



Leader orders probe into plane crash **2**



Iran 'deeply regrets the disastrous mistake' of plane downing, promises justice **2**



Oman swears in successor to Sultan Qaboos **10**



Iran edge Korea to book a place at Olympic Qualification final **11**



©File photo

We accept responsibility

Ukrainian plane downed due to human error: Armed Forces

See page 3

Steel exports up 19% in 9 months on year

TEHRAN — Iran's crude steel exports rose 19 percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2019) from the same period of time in the previous year, IRNA reported on Saturday.

As reported, 5,209 million tons of steel have been exported from the country in the nine-month period of this year.

In a press conference in last June, Iranian deputy industry, mining and

trade minister said the ministry has taken necessary measures to maintain the country's metal exports despite the U.S. sanctions.

"We have established a special working group in the ministry which is closely assessing the situation and making necessary arrangements to mitigate the impact of the U.S. sanctions," Jafar Sarqini told the Tehran Times in the press conference. ➔4

Ukraine: Iran pleaded guilty to plane incident

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Saturday that Iran pleaded guilty to shooting down Ukrainian plane even before completion of international commission's work.

"Even before the completion of the work by the international commission, Iran has pleaded guilty to shooting down the Ukrainian plane. However, we insist on full admission of guilt. We expect Iran to assure of willingness to conduct a full

and open investigation, bring those responsible to justice, return the bodies of the deceased, pay compensation, and make an official apology through diplomatic channels," Zelensky said in a statement that was published on his official website.

Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, said on Saturday that the Ukrainian passenger plane had been shot down erroneously by the Iranian air defense system. ➔2

Iraq in talks to buy Russian S-400

Iraq has resumed talks with Russia to buy its S-300 surface-to-air missile systems, a senior Iraqi lawmaker told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency following the U.S. killing of a top Iranian commander and Iran's retaliatory missile strikes there.

Meanwhile, firebrand lawmaker Vladimir Zhirinovskiy urged Iran to buy Russia's advanced S-400 missile systems in the wake of a flare-up in tensions with Washington.

"I told Iran's leadership to buy our more powerful S-400 and S-500 missile defense systems and to open air, naval and land bases like in Syria," the state-run TASS news agency quoted Zhirinovskiy as saying.

Iraq has several months ago "renewed negotiations on an S-300 contract" with Russia, Mohammad Reza al-Haider, the chairman of the Iraqi parliament's defense committee, told RIA on Thursday. ➔10

EDITORIAL

Mohammad Ghaderi

Tehran Times editor-in-chief

@ghaderi62

Ukrainian plane incident: Historical records and Iran's responsibility

The downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane over Iran's airspace on Wednesday morning, apart from the great sorrow that it caused, was only a repetition of similar events that have been recurring continuously in the contemporary world. The only difference between the recent crash near the Imam Khomeini International Airport and similar crashes around the world is that none of those governments regretted the incidents but Tehran did.

The reasons behind the tragic downing of the Boeing 737 airliner near Tehran were announced by Iran's Armed Forces General Staff. It listed human error, the security situation in the region and the U.S. warmongering policy as the chief reasons.

The Armed Forces General Staff, in a statement on Saturday morning, expressed condolences and sympathized with the Iranian and non-Iranian families and formally apologized about the human error.

This article is trying to utilize a report by the AFP (Agence France-Press) covering similar air crashes to compare Tehran's reaction to the event with the other governments.

Base on the AFP report, the Malaysian MH 17 airliners was targeted by a missile in the eastern part of Ukraine where a civil war was raging in July 2014. The entire 298 passengers on board lost their lives in the crash. None of the sides involved in the civil war in Ukraine accepted responsibly over the missile attack.

In March 23, 2007, a Belarusian cargo plan was targeted and downed by a missile as few seconds after the plane took off from the Mogadishu international airport. Eleven people were killed in the crash.

In October 24, 2001, a Russian Topolev airliner that was flying from Tel Aviv towards Novosibirsk was exploded over the Black Sea. A week later, Kiev admitted that a Ukrainian missile had downed the plane. It left 78 people dead. ➔2

Trump is the most dangerous man in the world: Adib-Moghaddam

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN - Professor Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, Chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute believes that "Trump is the most dangerous man in the world."

Professor in Global Thought and Comparative Philosophies and Chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute, also adds that "Donald Trump is the biggest threat to the United States itself, as he has clearly jeopardised the country's interests abroad."

Here is the full text of the interview.

■ The United States assassinated General Qassem Soleimani in an act ordered by President Donald Trump. By doing so, the United States appears to have raised tensions with Iran to avoid impeachment so that it can marginalize

US domestic affairs. What is your assessment?

