first event this year was the exhibition of medical and healthcare achievements in the battle against the coronavirus which was in Khordad [third Iranian calendar month (May 21-June 20)]."

"160 knowledge-based companies participated in this event and some good contracts were signed," Hosseinzadeh added.

According to the official, all necessary measures were taken during the previous exhibitions to assure the safety and health of both visitors and exhibitors during the event.

"To maintain the social distance, the pavilions were spacious and the exhibitors used masks, while sufficient amounts of disinfectant were also distributed," he said.

"We cannot stop the economic activities because the end of the Coronavirus pandemic is not certain," he noted.

Health professionals suggest industrial sectors to continue their economic activities under specific conditions and in accordance with health and safety protocols, the official added.

"The exhibitions company also does its best to protect the health and lives of people," Hosseinzadeh stressed.

Domestic company awarded project to develop Yaran oilfield

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Persia Oil and Gas Industry Development Company signed a contract with National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) on Saturday for carrying out the development project of Yaran Oil Field, Shana reported.

The deal was signed by Reza Dehqan, the NIOC deputy director for development and engineering affairs, and Seyed Jafar Hejazi, the managing director of Persia Oil and Gas Industry Development Company, at the presence of Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh.

As reported, the contract targets additional cumulative production of about 39.5 million barrels over 10 years.

The direct investment in the projects is estimated at \$227 million while operating costs during the contract period are estimated to amount to \$236 million; the contractor is obliged to provide all the necessary financial resources for the implementation of the project.

Based on the deal, the contractor is going to drill six new wells (three in North Yaran and three in South Yaran), as well as a descriptive well, a water injection well, while repairing five existing wells, equipping 27 wells with electrical submersible pumps



Managing Director of Persia Oil and Gas Industry Development Company Seyed Jafar Hejazi (L) and NIOC Deputy Director for Development and Engineering Affairs Reza Dehqan sign a deal for developing Yaran Oil Field in Tehran on Saturday.

(ESP), construction and upgrading of surface facilities, conducting research studies and designing new methods for Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR).

Yaran is one of the five oilfields known as West Karoun oilfields which Iran shares with Iraq at the western part of Iran's southwestern region of Karoun.

The field, which is divided into two parts namely North Yaran and South Yaran, lies 120 kilometers west of Ahwaz, the capital city of the southwestern province of Khuzestan, on the borderline with Iraq.

It is adjacent to Azadegan Field in the east and Iraq's Majnoon Field in the west.

West Karoun region which includes five major fields namely North Azadegan, South Azadegan, North Yaran, South Yaran, and Yadavaran prioritized among the country's top development projects.

Providing the condition for the presence of the private sector in development projects is now an agenda for the NIOC.

In the development sector, many exploration blocks are waiting for the implementation of projects, NIOC is seriously following up the plans to lay the ground for the private sector's contribution.

Monthly tax income stands at over \$2.8b



Omid-Ali Parsa, the head of Iran's National Tax Administration

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Omid-Ali Parsa, the head of Iran's National Tax Administration (INTA), announced that the country's monthly tax income has reached over 120 trillion rials (about \$2.857 billion).

The official said that the mentioned amount includes both direct and indirect taxes, IRNA reported.

Parsa reiterated that all governmental bodies should cooperate in achieving the targeted tax revenues.

Saying that the Iranian government collects eight percent of the people's income for the public expenditures, while the figure is 30 percent in the world, the official stressed, "Now that the oil revenue is reduced, the government has no income rather than collected taxes; so the people should cooperate in this due."

Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejjasand said on Tuesday that the government considers tax as the main source of income for managing the country's economy in the absence of oil revenues, the ministry's news portal Shada reported.

"Currently, the most important method of financing for the country's economic management is taxing, and this has placed a huge burden on the tax administration," Dejjasand said in a statement on the occasion of national tax day.

Taxes are the safest, healthiest, and most sustainable source of income for the government, and with proper planning, these revenues can have a positive impact on the country's sustainable development, the official said.

Strengthening the economy against external shocks and threats, eliminating social inequalities, equitable distribution of wealth in society, and increasing welfare, prosperity, and security were also mentioned by Dejjasand as the benefits of tax incomes.

Iran's tax revenue has increased 31 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the head of National Tax Administration has announced.

Putting the country's tax income at 1.43 quadrillion rials (about \$34.04 billion) in the previous year, the official said, "We could collect 250 trillion rials (about \$5.9 billion) as value-added tax (VAT)", IRIB reported.

Parsa also said that the country has gained projected tax income by 102 percent in the past year, and put the average tax income growth at 21 percent during the previous five years.

The head of the National Tax Administration further mentioned preventing tax evasion as one of the prioritized programs of INTA.

As the oil sale accounts for just seven percent of the country's income in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20), the revenues gained from elimination of hidden energy subsidies as well as increased tax incomes will replace oil revenues, according to Head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Mohammad Bagher Nobakht.

"This does not mean a rise in tax income; but by setting new tax bases and eliminating unnecessary exemptions at a time of economic warfare, more tax revenues will be provided," the official had said in late November 2019.

Quarterly aluminum ingot output up 63% yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of aluminum ingot in Iran rose 63 percent during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20) compared to the same period of time in the past year.

As reported by IRNA, Iran produced 101,195 tons of aluminum ingot in the three-month period of this year.

The country's aluminum ingot output stood at 36,025 tons in the third Iranian month Khordad (May 20-June 20), showing 73 percent rise compared to the same month of the previous year.

Production of the aluminum ingot in the country is planned to increase 63 percent by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021).

Iran's major aluminum producers produced 275,716 tons of aluminum ingots in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), according to the data released by the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

The country's aluminum ingot production in the past year fell eight percent in

comparison to the figure for its preceding year.

The data show that among the country's top producers, Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) had the best performance registering a four-percent rise during the mentioned period.

On April 23, during the inauguration ceremony of Iran's biggest aluminum production complex (in the central Fars province), the former industry minister said the country's aluminum production is expected to be doubled with that unit going operational.

The minister put the value of the Iranian mining industry's production at about \$22 billion, saying that the country is relatively self-sufficient in minerals and a great deal is also exported every year.

He went on underlying, "The country's capacities in the sector, saying that Iran is ranked 18th among the world's top aluminum producers, and with this new plant going operational the country will climb four places to stand at 14th place."

Chabahar to become Iran's 3rd trade hub soon



Iranian Acting Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Hossein Modares Khiabani

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Given its strategic location as well as infrastructure and capacities, Chabahar Port (in Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province) will become the country's third trade hub soon, the acting minister of industry, mining, and trade stated.

Making the remarks in a meeting of Sistan-Baluchestan Province's Economic Taskforce on Friday, Hossein Modares Khiabani said that Chabahar enjoys high potential for the exports and transit of commodities, which can make it Iran's third trade hub after Bandar-Abbas Port (in southern Hormozgan Province) and Imam Khomeini Port (in southwestern Bushehr Province), IRNA reported.

The official further put emphasis on the necessity of facilitating all trade processes in Chabahar to expedite its development.

Lying on the coast of the Gulf of Oman in Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Chabahar is the country's only oceanic port and given its strategic location in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) development of the port is of high significance for Iran.

During a ceremony on starting the track-laying operations of Chabahar-Zahedan railroad on July 7, Deputy Transport Minister Kheirollah Khademi underlined the significance of the railroad and noted that due to its strategic position, Chabahar port is going to be a gateway for the country's trade.

The project which is aimed to connect Chabahar to Zahedan (the capital city of Sistan-Baluchestan Province) is planned

to be completed by the end of the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (March 2022).

The total length of this railroad is 628 kilometers (km), 150 km of which will be laid by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2021), Khademi announced.

Establishing an all-rail corridor in the east of the country, connecting Chabahar as the country's only oceanic port to the national railway network, developing Makran coasts through rail transportation, connecting Central Asia and Afghanistan to open ocean waters, and establishing permanent cooperation with countries in the region and other countries with trade and transit exchanges are reported to be some of the goals of Chabahar-Zahedan railway project.

Also as mentioned by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI), Iran can use its eastern railway corridor for transiting commodities between Russia and India and also among CIS countries.

Mentioning the beginning of the track-laying operations for Chabahar-Zahedan railway, Saeed Rasouli told IRNA on Friday: "So far we haven't been able to use the full capacities of Chabahar port since it wasn't connected to the railway network, but with the completion of this line the port can become a transit hub in the region."

"This route is one of the important parts of the country's railway network, which in addition to its regional and national role, is very important as a part of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) leading to Chabahar port," Rasouli said.

Iran Venezuela Bi-National Bank to be listed on stock exchange

ECONOMY **TERHAN** — Managing Director of Export Development Bank of Iran has said that an Iran-Venezuela joint bank is going to be listed on Iran's stock market, IRNA reported.

According to the official, Iran Venezuela Bi-National Bank, which is a subsidiary of the Export Development Bank, is going through the necessary processes for entering the stock market, Ali Saleh-Abadi said in a press conference on Saturday.

Tamadon Investment Bank, another subsidiary of the mentioned bank, is also going to join the capital market along with the Iran-Venezuela bank.

Saleh-Abadi noted that 17 percent of the shares of Iran Venezuela Bi-National Bank are going to be offered at Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2021), while 25 percent of the shares of Tamadon Investment Bank will be offered at TSE by the end of the Q2 of the current Iranian calendar year (ends on September 21).

Mentioning the significant role of the Export Development Bank in the country's foreign trade, the official noted that in the face of the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak, the bank has increased the decision-making powers of 38 bank branches to support exporters who have suffered from these conditions, and has also set the average interest rate of the bank's facilities in the range of 14 to 14.5 percent.

He put the country's non-oil revenues in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) at \$40 billion, saying that the bank had a significant role in realizing this achievement.

Saleh-Abadi further referred to the bank's plans for supporting knowledge-based companies and added: for those knowledge-based companies that are introduced to the bank by the Vice President for Science and Technology, a total of 4 trillion rials (about \$95.23 million) will be offered in the form of facilities with 12 percent interest rate.

Petchem sector accounts for 40% of revenues injected to NIMA

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — The secretary of Iran's Association of Petrochemical Industry Corporations (APIC) announced that petrochemical companies account for 40 percent of the total export revenues injected to the country's Forex Management Integrated System, locally known as NIMA.

As Mohammad Abhari told IRNA on Saturday, 90 percent of the country's petrochemical complexes have exceeded their commitment to supply their export revenues into the NIMA system.

"For example, in cases that the commitment was to supply 70 percent of export revenues, some companies injected 90 percent or even 100 percent of their revenues," Abhari said.

Earlier, the head of National Petrochemical Company (NPC) had said that 85 percent of the petrochemical companies' export revenues were injected into the NIMA system in the previous Iranian calendar year 1398 (ended on March 19).

Behzad Mohammadi said that the



petrochemical sector earned Iran \$14.5 billion in revenue last calendar year to

March 2020.

The official noted that last calendar year

was marked with success for petrochemical sector as production forecasts came true.

He said the petrochemical output reached 31 million tons last calendar year, 23 million tons of which was exported and the rest was supplied on domestic markets.

The official mentioned that petrochemical prices dropped 30 percent on average last calendar year, year-on-year, adding that petrochemicals exports earned Iran \$9.5 billion while domestic market purchased \$5 billion of petrochemicals.

NIMA, which seeks to boost transparency, create competitiveness among exchange shops and a secure environment for traders, is a new chance for importers to supply their required foreign currency without specific problems and for exporters to re-inject their earned foreign currency to domestic forex market.

Secondary foreign exchange market was inaugurated in early July 2018 to allow exporters of non-oil commodities to sell their foreign currency earnings to importers of consumer products.

Turkmenistan failed to fulfill its gas deal commitments: Zanganeh

TEHRAN (Shana) — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said Turkmenistan has failed to fulfill its commitments regarding the quality and quantity of the gas that was meant to be delivered to Iran based on a deal between the two sides, Shana reported.

Speaking on the sidelines of a signing ceremony for an oil project on Saturday, Zanganeh said according to the ruling of the international arbitration, the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) was not subject to payment of any damages to the Turkmen side.

Elaborating on the gas dispute between National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) and Turkmen Gaz, the minister said: "The case concerned a trade contract between the two companies in which a dispute was created as the Turkmen side had failed to fulfill its commitments claiming that NIGC was in arrears with payment for the gas."

Zanganeh said: "We were unable to transfer the money due to the sanctions; Even the National Iranian Gas Company accepted had agreed to pay the interests on the basis of the contract due to non-payment of debt, and even part of this debt was paid in the form of goods and services, but Turkmen Gaz insisted on receiving the money in full. And in this regard, they did not show flexibility to negotiate. The National Iranian Gas Company raise the issue of arbitration and announced that if the case went to arbitration, the price of Turkmen gas should also be considered in the arbitration, because according to the National Iranian Gas Company, the price of Turkmenistan due to the additions to the previous contract, was high



and unfair. On the other hand, NIGC had agreed that Turkmen Gaz failures to fulfill its commitments in terms of quality and quantity of the gas needed to be considered as well. In the end, they did not accept the proposal to raise the issue in arbitration, but sometime later, they took the case to arbitration."

■ **Turkmen Gaz fine will be deducted from NIGC debt**

The official stated that what was decided in the arbitration was not a far-fetched result: "The arbitration decided that the National Iranian Gas Company should pay its debt to Turkmen Gaz, but the arbitration order did not impose any fines or damages on NIGC. On the other hand, the arbitrator agreed with a significant part of the claim of the National Iranian Gas Company regarding the fine related to the quantity

and quality of Turkmen gas, so that this amount of the fine is deducted from the debt of the National Iranian Gas Company."

Reminding that Iran has not been able to transfer money due to the sanctions, Zanganeh added: "Again, there must be a discussion and a solution on how to pay Iran's debt. The government and people of Turkmenistan are friends and we want to work with this neighboring country in the long run. Trade disputes are raised and resolved internationally, and it is not a matter of saying who won, who lost, or who was frustrated. As the National Iranian Gas Company and Turkey's Butas Company went to arbitration and at the same time continued their friendly relations."

He said: "Also, based on the arbitration ruling, the two existing contracts between the two companies, part of which was not in Iran's favor and were imposed on us by Turkmenistan due to a gas shortage, were considered terminated."

In response to a question about the possibility of signing a new contract between the two companies, Zanganeh said: "This issue is considered in the context of long-term relations between the two countries."

The Oil Minister added: "Capacity building for the oil industry is a strategic matter. We have seen such problems before and God willing, we will overcome them and we need to build enough capacity for the day when we re-enter the market. As after the previous embargo, the world was surprised that Iran's oil industry returned to its maximum production capacity in less than four months."

IEA raises 2020 oil demand estimate but warns over threat to strong rebound

The global economy bounced back from the worst of pandemic lockdowns faster than expected in the second quarter but a second wave of COVID-19 infections could still derail the strong recovery so far, Platts reported, citing the International Energy Agency.

In its latest monthly oil market report, the Paris-based agency raised its estimate for global oil demand by 400,000 bpd this year, estimating the demand collapse during the peak of lockdowns in Q2 was less severe than expected at 16.4 million bpd. Last month, the IEA had estimated a Q2 demand hit of almost 18 million bpd.

Global oil demand in 2020 is now forecast to average 92.1 million bpd, down 7.9 million bpd over 2019, the IEA said.

With lockdowns lifting, demand rebounded strongly in China and India in May, increasing by 700,000 bpd and 1.1 million bpd on the month, respectively, the IEA said. Indian oil deliveries also surprised to the upside in June, the IEA said citing provisional data. Next year, demand is now forecast to grow by 5.3 million bpd to 97.4 million bpd, unchanged from the IEA's previous report.

But the energy market watchdog cautioned that the outlook is overshadowed by the potential for a return to lockdowns due to second-wave COVID-19 infections globally.

"While the oil market has undoubtedly made progress since 'Black April,' the large, and in some countries, accelerating number of COVID-19 cases is a disturbing reminder that the pandemic is not under control and the risk to our market outlook is almost certainly to the downside," the IEA said.

In the U.S., the IEA noted that -- after



plateauing around 20,000 in the first half of June -- the number of new COVID-19 cases accelerated "spectacularly" to more than 50,000 in early July. As a result, the data is showing mobility and gasoline demand is slipping back in the worst-hit states of Texas, Arizona, California, and Florida.

Largely reflecting the threat to U.S. demand, the IEA lowered its third-quarter demand forecast by 630,000 bpd to 94.3 million bpd, which is 6.5 million bpd below the year-ago levels. IEA also revised down the Q3 demand forecasts for Brazil, Russia and Saudi Arabia, among other countries.

S&P Global Platts Analytics currently estimates that global oil demand will shrink by 8.3 million bpd this year to average 94.2 million bpd before recovering to 101.2 million bpd in 2021.

■ **Oil supply slump**

On supply, the IEA said global oil output

tumbled to a nine-year low in June after Saudi Arabia cut an extra 1 million bpd over its OPEC+ target and output in both Iraq and the U.S. fell by around 500,000 bpd.

With OPEC+ cutting crude output by nearly 2 million bpd from May, the producer group's overall cuts rose above 10 million bpd, boosting its compliance to 108% from 88% a month earlier, the IEA estimates.

As a result, global supplies averaged 86.9 million bpd in June, down 2.4 million bpd month on month and by 13.4 million bpd year on year.

In July, the IEA expects to see higher production as Saudi Arabia halts its additional voluntary cut and the U.S. and Canada start to recover.

The IEA said it also sees U.S. production falls bottoming out in the second half before recovering slowly while OPEC+ countries are set to ease their existing cut by around

2 million bpd from August.

Given the revision to its demand and supply outlook, the IEA revised upward its estimates for the call on OPEC's crude this year by 200,000 bpd to 24.2 million bpd.

■ **World oil demand/supply outlook**

In 2021, the IEA estimates demand for OPEC's crude will average 28.7 million bpd, 200,000 bpd higher than its previous forecast. The OPEC call for 2021, however, is well above the cartel's current 2021 output target of 23.03 million bpd, a level which would only rise to 25.6 million bpd after including the current output levels from members Iran, Venezuela and Libya, which are not covered by the quotas.

The global oil stocks picture was mixed in June after hitting highs in May as a tightening crude market balance and a flatter forward price curve reduced the incentive to store oil, the IEA said.

In the U.S., preliminary data for June showed that commercial stocks built by 24.7 million barrels (800,000 bpd), led by oil products. U.S. crude stocks rose by 2.8 million barrels month on month, when they typically fall 13.4 million barrels.

Global floating storage of crude, however, fell by 34.9 million barrels from a record high in May to 176.4 million barrels, the IEA said.

For May, the IEA said OECD industry stocks rose by 81.7 million barrels on the month, or 2.64 million bpd to 3.22 billion barrels, rising by 2 million bpd since the end of 2019. At the end of May, OECD stocks stood more than 300 million barrels above their end-2019 levels.

fuels consumption will drop to 92.9 million bpd in 2020 from a record 101.0 million bpd in 2019.

Even though U.S. oil prices are still down about 34 percent since the start of the year due to coronavirus demand destruction, U.S. crude futures have jumped 113 percent over the past three months to around \$40 a barrel on Friday on hopes global economies will snap back as governments lift lockdowns.

Analysts said higher oil prices will encourage energy firms to slow rig count reductions and possibly start adding some units later this year.

NISOC ready to boost synthetic oil supply to refineries

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN (Shana)** — The Managing Director of the National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) announced the company's readiness to enhance its synthetic oil supply to Iranian refineries.

It is possible to increase the NISOC capacity to send synthetic oil to refineries, Ahmad Mohammadi said.



During a visit of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) deputy director of production, Mohammadi said, "Due to the existence of infrastructure and extensive network of pipelines to the refineries in the oil-rich areas of south and with the knowledge and round-the-clock efforts of NISOC colleagues, this important project was finalized in a relatively short period of time."

Receiving gas condensate from South Pars gas field through Behrgan operational district which is operated by ??the Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), sending it to Maroon 2 exploitation unit and then transferring it to the northern refineries, have taken place for the first time with the aim of optimizing gas condensate consumption in the country's oil industry.

Earlier NISOC's deputy director of production had said that plans were under way to send synthetic oil to Abadan refinery besides the facilities operating in Northern provinces.

Farrokh Alikhani told Shana that sending synthetic oil of South Pars to refineries was an initiative developed with the aim of making optimal use of excess gas condensate and has reached fruition with constructive cooperation between the Deputy of Production of National Iranian Oil Company and the affiliate companies of the National Iranian South Oil Company.

BP's former CFO sees oil price in \$45-55/b range during 2021

Global oil prices will likely strengthen over the coming 18 months to hover around \$45-55/b if economies continue to reopen and OPEC+ follows through on efforts to drain oil stocks which surged during the peak of pandemic lockdowns, BP's former chief financial officer Brian Gilvary said.



Speaking a week after retiring from a 34-year career at the oil major, Gilvary said oil prices could spike higher, however, if oil demand continues to bounce back from crushing lows in April.

Despite fears of a snapback to lockdowns due to second-wave infections, implied driving activity -- a proxy for gasoline and diesel demand -- has now recovered to well above pre-crisis levels in a number of key markets such as the U.S. and Europe.

"I don't see a massive upside case for prices but you might get short-term spikes," Gilvary told S&P Global Platts in an interview July 9.

"I think we have to see the big overhang in stocks clear out now before we get back to numbers up around \$45 - 55/b which I think depends on what the next wave of COVID looks like," he said.

Global oil inventories have swollen by more than 1 billion barrels since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a level that is expected to drag on the oil price recovery.

Brent crude has remained mostly rangebound around \$40/b since early June after rebounding from near two-decade lows of under \$16/b on April 22. As stay-at-home orders continue to ease, OPEC and its key allies also appear to be sticking to a landmark deal of slashing almost 10 million bpd in supply from the oil market.

■ **New normal**

In addition to record global oil stock levels, Gilvary noted that the world can also count on a bigger supply buffer from OPEC, which -- even before the current output cuts -- was sitting on spare capacity of over 3 million bpd.

"All roads lead back to OPEC as a clearing system if they wish to clear the price at a certain level," he said.

"As things get back to a new normality, I think there'll be a bit of a juxtaposition perhaps between the OPEC states that want the price slightly higher in terms of balancing their balance sheets and the other members of OPEC+ not wanting to see U.S. onshore oil production grow back up to 13 million bpd."

A number of oil market watchers have raised their near-term oil price forecasts in recent weeks to reflect a more supportive oil market outlook. At the end of June, Citigroup said it sees Brent recovering over the coming year to top \$60/b, driven by OPEC+ discipline on output cuts and the near-term loss of U.S. shale oil.

BoFA Securities also raised its oil price forecast for the next two years to \$50 and \$55/b respectively on signs of faster-than-expected global oil demand recovery, massive industry spending cuts and strong OPEC+ adherence to curbing crude supplies.

S&P Global Platts Analytics on June 28 predicted that Dated Brent would rise gradually to \$50/b by the end-2021 as OPEC+ brings on enough supply to manage prices while not over-stimulating non-OPEC supply.

U.S. oil & gas rig count falls to record low for 10th week

U.S. energy firms cut the number of oil and natural gas rigs operating to a record low for a 10th week in a row but the rate of decline has slowed as higher oil prices prompt some producers to start drilling again.

The U.S. oil and gas rig count, an early indicator of future output, fell by five to an all-time low of 258 in the week to July 10. Reuters reported citing data from energy services firm Baker Hughes Co going back to 1940.

That was 700 rigs, or 73 percent, below this time last year.

U.S. oil rigs fell by four to 181 this week, their lowest

since June 2009, while gas rigs dropped by one to 75, matching its record low hit a couple of weeks ago, according to data going back to 1987.

More than half of the total U.S. oil rigs are in the Permian basin in West Texas and eastern New Mexico, where active units dropped by one this week to a fresh record low of 125, according to data going back to 2011.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) projected a fall in domestic crude output to 11.6 million barrels per day (bpd) this year from a record 12.2 million bpd in 2019, while global petroleum and other liquid

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PIC-COLLAGE

Second Announcement



IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 99/103-24/03

Tender Holder:

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender :

Broadcasting the TV networks of English iFilm , Press TV and IRIB World Service Radio 6 on Intelsat 20 for three years in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:

From Saturday 11 July 2020 (1399/04/21) until Tuesday 14 July 2020 (1399/04/24) by 04:00 p.m with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of receiving the tender document:

Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept. ,4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex ,Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali –Assr Ave,Tehran, Iran

The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:

Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No.IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:

The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 53000 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 10600000000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:

The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation packages/envelopes separately packed , should be submitted no later than 09:00 a.m. on Saturday 15 of Aug 2020 (1399/05/25) and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening Qualification Evaluation envelopes:

The date of opening the Qualification Evaluation envelopes on Saturday 15 of Aug 2020 (1399/05/25) at 10:00 a.m in the office of International Purchasing Dept.

Time and place of opening Envelopes:

The envelopes A of those eligible participants who meet the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee will be opened on Sunday 16 Aug 2020 at 03:00 p.m (1399/05/26) in the office of Financial Vice President .In case of complete content in the envelopes A the envelopes of B and C of eligible participants will be opened at the same time and place.