A: In my first interviews with you about Donald Trump, immediately when he was elected I said that he is the most dangerous man in the world, exactly because he is essentially void of intelligence, much less strategic acumen. The assassination of General Soleimani and Commander Al-Muhandis is clear evidence for the incompetence of this president to think in logical and rational terms when it comes to world politics, even in terms of US national interests. In fact, Donald Trump is the biggest threat to the United States itself, as he has clearly jeopardised the country's interests abroad.

The timing of the killing is related to the re-election campaign, as you indicate. Unfortunately, the United States continues to be one of the few

countries in the world where a chauvinist macho-politician such as Trump can garner votes by killing people. This is unthinkable in Europe, even in the contemporary United Kingdom after the debacle of the Blair years. Indeed, most societies of the world would vote for a politician that talks peace, rather than war.

■ US Action on Assassination of Sardar Soleimani On the other hand, it shows that the war with Iran is important for the U.S at the present moment. What is your assessment?

A: The state ruling US society has been at war essentially since its inception, certainly in the post Second-World War period. This is a garrison state, armed to the teeth, after all, and ready to use force in contravention to international law and multilateral organizations. ➔7

ISIL praises 'allied' U.S. for assassinating Gen. Soleimani

The ISIL (Daesh) terrorist group has hailed the recent assassination of Iran's top military commander, Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, by its "allied" US forces in Iraq, describing the criminal act as a "divine intervention" made by direct order of American President Donald Trump.

In the early hours of January 3, a US drone strike assassinated Gen. Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy chief of the Iraqi pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), near Baghdad International Airport.

Four other Iranians and four more Iraqis in their company were also martyred.

The Pentagon said in a statement that Presi-

dent Trump directly ordered the U.S. military to assassinate the top Iranian commander.

The assassination prompted Iran to take revenge by pouring more than a dozen ballistic missiles on two military bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq early on Wednesday.

Both commanders were admired by Muslim nations for eliminating the U.S.-sponsored Daesh terrorists in the region. General Soleimani, in particular, was an international figure who played a leading role in promoting peace and security in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

In an editorial of the terror group's weekly propaganda al-Naba publication on Thursday, Daesh praised the assassination of Gen. Soleimani and al-Muhandis, saying they "died" at the

hands of its "allies" - a clear reference to the U.S.

Many believe that Washington created the Daesh terrorist group and helped it rise and commence its reign of terror and destruction in Syria and Iraq in 2014.

Back in January 3, 2016, Trump, then a US presidential candidate, said during a campaign stop in Biloxi, Mississippi, that Democratic presidential candidate "Hillary Clinton created" the Daesh Takfiri group "with [then president Barack] Obama", stressing that "they created" the terror group.

Later, on August 10 of the same year, Trump reiterated what he had said several months ago, stressing that Obama was "the founder" of Daesh, whose co-founder "would be 'Crooked' Hillary Clinton." ➔10



©Tehran Times/ Behnam Tofighi

"No Fly Zone" picked as best film at Ammar festival

TEHRAN — Iranian director Amir Dasargar's movie "No Fly Zone" was crowned best at the 10th Ammar Popular Film Festival (APFF).

The film is about three teenagers who are trying to make a drone to take part in an important competition. While they are preparing for the competition a cheetah appears in the area they are working in. They decide to find and save the cheetah.

Hossein Darabi's "Water Never Dies" about an Iranian commander during the 1980s Iran-Iraq war received the Golden Lantern for the best short film. ➔12

PERSPECTIVE

Salman Parviz

Journalist

No winners in any war

In a rare accident during my last year's trip to India, a cobra managed to sneak into a jaguar's enclosure in one of the country's oldest and most popular zoo in the southwestern city of Mysuru. As the Jaguar, named Raja saw the cobra, the two pounced at each other. When the animal keepers got to the scene Raja had already killed the cobra and in the process had taken a few snake bites. The zoo authorities rushed Raja to the Zoo Hospital but the feline succumbed to the snake bites later same day.

Today's precarious situation in the Persian Gulf reminds me of this incident at the Mysuru Zoo, with the U.S. being the cobra, Iran as Raja and world powers the zookeeper. In this case, however, the zookeeper is not too late to save the day.

Although the tensions have been going on for years now but the situation got explosive with the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani.

General Soleimani frequently visited Iraq, and these visits were hardly a secret and according to the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the U.S. had him under surveillance for a long time. In the past he had miraculously escaped multiple assassination attempts.

General Soleimani was assassinated alongside and six others following a U.S. air raid at Baghdad's international airport on January 3.

After funeral processions in Iraqi cities of Kadhimiya, Najaf and Kerbala, the martyrs were taken to Ahvaz, Mashad and Tehran where people assembled in hundreds of thousands from the iconic landmarks of Enqelab Sqare to Azadi Square.

Among the martyrs was also Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, leader of Iraq's Hashd al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Front). He was laid to rest in Iraqi holy city of Najaf.