The participant must be qualified by the competent authorities.

Fore more information please see :

www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and http://iets.mporg.ir/ Tel: 00982122167053

Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

Second Announcement



IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 99/103-25/03

Tender Holder:

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender :

Broadcasting the TV network of Hispan TV on Intelsat 21 (Latin America) for three years in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:

From Saturday 11 July 2020 (1399/04/21) until Tuesday 14 July 2020 (1399/04/24) by 04:00 p.m with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

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The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:

Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No.IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:

The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 31070 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 6214000000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:

The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation packages/envelopes separately packed , should be submitted no later than 09:00 a.m. on Saturday 15 of Aug 2020 (1399/05/25) and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

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Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

Countless Bosnians lost lives as Western powers failed to act fast: Sarajevo University professor

“It seems that both the UK and US were aware of what was going to happen in Srebrenica at least 6 weeks in advance”

1 → A: There is no denying that Western forces waited far too long to intervene in Bosnia. They did not properly understand—or perhaps want to understand—the fanatical Serb nationalist mindset. The United States did not decide to forcefully intervene in Bosnia until August 1995, and as you note, it seems that both the UK and US were aware of what was going to happen in Srebrenica at least 6 weeks in advance. Even prior to the Srebrenica genocide, many Western officials were willing to accept certain territory swaps to appease Serb forces even if it meant displacing the Bosnian Muslims who were already living there.

In 2019, the British National Archives released some shocking documents dating back to July 1995 that showed internal British military assessments actually blaming the Bosnian Muslim forces for provoking the Srebrenica attack. The Western powers were unable to forge a coherent strategy until after atrocities and genocide had already been committed. U.S. President Bill Clinton actually did want to get more directly involved in Bosnia as early as 1993, but ran into his own domestic troubles and faced too much opposition from the EU and eventually backed down.

A couple years already into the war, Washington was finally interested in using NATO forces to bomb Serb military targets, but the other European countries involved in the larger mission still sought to keep it limited in scope to humanitarian purposes. This disagreement over tactics wasted valuable time and countless lives were lost as a result. On the other hand, one must remember, it was the Europeans who mostly had their own forces in the region and it was their soldiers who would be targeted if clashes with Serb troops broke out; the U.S. was in a much better position to advocate for a more forceful NATO military response without having to potentially put their own assets at risk.

■ Experts argue that one of the biggest failures of the UN has been the Srebrenica massacre in 1995. Many of the Muslim victims had fled to the UN-declared safe zone in Srebrenica but they found out that the lightly armed Dutch troops were unable to defend them. What do you think?

A: Yes, Srebrenica was most certainly the largest scale and most well-known genocide during the war in Bosnia. From what I have gathered in my own visits to the Srebrenica Memorial and through my interactions with local Bosnians who lived during the war, the general consensus seems to be that Dutch troops were more interested in their own safety rather than the safety of the local Bosnians who were being targeted. It wasn't that the Dutch troops were incompetent fighters; rather it was that they were unwilling. There was also evidence of Islamophobia and other ills commonly found in Europe these days against non-Christian populations that played a role in limiting the willingness of the Dutch soldiers to take a more active role. In the end, many different

“Many have argued that if it was not for Iran’s assistance in providing necessary equipment and training to local Bosnian units at the beginning of the war, the end result may have been different.”



What should be learned from Srebrenica is that even in Europe the worst forms of barbarism and killing are always possible.

things could have been done to limit the terror that would eventually transpire, but nobody took the initiative to do so until it was too late.

■ What was Iran's role in saving Bosnians' lives from the massacre?

A: Iran's role in the Bosnian liberation struggle has been largely ignored by Western media, but any Bosnian you speak with who lived during that time is fully aware of the help Iran provided during the war. Iran was one of the very first countries to offer direct meaningful assistance to the Bosnian Muslim cause. Many have argued that if it was not for Iran's assistance in providing necessary equipment and training to local Bosnian units at the beginning of the war, the end result may have been different. The UN weapons embargo (UNSC Resolution 713) passed on September 25, 1991 was perhaps the biggest mistake of the entire conflict. This resolution imposed an international arms embargo on all Yugoslav territories which actually worked to the Serbs benefit since they already were in possession of most of the former Yugoslavia's heavy military equipment.

As a result, Serb forces had a major advantage on the battlefield. The Bosnian Muslim resistance fighters possessed almost nothing beyond a limited amount simple assault rifles and small arms when the war first broke out. Near the city of Kakanj, about an hour and a half outside Sarajevo, there is a well-known memorial for an Iranian shahid who was martyred by Croatian forces. This particular shahid was known for demonstrating incredible bravery by helping provide critical tactical training and support for the heavily outmatched Bosnian resistance fighters. It is also known that during the war, the Iranian people back home sold their gold and other valuable possessions in order to help provide necessary

financial assistance to the Bosnian people.

■ Western media try to show a sectarian face of Iran, but the Bosnia is where Iran - a predominantly Shia country - was one of the first Muslim countries to provide support for the Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks, who are mainly Sunni Muslim). What is your take on it?

A: I think the situation in Bosnia goes far beyond sectarianism of any form; any civilized nation should have felt a sense of moral obligation to help the oppressed Bosnian Muslim side. While other countries were busy making sure that other powerful Western actors and the UN approved their efforts, Iran did not bother to waste their time with such delays. As soon as the atrocities became apparent, Iran acted decisively and provided the best help they could under the difficult circumstances they also faced, recently coming out of their own 8-year war in which an aggressive foreign power sought to undermine their sovereignty. Bosnia and Iran enjoy cordial relations today.

■ There have been some hesitations on the real number of victims. Although the announced number is 8,000, the documents show up to 20,000. Why is there such a difference? And what is the real number?

A: There are a few explanations for this. First, many bodies still have yet to even be found, and as time goes on inevitably more remains will be uncovered. So, it is likely that the numbers of victims, not only in Srebrenica but in Bosnia more generally, will be much higher than the current official numbers. Second, there have been scientific advances in forensics and DNA testing over the years which has helped up the process of identifying the remains of the deceased, this also is a reason why numbers will probably go higher. Third, Serb authorities have made great efforts to hide the extent of the killings. Srebrenica genocide denial to varying degrees is real even though it is completely obvious what happened there. Certain well-known individuals such as the recent Nobel Prize winning author Peter Handke and even Noam Chomsky have made efforts to downplay what happened in Srebrenica. Sadly, in the end, I do not think anyone will ever know the actual number of people killed during the Bosnian war.

■ What should be learned from the Srebrenica massacre?

A: What should be learned from Srebrenica is that even in Europe the worst forms of barbarism and killing are always possible. Muslims living in the West must be aware that they are seen as the enemy by many people living right next door to them. It is hard to deny that if the Bosnian Muslims were not Muslim, the global response would have been significantly different. It is important for Muslims—Sunni and Shi'a—to foster good relations and look out for each other. We have enough enemies as it is; we do not need to create enemies among ourselves.

“Iran’s role in the Bosnian liberation struggle has been largely ignored by Western media, but any Bosnian you speak with who lived during that time is fully aware of the help Iran provided during the war.”

UN arms embargo: Last chance for E3 to save Iran nuclear deal

Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei has warned France, Germany, and the UK against extending the UN arms embargo on Iran, signaling that doing so could spell the end of the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“According to UN Security Council Resolution 2231, the import or export of weapons to the Islamic Republic is subject to obtaining prior permission for a period of 5 years. This restriction should automatically end in October,” Rabiei told a news conference on Tuesday.

He called on the E3 to stop the policy of appeasing the U.S., which put the JCPOA and international peace “in danger.”

Under the JCPOA, the UN must lift its arms embargo on Iran five years after the implementation of the nuclear deal. Despite its withdrawal from the JCPOA, the U.S. is pushing for the extension of the arms embargo on Iran, which is scheduled to expire on October 18.

The U.S. has also drafted a resolution calling for the extension of the arms embargo and has circulated it in the UNSC even as

some permanent members of the council with veto power, like Russia and China, have strongly opposed extending the arms embargo. The council has yet to vote on the U.S. resolution.

The U.S. officials have said that they would resort to the highly controversial option of triggering UN sanctions snapback if their resolution is vetoed in the Security Council.

On the other hand, Iran has made it clear that the extension of the UN arms embargo would lead to the death of the JCPOA.

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 unilateralism or Accept humiliation & help unilateralism?”

The European signatories to the Iran nuclear deal have been caught in the middle on the UN arms embargo issue between Iran and the U.S. At the official level, the Europeans say they want to preserve the JCPOA, but at the same time, they voice concerns over

what they call “major implications” of the planned lifting of the arms embargo on Iran.

“The E3 remains committed to fully implementing Resolution 2231 by which the JCPOA was endorsed in 2015. However, we believe that the planned lifting of the UN conventional arms embargo established by resolution 2231 next October would have major implications for regional security and stability,” the foreign ministers of France, Germany, and the UK said in a joint statement on June 19, shortly after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors adopted an anti-Iran resolution on the same day.

The resolution, submitted by France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, was adopted by a vote of 25 to 2 with seven abstentions and was dismissed by Iran as “irresponsible and illegal.”

UK Chargé d'Affaires to the UN Jonathan Allen echoed the same concern at the UN Security Council meeting on non-proliferation on June 30, saying the planned lifting of the arms embargo on Iran would have implications for the region.

Delivering a speech at the Security Council

meeting, Allen claimed, “We believe that the planned lifting of arms restrictions on Iran in October would have major implications for regional security and stability.”

The European parties to the Iran nuclear deal want to preserve the JCPOA. They also want to go along with the U.S. plan to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran in October. But Iran has made it crystal clear that the Europeans can't have their cake and eat it too.

As Rabiei said, there is no middle ground between adhering to the Security Council Resolution 2231 and not adhering to it. It's an either-or situation; you're either committed to it or not.

Therefore, now it's up to the Europeans to decide whether they want to save the Iran nuclear deal, which has been on life support since U.S. President Donald Trump walked out of it, or to join the U.S. in its efforts to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran. In light of Iran's clear warnings about the implications of the extension of the UN arms embargo, it seems that October will be the last chance for the E3 to save the JCPOA by fully implementing the UNSC resolution 2231.

Arrears from crude export blocked in S. Korean banks

Iran mulls lawsuits and legal actions to unblock funds

1 → ■ CBI

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has filed lawsuits in Europe against financial companies that have withheld its money on the basis of court orders issued in the U.S.

Abdolnaser Hemmati, the head of the Central Bank of Iran, said on May 27th the actions of banks in South Korea are preventing Iran from using the money to buy foods and medicines, trade that is exempt from U.S. sanctions.

Hemmati said Iran could launch legal action to gain access to the funds without naming any specific bank. “It is appalling to see the Korean banks have conveniently neglected their obligations, common international financial agreements, and decided to play politics and follow illegal and unilateral U.S. sanctions,” he said.



■ Chamber of commerce

Hossein Tanhaee, chairman of the Iran-South Korea Joint Chamber of Commerce, was quoted by ILNA on Wednesday that an agreement between the two countries will allow South Korea to unblock part of Iran's frozen money, pointing out that “the Korean side is not going to return in cash but in form of medical and pharmaceutical items.”

South Korea's success in dealing with the early stages of Covid-19 pandemic has been exemplary. Early speedy testing pads, respirators, advisers, should be some of the items that can be purchased from the Iranian frozen block of money. Medical equipment, medicine, ICU beds, hospital worker suits, etc. remain in dire supply in Iran.

Tanhaee did not mention the amount of this transaction but said “with the coordination of the Ministry of Health and the Central Bank we will be able to return a large portion of the money.”

On June 12, Tanhaee said that “the amount of Iran's blocked assets in South Korea is between “\$6.5 billion and \$9 billion, where South Korea was supposed to release \$50 million, but they didn't”.

Moreover, he added that “South Korea not only doesn't release Iranian currencies, but the Korean Woori Bank is demanding Iran to get paid for its maintenance, while Seoul is using and working with Iranian currencies”.

■ Foreign Ministry

Iran's Foreign Ministry says South Korea is about \$7 billion in arrears from oil export revenue from the period before the Trump administration re-imposed penalties on Iran's crude sales. Arguing that Seoul is bucking to pressure from its U.S ally and illegally withholding funds that Iran needs to counter West Asia's worst coronavirus outbreak.

In May, the Iranian Foreign Ministry had said that preliminary steps were taken to set up a channel to allow Iran to use its funds in South Korea to buy humanitarian goods. Weeks later South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Seoul was sending \$500,000 worth of medicine to Iran.

In a meeting with the South Korean Ambassador to Tehran, Yu Jang Hian last year before the pandemic, Hemmati complained about the obstacles created by the South Korean banks in the way of Tehran-Seoul trade relations, saying the source of Iranian assets is clear. He added that the Korean banks should stop taking advantage of its sources under the pretext of U.S. sanctions.

If South Korea continues to block the Iranian frozen funds then it is a clear indication that Seoul is continuing to put U.S. interests first, and with that South Korea is forfeiting its sovereignty and its relations with other nations.

By doing so South Korea will sacrifice Iranian nation's trust in that country's products and technology which was gained in recent decades and in the long run Seoul will sacrifice its interests in the Iranian market.

Srebrenica massacre: Failure of the UN and the world's most powerful states

By Marko Milanovic

What is certainly true is that the international community, including the UN and the world's most powerful states, failed the people of Bosnia and the inhabitants of Srebrenica specifically.

Much more could have been done to end the bloodshed of the Bosnian conflict. And even in July 1995, the UN and the Dutch peacekeeping battalion deployed in Srebrenica could have done

much more to protect the lives of the people in the Srebrenica enclave. These failings are well documented. The UN Secretary-General accepted the UN's failures. A Dutch government resigned due to the fallout of the Dutch battalion's passivity during the massacre. The legal responsibility of the Netherlands for the failures of the battalion was also (partly) established by the Dutch Supreme Court.

As for lessons to be learned from Srebrenica, they are the same as for every mass atrocity: that human beings are capable of doing terrible things to one another in the name of ideology, ethnicity, or religion, and that such atrocities happen if we do not have sufficient domestic and international systems of prevention in place. While the Srebrenica genocide was the single worst crime in Europe after World War II, many of its highest ranking perpetrators have thankfully been prosecuted and punished by the International Tribunal. But international justice remains imperfect, insufficiently resourced, and therefore necessarily selective.

Marko Milanovic is a Professor of Public International Law at the University of Nottingham School of Law



Bosnia marks 25 years of Srebrenica genocide amid virus pandemic

Bosnian Muslims were marking 25 years since the Srebrenica genocide, the worst atrocity on European soil since the end of the second world war, with the memorial ceremony sharply reduced due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The event marks July 11, 1995, the day when Bosnian Serb forces marched into Srebrenica, a Muslim enclave on Serb territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina that had been under the UN protection.

After capturing the ill-fated town, Serb forces killed more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in a few days. So far, the remains of nearly 6,900 victims have been found and identified from more than 80 mass graves.

Bosnia had been embroiled in an ethnic war pitting the Serbs against Muslim Bosniaks and Croats between 1992 and 1995 that killed some 100,000 people.

■ Pandemic impacts anniversary

Organizers on Saturday said the number of people at-

tending the anniversary - normally in the tens of thousands - was lower than usual because of lockdown measures aimed at stemming the spread of COVID-19.

A daylong commemoration is under way at Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia.

“Since this was a quarter-century anniversary, it was initially planned that this should be a big memorial service honoring the victims but everything had to be scaled down because of the pandemic,” said Al Jazeera's Tarik Durmisevic, reporting from the burial site in Srebrenica.

“The most important effect, however, is the number of victims who were supposed to be buried here. Some families couldn't be here as they don't live in Bosnia any more so they withdrew their consent for the burial. As a result, only nine victims of the genocide will find their eternal peace today.”

The Srebrenica massacre is the only episode of the Bosnian conflict to be described as genocide by the international

community.

The European Union leaders called the anniversary “a painful reminder” that Europe failed in its promise to avoid such tragedy on the continent.

“We must confront the past with honesty and look to the future with determination to support the next generations,” said a statement by the EU.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on Saturday said Srebrenica stood for the atrocities and crimes against humanity in the countries of the former Yugoslavia that were committed in the 1990s.

“The killings had taken place at the end of the 20th century in the middle of Europe, almost under the eyes of the global public,” Maas said. “We must oppose nationalist tendencies wherever we encounter them.”

‘All those images come back to me’: Srebrenica survivor's story (3:00)

(Source: al Jazeera)

Abandoned craft of Sofreh-bafi revived in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari

➔1 Sofreh (spread), which is made of wool, is used to store flour, bread, and similar materials by rural and nomadic people.

Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari has various unique traditions and rituals relative to the 'tribal' lifestyles. Special forms of music, dance, and clothing are noteworthy. It has considerable potential to become a vibrant tourist attraction because of its changing natural landscape.

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

Hormozgan museums extend closures due to COVID-19

TOURISM TEHRAN — Museums in southern Hormozgan province will remain closed for at least one more week due to the coronavirus outbreak, CHTN reported.

As the province is on the red risk zone based on the number of COVID-19 infections and fatalities, museums lockdown extended for at least one week, provincial tourism chief Reza Borumand said on Saturday.



He also noted that the hotels are allowed to resume their work following strict health protocols, however, reception halls are closed until further notice.

The country closed cultural heritage museums and historical sites across the country in a preventive measure amid fears of coronavirus outbreak back in February, but as the coronavirus lockdown was eased, they were reopened in early May.

Ancient relics of Iran: Statuettes of little dogs wearing a hatched collar

(Part: 2/2)

(Louvre museum) — The region of Bactria had a strong tradition of decoration using animal figures. Wild animals (birds of prey, monkeys, camels, and wild boars) and fantastic beasts (dragons) were represented on arms, tools, vases, and dress ornaments.

These two little dogs, barely four centimeters long, are pierced vertically. It is possible that a thread was passed through the hole to hang them on a necklace, for instance, or - more probably - these elements were attached to a metal stem and used as pinheads or the tops of decorative staffs. The motif selected is, however, exceptional for this kind of object.

These pieces may be compared to a similar animal figure made of copper and surmounted with a silver ring to be worn as a pendant, which was found along with other ornaments in a tomb at Tepe Hissar, a site southeast of the Caspian Sea. Like this piece, the dogs would therefore seem to be works produced in the Outer Iran region of influence.



■ A domestic animal

Dogs were domesticated very early and there are many ancient representations of them. Figures of wild dogs animate decorative friezes on vases from Susa dating from the 4th millennium BC. On this site, however, were also found two pendants - one in gold, the other in silver - dating from the late 4th millennium BC and shaped like two small dogs that are apparently domesticated. Indeed, around their neck they wear a hatched collar, just like the two Bactrian figures. Dogs as domestic animals also appear on Mesopotamian objects: for instance, on a terra-cotta plaque from the early 2nd millennium BC or in the form of statuettes. On the other hand, the trans-Elamite civilization - Bactria in particular - has left few representations of this canine companion, preferring the image of a more slender type of dog, either shown running in hunting scenes or watching a flock.

The two silver figurines depict in all likelihood another race of dog: smaller, squatter, with a flat, cylindrical muzzle, and plump hindquarters. They have long, rolled up tails, used bizarrely here as stands so that the hind feet do not rest on the ground. The tiny animal from Tepe Hissar most probably belongs to the same species.

Iran eyes to attract more travelers from Turkey

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iranian travel agencies plan to offer stimulus packages and hold familiarization tours for Turkish agencies, tour operators, journalists, and influencers in a bid to attract more travelers from the neighboring country.

"Iran will be organizing familiarization tours for about 100 Turkish tourism agencies after the [complete] reopening of joint borders and resuming [mutual] tourist relations," ISNA quoted Mehdi Rezaei, the secretary of the Turkey consortium at the Association of Iranian Travel Agents, as saying on Friday.

Regarding potential sightseers from Europe, Rezaei noted, "Europeans, with sensitivities over the coronavirus, are unlikely to travel to Iran for another two years, so that [their shares] should be replaced by other countries."

"Fam tours had been planned for Turkish [travel] agencies and media for a period before the virus pandemic. Unfortunately, at the outset of the outbreak, the tours were postponed to another time when mutual travels are resumed."

"Turkey was among the top ten countries with the most arrivals in Iran during the [Iranian calendar] year 1398 [Mar. 2019 - Mar. 2020], according to data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts," he explained.

"We must go to the heart of Turkey and introduce our country to them. In Iran, there are places that Turks wish to visit, such as the shrines in Neyshabour and Kashan. Many Turks are familiar with Iranian literature and poets, and Hafez's poems are etched in the memory of many of them. We must develop these capacities."

He remained that the neighboring country is potentially a noticeable travel market for Iran, saying "Contrary to many who think that Turkey is not a good tourism market, I emphasize that its capacity is high.... And we just need to work harder. If the situation improves, we will probably hold a fam tour by September, inviting 100 Turkish tour operators and we will also hold bilateral meetings between Turkish and Iranian agencies."

The border closure with the Islamic Republic due to spreading coronavirus particularly hit Iranian arrivals during Noruz holiday in late March, when the largest number of Iranians visit Turkey.

In 2019, Hormatollah Rafiei, head of the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies, emphasized the need to attain a balance in tourist flow rates between the two nations. "Iran intends to reach a balance with Turkey in the movement of



Foreign travelers take a selfie during the visits to the UNESCO-registered Imam Square in Isfahan, central Iran.

tourist flow," Rafiei said in a meeting with Firuz Baglikaya, the head of the Association of Travel Agencies of Turkey.

Deputy tourism minister Vali Teymouri said in May that Iran's tourism industry will get back on the right track sooner than expected thanks to measures taken to tackle the spread of coronavirus.

"I believe that tourism industry of the country will get back on the right track far sooner than generally expected thanks to the measures taken to deal with the spread of coronavirus in tourist destinations, hotels, stopovers, and all the centers which are affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage,

Tourism and Handicrafts," Teymouri said in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times.

Referring to foreign arrivals, Teymouri said that international tourism could be recovered soon because it is mostly relying on potential travelers and pilgrims from the neighboring countries.

The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus has plunged the travel and tourism industry and economy in the global scene over that past couple of months as passenger traffic on airlines and hotel occupancy rates have fallen off a cliff compared to the same periods previous years.

New properties in Isfahan inscribed on National Heritage list

TOURISM TEHRAN — A total of 20 aging structures and sites, which are scattered across the central Isfahan province, have recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list, CHTN reported.

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

Eleven mansions, two offices, two bathhouses, two dove-cotes, a cemetery, a castle, and a mosque in different cities of the province have been added to the list.

Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled with many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a



city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The city has long been nicknamed as

Nesf-e-Jahan which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see the whole world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region

Potter makes miniature models of genuine elements of Iranian architecture

HERITAGE TEHRAN — An Iranian potter has crafted miniature models of the genuine elements which are prevalent in the traditional Iranian architecture during a project that exercises an aesthetic approach rather than a technical and engineering one.

Mohammad-Ali Sajjadi has carried out this project, which deals with the buildings in harmony with Iranian culture and climate, IRNA reported on Saturday.

The project shifts the focus on the construction of geometric order, decorations, asymmetry, and skewness in the traditional Iranian architecture and their relationship between their functional aspects.

Domes, arches, and stairs are amongst other prominent elements of Iranian architecture, clay models of which been produced using a potter's wheel, the report added.

Iran has inherited numerous architectural traditions over the course of history.



The Elamite, Achaemenian, Hellenistic, and other pre-Islamic and Islamic-era dynasties have left striking stone testaments to their greatness, such as Chogha Zanbil and Persepolis—both of which were designated UNESCO World Heritage sites in 1979.

Three monastic ensembles central to the Armenian Christian faith, with an architecture representing a confluence of Byzantine, Persian, and Armenian cultures, were collectively recognized as a World Heritage

site in 2008.

From the Islamic period the architectural achievements of the Seljuq, Il-Khanid, and Safavid dynasties are particularly noteworthy. During that time Iranian cities such as Neyshabur, Isfahan, and Shiraz came to be among the great cities of the Islamic world, and their many mosques, madrasahs, shrines, and palaces formed an architectural tradition that was distinctly Iranian within the larger Islamic milieu, according

with a population of nearly one million.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside.

The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning "Image of the World"), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning. Built in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan.

Modern Isfahan is now home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts, however, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

to Encyclopedia Britannica.

The Persian tradition of dome-building dates back to the earliest Mesopotamian architecture when domes became an integral part of buildings due to the scarcity of wood in many areas of the Iranian plateau.

In ancient Persia, domes were associated with the divine side of life, as their circular shape represented perfection, eternity, and the heavens, according to Press TV.

Domes moved to the forefront of Persian architecture during the Sasanian period (224 to 651 CE) and they evolved through different eras until the Safavid dynasty (1501–1732) when the last generation of Persian domes was characterized by a distinctive bulbous profile and astonishing tilework.

Iranian architecture makes use of abundant symbolic geometry, using pure forms such as the circle and square, and plans are based on often symmetrical layouts featuring rectangular courtyards and halls.