Gen. Soleimani hailed from a modest background in Kerman. He was a child of the revolution. At 13 years of age he started working to support his family, spending his free time lifting weights and attending sermons by the founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Khomeini. ➔7

Leader orders probe into passenger plane crash

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** —Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday expressed deep condolences to the bereaved families of the victims of the Ukrainian passenger plane, urging the Armed Forces General Staff to launch investigations into the downing of the plane that was caused by a human error on Wednesday morning.

Ayatollah Khamenei ordered the Armed Forces General Staff to probe possible failures and shortcoming that led to such a “painful” incident.

The Leader asked relevant officials to devise a mechanism to prevent such incidents in the future.

The incident happened a few hours after Iran fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a U.S. airbase inside Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif expressed apologies and condolences to all who have been affected by the tragic plane crash, saying that “U.S. adventurism” has led to this disaster.

“Preliminary conclusions of internal investigation by Armed Forces: Human error at time of crisis caused by US adventurism led to disaster,” Zarif tweeted on Saturday.

On Saturday morning, the Armed Forces General Staff released a statement noting that human error in an air defense mistakenly targeted the Ukrainian passenger plane near Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Airport. 176 people on board lost their lives.

Tehran condoles with Oman over Sultan Qaboos demise

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Minister, in a tweet on Saturday, expressed his condolence to the Omani government and people over the demise of Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

In his Arabic-language tweet, Zarif said, “Sultan Qaboos’ demise is a great loss for the region.”

He further congratulated Sultan Qaboos successor Heitham bin Tariq for the new responsibly.

Qaboos bin Said was sultan since 1970 and the eighth sultan of the House of Al Said. He was the longest-serving monarch among the present Arab rulers.

Heitham bin Tariq, 56 years old, has been the minister of cultural heritage and the head of 2040 economic prospect committee of the country since 2000.

Iran to unveil new generation of centrifuges in April

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) is set to unveil the 16th generation of domestically-manufactured centrifuge machines in early April 2020, the special assistant to the AEOI chief announced on Saturday.

Ali Asghar Zare’an broke the story on the sidelines of the nuclear industry exhibition in the southern port city of Bushehr.

“We certainly will showcase more products both in terms of volume and quality on April 8,” Zare’an explained.

April 8 marks the National Nuclear Technology Day in Iran. “One of the newest achievements is the latest version of centrifuge machine with SWU 50 (Separate Work Unit), which is designed and manufactured by the Atomic Energy Organization’s experts. The new centrifuge machine will be unveiled on the national nuclear day in Tehran,” he said

“The new centrifuge machine is the 16th version of such machines.”

He added, “We had five centrifuge machines for research and development purposes but now we have 15 generation of centrifuge machines.”

In recent years, Iranian scientists have made remarkable progress in the field of nuclear technology despite the sanctions imposed by the West.

Ukrainian plane incident: Historical records and Iran’s responsibility

1 → In July 1988, Iran Air Flight 655, an Airbus A300 with 290 people on board, was targeted and blown up by a missile fired from the U.S. navy’s guided-missile cruiser USS Vincennes as it was flying over Iran’s territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The entire 290 passenger and crew on board were killed at the scene. The U.S., though paying money to compensate for the deaths of the plane’s passengers, never apologized and even the U.S. navy awarded a medal of honor to the commander of the warship.

In September 1983, a South Korean airliner was targeted and downed mistakenly by the former Soviet Union’s fighter jets over Sakhalin Island. 269 passengers and crew on board the Boeing lost lives in the incident.

In February 1973, an airbus of the Libyan airliner was targeted and downed by the Zionist regime of Israel’s air defense units as the plane had approached an Israeli military facility in the Sinai Deseret. 108 passengers and crew were killed in the incident.

The AFP report testifies that such incidents are inevitable in warlike situations; however, Iran honestly revealed the truth and expressed its apology for the error that it called “painful”.

With a glance at similar events, none of the governments whose airspace had been the scene of such incidents accepted responsibly for their faults. For Instance, neither separatists in eastern Ukraine nor the pro-government fighters accepted responsibly for the downing of the Malaysian plane and nobody apologized about the error.

The same story happened for Iran Air Flight 655. The U.S. that has always been claiming as a defender of human rights never apologized about the incident. It even awarded a medal of honor to the man that had ordered the shooting.

Ukraine: Iran pleaded guilty to plane incident before completion of intl. commission work

1 → The passenger plane, with 176 people aboard, was mistakenly downed on Wednesday morning. It happened a few hours after Iran fired dozens of missiles at the U.S. airbase inside Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of Iranian Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad on January 3.

The victims of the crash included 82 Iranians, 63 Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans, and three British nationals.

Zarif blames ‘U.S. adventurism’ for tragic plane incident, offers apologies

POLITICAL d e s k

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Saturday expressed apologies and condolences to all those who have been affected by the tragic Ukrainian plane incident near Tehran, saying “the U.S. adventurism” has led to this tragedy.