Ardakan's handicrafts hold potential to become international brand

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Handicrafts made in Ardakan, a historical city in central Iran, have the potential to become an international brand and reach the global market, CHTN reported on Friday.

Supporting crafters of the city can be effective in creating job opportunities as well as developing the city, said deputy tourism minister Pouya Mahmoudian.

Ardakan lies on the margins of the central Iranian desert in Yazd province. Historical suctions such as qanats (underground aqueducts), windmills, badgirs (wind towers), caravanserais, mosques, and mansions constitute parts of its attractions.

Iran exported \$527 million worth of handicrafts during the past calendar year 1398 (ended March 19).

Of the figure, some \$273 million worth of handicrafts were exported officially through customs, and \$254 million was earned via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) through various provinces.

Back in May, Mahmoudian noted that due to the outbreak of coronavirus, suitcase exports of handicrafts were completely stopped since the month of Esfand (the last month of the year), and official exports of handicrafts experienced a steep decline.

Talking on the significance of handicrafts in the country, she noted, "Iran globally ranks first in terms of having the topmost number of world cities [and villages] of handicrafts."

"Some 295 fields of handicrafts are currently practiced across Iran with more than two million people engaging, majority of whom are women... Handicrafts also play an important role in the economy in our rural villages," she said.

Iran's handicrafts exports reached \$289 million in the year 1397, showing three percent growth year on year, based on data released by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven clothes as well as personal ornamentations with precious and



semi-precious gemstones were exported to Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, the U.S., the UK, and other countries.

We stand in full solidarity with Iran during pandemic: European Commissioner

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Janez Lenarcic, the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, has said that the Commission will stand in full solidarity with the Iranian people and support ongoing efforts for delivering equipment to help the country in battle against the coronavirus.

“We stand in full solidarity with the Iranian people at this difficult time. Our thoughts are with all those affected by this pandemic and to the first responders on the ground. Our support will help ongoing efforts in Iran deliver urgent life-saving protective medical gear and other vital medical supplies to those most in need. Global solidarity is essential in the fight against coronavirus,” he noted, according to un.org.ir.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has flown 55 tons of vital medical supplies to Iran, thanks to the newly established Humanitarian Air Bridge, an initiative by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and part of the EU’s global “Team Europe” coronavirus response.

The consignment arrived on an Emirates Boeing 777-200 flight from Frankfurt, Germany, to Imam Khomeini Airport in Tehran, on July 9, containing life-saving medical items procured by UNHCR. The supplies include N95 masks, disposable face shields, and portable ventilators that will support Iran in its fight against the pandemic.

“The global supply chain was brought to a near halt by the pandemic. This Humanitarian Air Bridge flight arrives at a critical juncture when needs in Iran remain high, and more international support and solidarity is required to bring in medical supplies to



A consignment of vital UNHCR medical supplies leaves Frankfurt for Tehran, Iran, thanks to EU's Humanitarian Air Bridge. Photo: Kuehne + Nagel International AG

help those fighting the coronavirus,” said Ivo Freijssen, the UNHCR Representative to Iran.

The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge was set up in early May 2020 to help countries respond to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting the flow of humanitarian aid and workers.

■ **Iran needs more support to maintain free primary health services**

Iran ramped up its production of essential medical equipment, and independent

entrepreneurs – refugees included – have redirected their efforts towards contributing to the national COVID-19 response.

However, the coronavirus shows no sign of abating and, with a socio-economic environment placed under additional strain, Iran needs more support to be able to help the increasing number of people affected by the virus, including refugees.

There are close to one million refugees in Iran and 1.5-2 million undocumented

Afghans who have access to free primary health services and similarly free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like nationals.

In Iran, UNHCR is seeking \$16.2 million for its COVID-19 emergency, while requires an additional \$98.7 million to support Iran in maintaining and sustaining its commendable inclusive refugee policies, under the umbrella of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).

Coronavirus halves road accident casualties in Iran

➔ The highest number of traffic accident deaths in the first two months of this year was related to Tehran with 163 people, Fars with 149 and Kerman with 148, and the lowest was related to Ilam and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari with 19 each and Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad with 21, he stated.

According to the statistics of the Forensic Medicine Organization, provinces of Markazi with 41.8 percent, Ilam with 35.7 percent, and Qom with 18.9 percent, experienced the highest increase in traffic-related deaths in two months this year in comparison to the same period last year, while provinces of West Azarbaijan with 45.5 percent, Khorasan Razavi with 44.9 percent, and Gilan with 44.8 percent, had the highest reduction.

Also during this period, out of the total casualties of accidents, 1,274 people lost their lives on suburban roads,



568 people on urban roads, 118 people on rural roads, and 13 people on other roads, he concluded.

The number of daily COVID-19 mortalities in the country reached 188 and the total number of deaths reached 12,635, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on Saturday.

Over the past 24 hours, 2,397 new cases of COVID-19 were identified in the country, of which 1,739 were hospitalized, she stated, adding, the total number of patients in the country reached 255,117.

Currently, 3,338 patients with coronavirus are in critical condition. While, 217,666 patients have recovered or been discharged from hospitals.

So far, 1,947,114 tests have been performed to diagnose COVID-19 in the country.

Rare spider-tailed horned viper spotted in western Iran

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Spider-tailed horned vipers, unique species of viper endemic to western Iran being pushed toward extinction through poaching, was spotted in the western province of Kermanshah, the provincial department of environment chief has announced.

Experts in Kermanshah province recorded the image of the viper while monitoring a protected area in Gilan-e Gharb city, IRNA quoted Fereydoun Yavari as saying on Saturday.

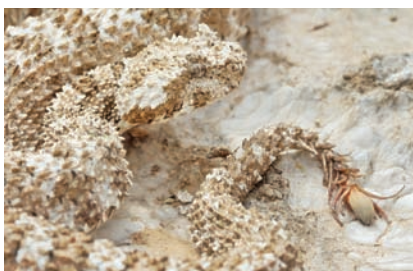
Being pushed toward extinction through poaching, the spider-tailed horned viper has been discovered in 2006. The venomous snake has a unique tail that has a bulb-like end bordered by long drooping scales that

give it the appearance of a spider, which is waved around and used to lure insectivorous birds to within striking range.

There are no accurate statistics of spider-tailed horned viper population, but it is spotted in the province of Ilam, Kermanshah, and Lorestan. To date, there have been no reports of spider-tailed horned viper being discovered in other countries.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has banned illegal trade of spider-tailed horned viper in August 2019.

The 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CITES CoP18 took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 17-28 August 2019, through which Iran’s proposal to add rare spider-tailed horned viper on



the Convention’s Appendix II have been accepted.

Following the CITES mission designed to protect endangered species against illegal trade, and based on the international demand for such illegal trade, the CITES office in Iran set out to send a proposal

to the Convention Secretariat to add spider-tailed horned viper on the Convention’s list and thus prevent its illegal trade in early March.

Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction; trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.

So, any trade of the species is permitted only with the CITES’s permission, and all 183 member parties are obliged to control the ports and prevent the trade of this viper.

Spider-tailed horned viper was declared endangered by the DOE in November 2018.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◀ ▶ ع

Precipitation forecast to reach above normal in next 3 months

The country is predicted to receive above normal rainfall over the next three months (February 20-May 21), head of the climatological research institute affiliated to Iran’s Meteorological Organization (IMO) has said.

The whole country will meet normal and above normal rainfalls, the northern parts will receive above normal rainfall while southern provinces will receive normal to lower-than-normal rainfall, IRNA quoted Iman Babaeian as saying on Sunday. This month, northern and eastern provinces will receive rain above normal averages, while in the first month of spring precipitation will be at normal amounts across the country, he noted, adding, during the second month of spring rainfall will reach its peak.

بارش‌های کشور در سه ماه پیش رو بیش از نرمال است

رئیس پژوهشکده اقلیم‌شناسی سازمان هواشناسی گفت: پیش‌بینی‌ها نشان می‌دهد میزان بارش در کشور در سه ماهه پیش رو (اسفند ۹۷، فروردین و اردیبهشت ۹۸) در حد نرمال و متمایل به بیش از نرمال خواهد بود.

ایمان باباییان روز یکشنبه در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: مجموع بارش‌ها در سطح کشور نرمال و متمایل به بیشتر از نرمال است اما در نیمه شمالی، بیشتر از نرمال و در نیمه جنوبی در محدوده نرمال تا کمتر از نرمال خواهد بود.

وی اظهار داشت: بارش‌ها در اسفندماه ۹۷ در نیمه شمالی و شرقی بیشتر از نرمال است، در فروردین ماه ۹۸ نیز بارش‌ها در محدوده نرمال و برای اردیبهشت بیشتر از نرمال پیش‌بینی شده است.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“hemi-”

■ **Meaning:** half

■ **For example:** Damage to the corresponding part of the right **hemisphere** had no effect on speech.

PHRASAL VERB

Hear from

■ **Meaning:** to receive news or information from someone

■ **For example:** Police want to hear from anyone who has any information.

IDIOM

Build bridges

■ **Explanation:** help opposing groups to cooperate and understand each other better

■ **For example:** A mediator is trying to build bridges between the local community and the owners of the new plant.

Wildlife traffickers target lion, jaguar and leopard body parts as tiger substitutes

Lion, jaguar and leopard body parts are being increasingly sought as substitutes to tiger products by traffickers, a major UN report has found, but demand for ivory and rhino horn has shown signs of a sustained fall.

Wildlife trafficking continues to pose a major threat to nature, global biodiversity and human health, the UN’s Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has warned, following an analysis of trends in the multibillion dollar illegal wildlife trade.

Rising living standards in Asia have continued to drive demand for illegal plants and wildlife products, with criminal groups increasingly using social media platforms to sell illicit goods, according to the second World Wildlife Crime Report, the most comprehensive analysis of criminal trends available.

The report found that plummeting pangolin populations in Asia has made west and central Africa the centre of the illicit trade for the most trafficked animal on the planet. Its scales are commonly used in traditional medicine in China and Vietnam. The pangolin trade has increased tenfold between 2014 and 2018, according to the market analysis, the Guardian reported.

The report found signs of a “sharp decline” in markets for ivory and rhino horn, recording falls in the price paid to poachers in Africa. Due to several large tusk and horn seizures in 2019, provisional data indicates it will be a record year, reflecting increased domestic restrictions on the trade in parts of African and Asia.

UNODC said poor sanitary and hygiene controls in illegal markets meant wildlife trafficking posed a global risk to human health, with zoonotic diseases representing up to three-quarters of all new illnesses, including the Covid-19 outbreak. The analysis of seizure data from 149 countries and territories over the last two decades has unveiled the scale of diversity of the global wildlife trafficking, describing trends in markets for illicit rosewood, ivory, rhino horn, pangolin scales, live reptiles, big cats and the European eel.

Angela Me, the head of research and trend analysis for the UNODC, said high demand for wildlife and wildlife products in Asia should not distract from the fact that the problem affects all parts of the world.

“You have to remember that the biggest demand for everything is in Asia because Asia is the most populous continent,” she said. “What you have that is striking in Asia is increasingly people can now buy things that they probably could not buy before.

“But we should not have this idea that it doesn’t touch all of us. For more than half of the commodities, they start from an illicit source because they are poached and then trafficked, but ultimately they go into the licit market.

“For example, with reptile skins, they start in Malaysia and are illegally poached, but then they go into the supply chain of luxurious bags, shoes. Everyone in the world may be wearing something that has been illegally supplied.”

Private markets on social media platforms and YouTube “how to” video explainers for catching reptiles around the world are encouraging people that live in range areas to opportunistically collect the animals for secondary income.

The reptiles are increasingly sold into the pet market for collectors via agents in Facebook groups, according to the report. The trend has meant that live reptile seizures destined for the pet trade have become far more common than seizures of reptile skins for fashion.

A rise in seizures of tiger products, which commonly include bones for tiger wine and tiger paste in China and Vietnam, has meant that traffickers are increasingly sourcing parts from other big cats, passing them off as tiger products in some cases.

The report found evidence of clouded leopard, snow leopard and jaguar parts used in this way, although there was particular concern about African lions, owing to a significant rise in the South African breeding industry.

More than 12,000 tigers are estimated to be living in captive facilities around the world, many with links to trafficking networks. Of these, 6,057 are in China, vastly outnumbering the remaining wild populations in India and south-east Asia.

The report also highlights the need for national governments to move beyond seizures as the primary method of restricting wildlife crime, with increased emphasis on tackling corruption and bribery.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Lack of micronutrients affecting millions

(March 24, 2004)

Up to a third of the world’s population don’t meet their physical and intellectual potential because of a lack of vitamins and minerals according to a report published by UNICEF and the Micronutrient Initiative. This report from Ania Lichtarowicz. Ten years ago a **lack of** vitamins and minerals was only seen as a relatively minor problem, but this new report claims that vitamin and mineral **deficiency** is having a severe effect on two billion people worldwide. Data from eighty countries shows the huge impact that these **micronutrients** have - at least a thousand women die during childbirth every week because of severe anaemia caused by a lack of iron, while iodine deficiency during pregnancy is leading to twenty million babies a year being born **mentally impaired**. But the authors of the report say that these problems can be **overcome** very easily.

Food fortification that’s already **widespread** in the developed world is cheap - it costs just a few cents per tonne to add iron to flour - and **supplements** are also very **inexpensive**. Giving a child enough vitamin A for a whole year costs only 5 cents, this will not only prevent blindness but **boost** the immune system, which the report estimates could prevent a million deaths each year alone.

■ **Words**

a lack of: not enough

deficiency: not enough

micronutrients: things like vitamins and minerals that are needed in small amounts for good health

leading to: causing, resulting in

mentally impaired: a condition in which a part of a person’s mind is damaged or is not working properly

overcome: solved, dealt with

food fortification: adding things to food to increase its nutritional value

widespread: here, common, something that is done a lot

supplements: things like tablets that you eat in addition to your food to maintain good health

inexpensive: not expensive

boost: improve, increase the efficiency of

(Source: BBC)

The fourth phase of Iraq’s “Heroes Operations” begins

The Iraq’s Joint Operations Command announced the beginning of the fourth phase of Iraq’s Heroes (Abtal al-Iraq) operations in Diyala province.

“Under the direction of the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and the supervision of the Joint Operations Command, dawn today the fourth phase of “heroes operations” started, to pursue the remnants of the terrorists and impose security and stability in Diyala province,” Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Al-Shammari said.

“The operations included clearing and inspecting the border strip with Iran and entering into special operations within the areas that ISIL (Daesh) terrorist group has exploited to exist and carry out their terrorist operations, which are the areas separating the federal forces and the Peshmerga forces,” He maintained.

Al-Shammari added that “the operations are targeting at this phase a large area estimated at 17,685 km2,” noting that “forces from (Land Forces Command, Diyala Operations Command, Salahuddin Operations Command, Samarra Operations Command, Federal Police Forces Command, Immediate Response Forces, Hashd al-Shaabi forces, two brigades of the Special Forces, the eighth brigade of the Border Forces, the counter-Terrorism center and the second Special Operations Command, the counter-Terrorist Regiment of Sulaimaniyah, and the Diyala Governorate Police Command), and with the support of the Army Air Force, Air Force, and International Alliance Aviation participated in the operations.

Russia, China veto Western-backed UNSC resolution on Syria aid

➔ **1** Concerns have also grown over Western efforts, which are made under the guise of humanitarian assistance, to support Takfiri terrorist groups that have been suffering heavy defeats against Syrian government forces.

Germany and Belgium said in a joint statement after the vote that they remain committed to ensure what they called the “critical lifeline” to “millions of people in dire need of cross-border assistance in Syria.”

China said the U.S. sanctions are to blame for Syria’s collapsing economy.

“Humanitarian situation in Syria is dire largely because of the U.S. unilateral sanctions,” the Chinese mission to the UN tweeted. “The so-called humanitarian exemption brings no difference. It is more urgent than ever for the U.S. to lift its ruthless sanctions against the Syrian people.”

Five killed, 200 taken hostage at South African church

Five people were killed and hostages were being held at a church west of Johannesburg, South African police said Saturday.

Police said in a statement on Twitter that they were alerted to a “hostage situation and shooting” in the early hours of the morning at the International Pentecost Holiness Church in Zuurbekom, Reuters reported.

Thirty arrests were made and more than 25 firearms seized, police said, adding hostage negotiators were still at the scene.

Police did not say why or how many hostages had been taken.

Television station eNCA said there had been a leadership dispute at the church and cited a church official as saying roughly 200 people had been taken hostage.

Utah governor declares state of emergency after protests over police shooting

➔ **1** Nathan S. Morris, a lawyer for the family of Mr. Palacios-Carbajal, said in a statement on Thursday that in deciding not to press charges, Mr. Gill “took upon himself the decision to exonerate the officers at the expense of a fair judicial process, rather than permitting a jury of Bernardo’s peers to decide the fate of the officers.”

Mr. Morris said by telephone on Friday that the family would be filing a wrongful-death lawsuit.

“As a family, we will not stop in our pursuit of justice for Bernardo through all means that are available to us,” he said, reading from the statement, prepared on behalf of the family.

Mayor Erin Mendenhall of Salt Lake City said on Thursday that the district attorney’s report provided “significant evidence of the justifiable actions” of the officers, but that it was also likely to disappoint those who wanted the officers to face charges.

Resistance News

IOF kidnaps several West Bankers in dawn campaigns

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) at dawn Saturday raided several homes and kidnapped a number of Palestinian citizens during campaigns in different West Bank areas.

According to local sources, the IOF stormed Balata refugee camp in Nablus and kidnapped two young men identified as Abd-Rabo Hashash and Fathi Abu Rizq from their homes.

Another young man called Ibrahim Sameer, a resident of Askar refugee camp, was kidnapped by the IOF at the Za’atara checkpoint in southern Nablus.

In Jenin, two young men identified as Mohamed Bassam and Adham Omar were taken prisoners after the IOF ransacked their homes in Ya’bad town.

Another two unidentified young men were reportedly kidnapped by the IOF from the outskirts of Jibiya village in northern Ramallah.

In al-Khali, the IOF kidnapped two young men from the Old City after they were physically assaulted by extremist Jewish settlers. They were identified as Amjad Mahmoud and Malek Haroun.

UK accused of ‘empty talk’ as Bahrain activists face death penalty

The British government has been accused of “empty talk” over human rights as two pro-democracy campaigners in Bahrain face the death penalty.

The UK has provided security advice to the island nation in the Persian Gulf for five years and funds a body that examines allegations of police mistreatment.

Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa, leading figures in the pro-democracy protests of 2011, were arrested in 2014 and accused of killing a police officer. They say their confessions were extracted by torture.

This Monday Bahrain’s court of cassation is widely expected to impose the death penalty, exhausting their final appeal against their convictions.

According to Guardian, James Cleverly, a minister in the UK Foreign Office, has resisted intensifying calls for the UK to withdraw from its arrangement with Bahrain, telling MPs on Thursday: “The Bahraini royal family have demonstrated a desire to improve their structures and transparency, and the resilience of their governmental structures. The oversight bodies we support are a part of that. While they continue to express the desire to improve their structures and head in a positive direction, we will maintain our support to enable them to do so.”

He said the UK would continue to oppose



the death penalty regardless of Bahrain’s actions, and that disengagement would not help the cause of human rights in the kingdom. Cleverly also touted the UK’s close relationship with Bahrain as making it possible for the British government to hold “candid conversations” with the king, including to express its opposition to the use of the death penalty.

Harriet McCulloch, a deputy director

at the charity Reprieve, accused Cleverly of “more empty talk about Britain’s ‘moral responsibility’ to protect human rights in Bahrain”.

She added: “Two Bahraini men are likely to be sentenced to death on Monday, based on false confessions, following a UK-supported whitewash of their torture. It is not enough to have ‘candid conversations’ with Bahrain.”

The level of pressure on the Foreign Of-

Democrats blast Trump for commuting Roger Stone: ‘The most corrupt president in history’

U.S. Democrats tore into President Trump on Friday after he commuted the prison sentence of longtime confidant Roger Stone, who was set to be behind bars for over three years starting next week.

The president’s decision marked the finale of months-long “will he, won’t he” speculation over if or how Trump would intervene in Stone’s case, but opened up another avenue of criticism for Democrats who have been pounding on the White House on an array of issues.

Stone was found guilty in 2019 of obstructing a congressional probe into Russian election interference and witness tampering and sentenced to more than three years in prison. He has denied wrongdoing and maintained that he is innocent.

“Donald Trump has abandoned the rule of law and made a mockery of our democracy. He truly is the most corrupt president in history,” tweeted Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.).

Donald Trump has abandoned the rule of law and made a mockery of our democracy. He truly is the most corrupt president in history.

“President Trump has engaged in countless acts that are both self-serving and destructive to our democracy while in office, but commuting the sentence of Roger Stone, a crony who lied and obstructed our investigation to protect Trump himself, is among the most offensive to the rule of law and principles of justice,” added Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

World reacts to Turkey reconverting Hagia Sophia into a mosque

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared Istanbul’s iconic Hagia Sophia open to Muslim worship on Friday after a top court ruled the building’s conversion to a museum by modern Turkey’s founding statesman was illegal.

Erdogan made his announcement, just an hour after the court ruling was revealed, despite international warnings not to change the status of the nearly 1,500-year-old monument, revered by Christians and Muslims alike.

“The decision was taken to hand over the management of the Ayasofya Mosque ... to the Religious Affairs Directorate and open it for worship,” the decision signed by Erdogan said. The UNESCO World Heritage Site in Istanbul, a magnet for tourists worldwide, was first constructed as a cathedral in the Christian Byzantine Empire but was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453.

The court decision was followed quickly by Erdogan saying that the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Istanbul would be reopened for Muslim worship.

The Council of State, Turkey’s highest administrative court, unanimously cancelled a 1934 cabinet decision and said Hagia Sophia was registered as a mosque in its property deeds.

The United States, Greece and church leaders were among those to express concern about changing the status of the huge sixth-century building, converted into a museum in the early days of the modern secular Turkish state under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

Below is a round-up of international reaction to Friday’s decisions.

■ Church leaders

The Russian Orthodox Church expressed dismay at Turkey’s decision to revoke the museum status of Hagia Sophia, accusing it of ignoring voices of millions of Christians.

“The concern of millions of Christians has not been heard,” Russian Orthodox Church spokesman Vladimir Legoida said in comments carried by the Russian news agency Interfax.

“Today’s court ruling shows that all calls for the need for extreme delicacy in this matter were ignored,” Legoida said.

The Russian Orthodox Church previously urged caution over calls to alter the status of the historic former cathedral, and Russian Patriarch Kirill said he was “deeply concerned”



about such a potential move and called it a “threat to the whole of Christian civilization”.

Previously, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual head of some 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide and based in Istanbul, said converting it into a mosque would disappoint Christians and would “fracture” East and West.

■ UNESCO

UNESCO said its World Heritage Committee would review Hagia Sophia’s status, saying it was “regrettable that the Turkish decision was not the subject of dialog nor notification beforehand”.

“UNESCO calls on the Turkish authorities to open a dialog without delay in order to avoid a step back from the universal value of this exceptional heritage whose preservation will be reviewed by the World Heritage Committee in its next session,” the United Nation’s cultural body said in a statement.

■ The European Union

The European Union’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell called the decision “regrettable”.

“The ruling by the Turkish Council of State to overturn one of modern Turkey’s landmark decisions and President Erdogan’s decision to place the monument under the management of the Religious Affairs Presidency is regrettable,” he said in a statement.

■ Cyprus

Cypriot Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides, a Greek Cypriot, posted on his official Twitter account that Cyprus “strongly condemns Turkey’s actions on Hagia Sophia in

U.S. sets record for new COVID cases third day in a row at over 69,000

New cases of COVID-19 rose by over 69,000 across the United States on Friday, according to a Reuters tally, setting a record for the third consecutive day as Walt Disney Co stuck to its plans to reopen its flagship theme park in hard-hit Florida.

A total of nine U.S. states - Alaska, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, Ohio, Utah and Wisconsin - also reached records for single-day infections.

In Texas, another hot zone, Governor Greg Abbott warned on Friday he may have to impose new clampdowns if the state cannot stem its record-setting caseloads and hospitalizations through masks and social distancing.

“If we don’t adopt this best practice it could lead to a shutdown of business,” the

fice over the fate of Ramadhan and Moosa is unusually high, with ministers forced to come to the Lords and Commons in successive days to explain what pressure they were applying to save the men’s lives. Calls for a reprieve came from all sides of the Commons, including from two senior Conservatives: Peter Bottomley, the father of the house, and Tom Tugendhat, the chair of the foreign affairs select committee.

Both prisoners claim they were tortured, and Moosa alleges he was hung from the ceiling for three days before confessing.

Stephen Doughty, a shadow Foreign Office minister, claimed confessions had been obtained by torture and that the two Bahraini security bodies that allegedly enabled the torture – the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and the ombudsman for the Ministry of Interior – were funded by the UK government. He asked for positive evidence that UK advice to the SIU and the ombudsman had brought any practical benefit.

“Since 2012, the government have provided over £5m of technical assistance [to Bahrain], yet the number of executions has increased and human rights abuses have increased,” Doughty said.

Cleverley said the two bodies were relatively new and their abolition would be entirely counter-productive.

Republican governor told local KLBK-TV in Lubbock, adding it was the last thing he wanted.

California announced on Friday the state will release up to 8,000 inmates early from prisons to slow the spread of COVID-19 inside the facilities. At San Quentin State Prison, outside San Francisco, half of the facility’s roughly 3,300 prisoners have tested positive for the virus.

The Walt Disney Co (DIS.N) said the theme parks in Orlando would open on Saturday to a limited number of guests who along with employees would be required to wear masks and undergo temperature checks. The park also cancelled parades, firework displays and events that typically draw crowds.

its effort to distract domestic opinion and calls on Turkey to respect its international obligations”.

■ United States of America

“We are disappointed by the decision by the government of Turkey to change the status of the Hagia Sophia,” Morgan Ortagus, State Department spokesperson, said in a statement.

“We understand the Turkish Government remains committed to maintaining access to the Hagia Sophia for all visitors, and look forward to hearing its plans for continued stewardship of the Hagia Sophia to ensure it remains accessible without impediment for all.”

■ Greece

Greece branded Turkey’s move an “open provocation to the civilized world”.

“The nationalism displayed by Erdogan ... takes his country back six centuries,” Culture Minister Lina Mendoni said in a statement.

Mendonni further said the court ruling “absolutely confirms that there is no independent justice” in Turkey.

■ Russia

Vladimir Dzhabarov, deputy head of the foreign affairs committee in the Russian upper house of parliament, called the action “a mistake”.

“Turning it into a mosque will not do anything for the Muslim world. It does not bring nations together, but on the contrary brings them into collision,” he said.

■ Hamas

Palestinian group Hamas has welcomed the verdict allowing the opening of Hagia Sophia as a mosque.

“Opening of Hagia Sophia to prayer is a proud moment for all Muslims,” said Rafat Murra, head of international press office of Hamas, in a written statement, quoted by Turkey’s Anadolu Agency.

Murra stressed that the decision fell under Turkey’s sovereignty rights.

■ Northern Cyprus

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), recognized only by Turkey, is happy with the opening of Hagia Sophia as a mosque.

“Hagia Sophia has been Turkish, a mosque and a world heritage since 1453. The decision to use it as a mosque, at the same time to be visited as a museum, is sound and it is pleasing,” Prime Minister Ersin Tatar said.

U.S. military tankers smuggle crude oil from Syria’s Hasakah to western Iraq

As Washington is fiercely vying with some of its regional allies to seize oil reserves and plunder natural resources in Syria, the US military has reportedly dispatched dozens of tankers to the war-battered country’s northeastern province of Hasakah.

Local sources, requesting not to be named, told Syria’s official news agency SANA that a convoy of 35 tankers rumbled through al-Ya rubiyah border crossing on Friday evening, and headed toward the Iraqi territory after being filled with crude oil.

Separately, Syrians staged a rally

in al-Qusayr village, which lies in the Qamishli district of Hasakah province, to protest against U.S. and Turkish military deployment to their area, in addition to new anti-Syria economic sanctions which entered into force on June 17 under the so-called Caesar Act.

The protesters burnt US flags, and demeaned the immediate withdrawal of all foreign military troops and their mercenaries from the entire Syrian territory as the forces perpetrate various acts of aggression and loot the country’s natural wealth.

Sports activities halted again in Tehran

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Because of the recent surge in COVID-19 cases, Tehran authorities have suspended all indoor athletic and activities.

Director General of Youth Affairs and Sports Office in Tehran Province Reza Golmohammadi has said all indoor sports activities are suspended for one week.

“In accordance with health protocols, all indoor sports activities are suspended in Tehran for one week,” Golmohammadi said.

Tehran has more than 5,000 outdoor and indoor gyms, swimming pools, and sports facilities and Golmohammadi has said that outdoor gyms and pools are allowed to work.

Health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari reported Saturday that 188 people had died from the respiratory disease in the past 24 hours, raising the overall toll to 12,635.

Iran’s daily COVID-19 death toll has topped 100 since around mid-June, with a record single-day tally of 221 reported on Thursday.

Authorities in Iran suspended all sports competitions in early March 2020 due to the coronavirus outbreak in the country.

In April, Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani described the country’s plan about lifting coronavirus lockdown measures as the outbreak was slowly brought under control. The government planned to relax the regulations in three phases.

The first started with sectors of the economy considered to have a low risk of infection. In the second phase, the employment restrictions were lifted in Tehran and



© Mehr/ Majid Asgarpour

some other big cities. Finally, the third phase included the opening of sports facilities, festival venues, and religious sites. Accordingly, in May 2020 sports clubs opened in 132 cities by the order of Sports Minister Masoud Soltanifar.

Serie A’s Parma in isolation, but will play Sunday

Players at Serie A side Parma have gone into isolation after a staff member tested positive for the coronavirus, the club announced on Saturday.

However, they will continue to train properly and their clash with Bologna on Sunday will go ahead as scheduled, as all of their playing staff tested negative.

“Parma Calcio 1913 communicate that the latest set of COVID-19 tests returned one positive result for a member of non-playing staff,” a club statement read.

“This person was completely asymptomatic and has been promptly isolated in accordance with the federal and ministerial directives.

“The club also announce that all other members of the aforementioned squad tested negative for COVID-19 and have begun a period of isolation and training center, though



they will be able to continue their regular training activities while being constantly monitored, in accordance to the current protocol.”

All sporting activity in Italy came to a halt on March 10. The country was the first in Europe to be seriously affected by the coronavirus crisis.

Football returned to Italy on June 20, with Parma in action away at Torino, and clubs have regular testing and are closely monitored by authorities who attend training sessions for any breaches of social distancing regulations.

Parma have endured a difficult return to action. They followed up an impressive 4-1 victory away at Genoa with defeats in each of their last four matches.

(Source: ESPN)

Asian Beach Games in China postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic



The Olympic Council of Asia is considering new dates for this year’s Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, the OCA said on Saturday, following China’s decision to cancel all international sports in the country following the COVID-19 crisis.

The sixth edition of the Games was scheduled from November 28-December 6 but China’s General Administration of Sport said on Friday the only international sports events allowed in the country this year would be trials for the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

The OCA said it was in discussion with the beach games organizers and the Chinese Olympic Committee to re-

schedule the event. “The three parties ... are closely monitoring the situation on a daily basis and working together closely to adjust the dates, if required,” the OCA said in a statement.

“Once a decision has been made, OCA jointly with Chinese Olympic Committee and the Sanya Asian Beach Organising Committee will announce the new dates regarding the sixth Asian Beach Games.”

The Badminton World Federation has also sought more information from China before taking a call on the season-ending World Tour Finals scheduled in Guangzhou from December 16-20.

(Source: Xinhua)

Speed skating: World champion Van Ruijven dies aged 27



World champion Dutch speed skater Lara van Ruijven has died aged 27 after battling with an autoimmune disorder, the Royal Dutch Skating Federation (KNSB) said on Friday.

The 27-year-old short track skater, who won a bronze medal at the 2018 Olympics, was admitted to hospital in Perpignan, France last month after falling ill during a training camp.

She was placed in intensive care and kept in an artificial coma but despite undergoing surgery, her health continued to deteriorate.

“What horrible news we’ve just received. Her loss will be felt through the whole sporting world,” said Dutch short

track coach Jeroen Otter.

“It is an enormous blow for a close-knit group. We’ve missed her over the last two weeks but today’s news is so definite and surreal.”

Van Ruijven won the 500 metres title at the world championships in Sofia last year, and an Olympic bronze medal in the 3,000m relay at 2018 Pyeongchang Games.

“We feel the pain for her family and the short track team,” said KNSB director Herman de Haan. “This is hard to comprehend. On behalf of KNSB I want to wish Lara’s friends and family strength with dealing with this great loss.”

(Source: Reuters)

Former England World Cup winner Jack Charlton dies at 85

Jack Charlton, a soccer World Cup winner with England who became the darling of Ireland after leading their national team to unprecedented success as manager, has died aged 85.

A family statement said the former Leeds United defender, who helped England beat West Germany in the 1966 World Cup final at Wembley, died peacefully on Friday at his home in Northumberland, northern England.

“We cannot express how proud we are of the extraordinary life he led and the pleasure he brought to so many people in different countries and from all walks of life,” the statement read.

“He was a thoroughly honest, kind, funny and genuine man who always had time for people. His loss will leave a huge hole in all our lives but we are thankful for a lifetime of happy memories.”

Charlton led Ireland to their first major finals at the 1988 European Championship and also took them to the World Cup quarter-finals in 1990.

Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin was among the



first to tweet his reaction.

“So saddened to hear of the passing of Jack Charlton who brought such honesty and joy to the football world. He personified a golden era in Irish football - the Italia 90 campaign being one of pure joy for the nation. He gave us magical memories. Thank you Jack,” he said.

Former Ireland defender Paul McGrath tweeted: “Absolutely gutted. Father figure to me for 10 years, thanks for having faith in me. Sleep well Jack. Love ya.”

The English FA said it was devastated by the news that a member of their World Cup-winning team of 1966 had died, while the Ireland FA said Charlton changed Irish football forever.

Several Premier League clubs also paid tribute.

Former England skipper Wayne Rooney tweeted his condolences to the family, including Charlton’s younger brother and Manchester United great Bobby.

“Sad news, legend. Condolences to @SirBobby and family,” Rooney tweeted.

Former England striker Gary Lineker said on Twitter: “Saddened to hear that Jack Charlton has passed away. World Cup winner with England, manager of probably the best ever Ireland side and a wonderfully infectious personality to boot.”

(Source: Reuters)

Ex-Esteghlal midfielder Teymourian left in coma

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Serjik Teymourian, a former Iranian football player, was placed in a medically induced coma after being seriously injured in a devastating car accident on Saturday 11 July 2020.



Teymourian, the older brother of ex-national team player Andranik, previously played for Esteghlal in Iran and the German side, Maintz 05 between 1998 to 2000 as a defensive midfielder.

He is in intensive care unit in Tehran.

Andranik has shared a post on his Instagram account, saying his brother is in need of prayers.

Persepolis edge Machine Sazi to move a step closer to IPL title

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team defeated Machine Sazi 1-0 in Tabriz to move another step closer to Iran Professional League (IPL) title on Friday.

The Reds need six points to win IPL title for the fourth time in a row.

Mehdi Torabi scored the only goal of the match from the penalty spot in the 85th minute after Ali Alipour was brought down in the area.

Machine Sazi midfielder Shahin Saghebi was shown his second yellow card in the 90th minute.

Also, Zob Ahan defeated rock-bottom Shahin Bushehr 5-1 in Bushehr.

With six weeks remaining, Persepolis sit top of the table with 56 points.

Sepahan and Shahr Khodro are 41 points with one game in hands.

Tehran derby 33rd in world

Tehran derby between Iranian teams Esteghlal and Persepolis has been ranked among the 50 biggest derbies in the world.

Popular football magazine FourFourTwo decided to rank the world’s biggest derbies and see which came out on top.

Boca Juniors vs River Plate has come out on top as the greatest, while the match between Barcelona and Real Madrid is second.

Tehran derby sits 33rd in the list.

Derbies are often the highlight of every fan’s season and some teams often define their success of a season based on victory.

(Source: FourFourTwo)

Saman Ghoddos remains in Amiens

Iran international winger Saman Ghoddos will remain in French club Amiens.

The Swedish-born Iranian international joined the French Ligue 1 Amiens from Ostersunds FK in August 2018. Amiens paid €4 million to sign Ghoddos.

The French media had reported that he would leave the team but courier-picard has reported that the 26-year-old player will remain in Amiens.

In August 2019, Ghoddos was suspended from all games for four months by FIFA for failing to honor an agreement to join Huesca.

(Source: courier-picard)

Hamed Haddadi sidelined for two weeks

Tasnim — Nanjing Monkey King center Hamed Haddadi has been sidelined for two weeks due to a foot injury.

He suffered an ankle injury in the match against Shenzhen in CBA.

Haddadi scored 24 points for his team before being injured.

Media reports suggest that he needs two weeks to make a full recovery.

Veteran volleyball player Mohammadi dies

Volleyball.ir — Former member of Iran volleyball team Shaban Mohammadi died in Tehran on Friday.

Mohammadi passed away aged 84 at the Shohaday-e Tajrish.

He was born in Tehran in 1936 and was among the sport’s pioneers and inspired many young players training in Tehran.

Mohammadi will be laid to rest in Tehran’s Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery.

Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) extends deepest sympathy to Mohammadi’s family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

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**GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING**

There is no price for your soul but heaven; so,
beware of selling it for anything else.
Imam Ali (AS)

“Autumn of Age Fifty” on Commander Soleimani’s comrade published in Turkish

→1 Written by Fatemeh Behbudi, the Persian version was released by Khate Moqaddam Publishing House in Tehran during February.

Soleimani was earlier informed about the publisher’s plan to release the book and due to his close friendship with Mohammad Jamali, he had promised to attend the unveiling ceremony of the book.



Front cover of the Turkish translation of “Autumn of Age Fifty”.

However, the book was released about forty days after the assassination of Commander Soleimani in a U.S. air raid in Baghdad on January 3.

Jamali joined Soleimani’s forces in the Syrian war against the ISIS terrorists in August 2013 and was martyred on November 2.

Feta Publishing has published dozens of books about Iranian political personalities. Earlier in March, it released “Haci Kasim Suleymani ve Harem Savunuculari” (“Hajji Qassem Soleimani and Harem Defenders”).

Qorbani, Nizami join together on “The Voices and Bridges”

A R T TEHRAN — Vocalists Alireza Qorbani from Iran and Qaiser Nizami from Kashmir have teamed up on the project “The Voices and Bridges” to record “Nazanin”.

The song features verses of poems from several Iranian and Kashmiri poets.

“The Voices and Bridges” was initiated by the U.S.-based Iranian composer Ehsan Matoori to foster collaboration between Iranian musicians and top musicians from around the globe.

American cellist Mike Block, Iranian musicians Ali Montazeri, Hesam Nasserri, Milad Mohammadi and Meisam Marvasti, and several other musicians from across the world have contributed to the piece, which will be released in the near future.

Earlier in July 2019, Matoori, Qorbani and the New York-based Argentinean mezzo-soprano Solange Merdinian recorded the single “El Sueño” at Sheed Records as part of the project.

Teahouse painter Habib Naqqash dies at 88

A R T TEHRAN — A pioneer of teahouse painting Habib Naqqash died of natural causes on Friday morning at the age of 88.

He was one of the few pioneers of Iranian teahouse painting who lived in Dezful, Khuzestan Province and had learned painting from his father and grandfather.

The master had created over 40 paintings on different topics such as the Iran-Iraq 1980-1988 war.

His other paintings centered on Imam Hussein (AS), his uprising against the Umayyad dynasty and the tragedy of Ashura, during which the Imam and his companions were martyred in Karbala.

He also created a collection of glass paintings in the form of teahouse paintings besides a collection of miniature works.

The artist took his family name Naqqash (painter) from his grandfathers who all were painters.

Naqqash was selected as an Eternal Figure of Dezful in 2013. He was also honored during a ceremony held in Dezful last year.

The teahouse has had various functions in different eras during its 400-year history in Iran. Teahouses used to be places where people gathered to spend their leisure time listening to a naqqal, an Iranian traditional storyteller who narrates stories from Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh. People talked and exchanged views, and along with lutas, wise and generous people, helped poor people.

Teahouse painters emerged in such an atmosphere. They listened to the discussions and tales, using them as subjects for the paintings they drew on the walls, tiles, stones and canvases. Sometimes, teahouse owners commissioned the painters to draw the stories.

With their own unique perspective not used in other styles, teahouse painters drew motifs entirely based on their imagination. The themes of such paintings are epics, traditions and religion.

Istanbul festival to screen Iranian-Turkish film “Silence Tree”



“Silence Tree” by Turkish director Faysal Soysal.

A R T TEHRAN — “Silence Tree”, co-production between Iran and Turkey will be competing in the 39th Istanbul Film Festival, the organizers have announced

The movie directed by Turkish filmmaker Faysal Soysal will be screened on July 21 in the national competition of the event, which will commence on July 17.

Ali Nuri Oskui, director of the acclaimed Iranian animated movie “Release from Heaven”, is the co-producer of the movie.

The film is about Hayati, a writer whose talent as well married life worsens. He is deeply obsessed with

reviving a dried walnut tree at his father’s house. The more he tries to dig into his father’s past and death, the more confused and lost he gets. Finding out about his wife’s affair is a terrible blow, but his seemingly weak character does not allow him to react the way he is expected to. While struggling to get rid of his hellish life, he meets his best friend’s fiancée, who looks so much like his own ex-girlfriend, inspiring him to write again. Surprisingly, the walnut tree starts budding, too. Just as hope flares up inside him, his mother dies and his wife elopes with her lover. He can no longer take it and leaves the town. A couple

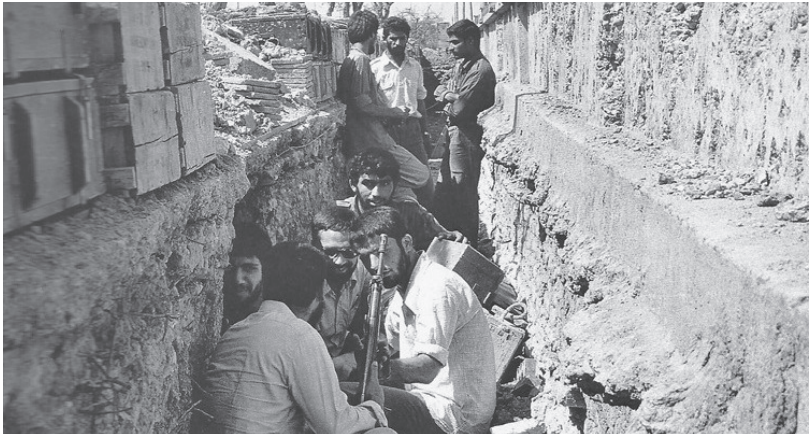
of days later, the police discover the burned body of a woman. Hayati is arrested and accused of murder. Though innocent, he pleads guilty.

“Silence Tree” was first named “Walnut Tree”, but then it was renamed due to an Iranian production of the same title by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian. However, the film has kept the original name in its Turkish title.

An all-Turkish cast stars in the movie, which has been produced at the companies Balkon Film from Turkey and Iran’s Farabi Cinema Foundation.

Eleven other films will be screened in the Istanbul Film Festival, which will announce the winners on July 27.

Commanders to recount Khorramshahr resistance against Iraqi invaders in “Dust of War”



Battle of the soldiers in Kut Sheikh Village near Khorramshahr before the liberation of the city.

A R T TEHRAN — Three top commanders will recount the valor shown by the people of Khorramshahr throughout their 34-day resistance against the Iraqi invaders during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war in a documentary under production at the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC).

Khorramshahr in the southwestern Iranian province of Khuzestan was captured by Iraqis on October 26, 1980 during the early months of the war and was liberated on May 24, 1982.

Mohammad Abdizadeh is the director of the documentary,

which will include interviews with Captain Hushang Samadi, Colonel Ali Qamari and Brigidair-General Mahdavi who played major roles in the Khorramshahr battle, before the city was captured by the Iraqi invaders.

“During the 34-day resistance many great men were martyred and the epic will present their resistance, sacrifice and sympathy,” Abdizadeh said in a press release published by the DEFC.

“The research has been completed, and shooting will begin in autumn in Tehran and in the military zones in Khorramshahr and Bushehr,” he said.

“The Rhinoceros SpongeBob” explores loneliness of young adults: director

A R T TEHRAN — Sami Salehi-Sabet, the director and writer of “The Rhinoceros SpongeBob”, says the play explores the loneliness of young adults in the world of today.

He said that he decided to stage the play with young adults since the troupe was established to concentrate on daily needs, concerns and emotional trauma of young adults.

The play is based on the American animated comedy TV series “SpongeBob SquarePants” and Eugène Ionesco’s “Rhinoceros”, and will be performed onstage at the Tehran Independent Theater today by Bachehaye Shahkar, a Tehran-based troupe for children’s performances.

“Children shout their pains and sorrows in the games they play in every corner of the city. The form of the performance is like a game of young adults playing in the alleys, but the difference of this play from the games is their type of performances,” Salehi-Sabet said.

He added, “The young performers make the audience feel trapped in their game. Any individual can hardly ignore their game while passing by and will stand to watch their game and it is right there the trap begins to work, a trap which reminds of the share of responsibility of the adults against the fates of the youth in the present and future.”

He said that the play is suitable for children above 10, however, there is a good potential for children, young adults and adults to communicate with the play through their own attitudes.



Stage director Sami Salehi-Sabet in an undated photo.

Considering the current situation of the coronavirus pandemic, he said, “We are an independent troupe which must make its own money, and the young performers have been able to keep this troupe working for 10 years, and these days we take the risk and go for the performance.”

“This troupe is a good means to make the society hear the voice of young adults that have been ignored. They are among the minority groups of the society and under normal conditions they were not happy. And now in these hard coronavirus days, they have been ignored much more and

“Dear Madam President” comes to Iranian bookstores



Front cover of the Persian translation of “Dear Madam President” published by Sattak Publications.

C U L T U R E TEHRAN — “Dear Madam President” by Jennifer Palmieri, Hillary Clinton’s former communications director, has been published in Persian by Sattak Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Fatemeh Rezapur.

“Framed as an empowering letter from former Hillary Clinton Communications Director Jennifer Palmieri to the first woman president, and by extension, to all women working to succeed in any field, ‘Dear Madam President’ is filled with forward-thinking, practical advice for all women who are determined to seize control of their lives-from boardroom to living room,” Amazon says.

“As a country, we haven’t wrapped our

heads around what it should look like for a woman to be in the job of a president. Our only models are men. While wildly disappointed by the outcome of the 2016 election, Palmieri argues that our feelings-confusion, love, hate, acceptance-can now open the country up to reimagining women in leadership roles,” it adds.

“And that is what Palmieri takes on in this book-redefining expectations for women looking to lead and creating a blueprint for women candidates and leaders to follow. ‘Dear Madam President’ will turn the results of the 2016 election into something incredibly empowering for graduates, future female leaders and independent thinkers everywhere,” it concludes.

are less happy. I think these days are the best days to perform the play,” he concluded.

The play tells the story of a group of youths and young adults that team up to perform a play in the city.

Their play is a combination of “SpongeBob SquarePants” and Eugène Ionesco’s “Rhinoceros”: in the underwater life, all friends and relatives of SpongeBob choose to turn into rhinoceroses for unclear reasons. SpongeBob can do nothing to change their minds, while they begin mocking him. They also taunt SpongeBob about why he doesn’t want to change into a rhinoceros.

In Ionesco’s “Rhinoceros”, the inhabitants of a small, provincial French town turn into rhinoceroses. Ultimately, the only human who does not succumb to this mass metamorphosis is the central character, Bérenger, a flustered everyman figure who is initially criticized in the play for his drinking, tardiness and slovenly lifestyle, and then, later, for his increasing paranoia and obsession with the rhinoceroses.

The play is often read as a response and criticism to the sudden upsurge of Fascism and Nazism during the events preceding World War II, and explores the themes of conformity, culture, fascism, responsibility, logic, mass movements, mob mentality, philosophy and morality.

Alireza Khodabakhsh, Mana Mokri, Sarina Bonyani and Mehrdad Amani are some members of the cast.

“The Rhinoceros SpongeBob” is the fifth production of the troupe.

Teahouse painter Habib Naqqash dies at 88

A R T TEHRAN — A pioneer of teahouse painting Habib Naqqash died of natural causes on Friday morning at the age of 88.

He was one of the few pioneers of Iranian teahouse painting who lived in Dezful, Khuzestan Province and had learned painting from his father and grandfather.

The master had created over 40 paintings on different topics such as the Iran-Iraq 1980-1988 war.

His other paintings centered on Imam

Hussein (AS), his uprising against the Umayyad dynasty and the tragedy of Ashura, during which the Imam and his companions were martyred in Karbala.

He also created a collection of glass paintings in the form of teahouse paintings besides a collection of miniature works.

The artist took his family name Naqqash (painter) from his grandfathers who all were painters.

Naqqash was selected as an Eternal Figure

of Dezful in 2013. He was also honored during a ceremony held in Dezful last year.

The teahouse has had various functions in different eras during its 400-year history in Iran. Teahouses used to be places where people gathered to spend their leisure time listening to a naqqal, an Iranian traditional storyteller who narrates stories from Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh. People talked and exchanged views, and along with lutas, wise and generous people, helped poor people.

Teahouse painters emerged in such an atmosphere. They listened to the discussions and tales, using them as subjects for the paintings they drew on the walls, tiles, stones and canvases. Sometimes, teahouse owners commissioned the painters to draw the stories.

With their own unique perspective not used in other styles, teahouse painters drew motifs entirely based on their imagination. The themes of such paintings are epics, traditions and religion.