The remarks by Zarif followed after the Iranian military found out that the Ukrainian passenger plane had been shot down by mistake.

“A sad day. Preliminary conclusions of internal investigation by Armed Forces: Human error at time of crisis caused by US adventurism led to disaster,” Zarif tweeted.

“Our profound regrets, apologies, and condolences to our people, to the families of all victims, and to other affected nations,” Zarif added.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the Armed Forces General Staff issued a statement declaring that the Ukrainian passenger plane was downed due to “human error” in an air defense base near Tehran.

The plane was shot down mistakenly a



few hours after Iran fired missiles at a U.S. airbase in western Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of top Iranian military com-

mander Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad on January 30. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the commander the

Iranian UN envoy says U.S. must leave the region

POLITICAL d e s k

TEHRAN — Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, has said that the U.S. must leave the region, noting that the U.S. is unwelcome in the region.

“Iraq and the region are dissatisfied with the presence of the United States, and the United States must respect the Iraqi parliament’s approval to end the United States’ military presence,” IRNA quoted him as saying on Saturday in an interview with Aljazeera.

He said the Iraqi parliament’s approval is the result of more than 17 years of the U.S. occupation of the country.

The U.S. invaded Iraq in March 2003 under the false claim that the country was hiding weapons of mass destruction. The invasion took place despite repeated confirmations by international bodies, including the UN’s International

Atomic Energy Agency, that Iraq did not have any secret weapons program.

Takht-Ravanchi added that Iran and the Persian Gulf littoral states can solve their problems without U.S. interference.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday that the U.S. “corruptive presence” in the region must come to an end.

“This region does not accept presence of the United States. The people in the region and the regional governments rising from the people do not accept this issue,” the Leader said during a speech in Qom.

■ **‘Gen. Soleimani was anti-terror hero’**

Takht-Ravanchi also said that Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was a “hero of fight against terrorism”.

Rouhani says Iran “deeply regrets the disastrous mistake” of plane downing, promises justice

POLITICAL d e s k

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani issued a statement on Wednesday saying that investigations will continue to identify and prosecute all those involved in the unintentional downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane near Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Airport on January 8.

On Saturday, the Armed Force General Staff issued a statement saying that the plane was shot down due to a “human error”.

The plane crashed shortly after taking off from the Imam Khomeini Airport, leading to the death of 176 people on board.

Rouhani noted that his country “deeply regrets this disastrous mistake”.

Rouhani’s text message is as follows:

With the utmost regret and sorrow, hours ago I was informed of the outcome of the General Staff of the Armed Forces’ investigation into the Ukrainian passenger plane crash. In the atmosphere of threats and intimidation by the aggressive American

regime against the Iranian nation after the martyrdom of General Qassem Soleimani, and in order to defend ourselves against possible attacks by the American Army, the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran were on full alert, which unfortunately led to this terrible catastrophe, taking the lives of dozens of innocent people because of human error

and mistaken shooting.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is deeply sorry by this disastrous mistake, and I extend my deepest condolences to the families of the victims of this tragic incident on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran and instruct all related bodies to take all necessary measures to compensate and sympathize with the bereaved

“In the atmosphere of threats and intimidation by the aggressive American regime against the Iranian nation after the martyrdom of General Qassem Soleimani, and in order to defend ourselves against possible attacks by the American Army, the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran were on full alert, which unfortunately led to this terrible catastrophe.”

Biden blames Trump for instability in Middle East

By staff and agency

Democratic presidential front-runner Joe Biden has held Donald Trump responsible for the current instability in the Middle East as he withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal and imposed sanctions on Iran.

According to the Associated Press, Biden said at a rally in the early caucus state of Nevada that everything that has happened in Iran and Iraq in recent weeks was brought on by Trump “walking away” from a nuclear deal in 2018 that enjoyed strong international support.

“This is a president who doesn’t listen to his military, who doesn’t listen to his intelligence community,” he said.

Biden, who was vice president when President Barack Obama signed the nuclear deal and earlier served as chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, said he warned more than a month ago that Trump would “get us in a war and get us in a war in Iran.”



“This president has embraced thugs across the world. He has poked his finger in the eye of our friends and allies,” Biden said. “The next president better be able to figure out how to bring back these alliances and pull us back together.”

Trump ordered assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in an airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.

In retaliation, Iran carried out missile attacks on a U.S. base in Iraq on Wednesday morning.

Iranian parliament to discuss Ukrainian plane incident on Sunday session

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Iranian Parliament is slated to review the details of the Ukrainian plane incident in an open session on Sunday.

Parliament member Tayyebeh Siavashi said on Saturday that the legislature will review the recent airplane incident near Tehran in an open session on Sunday.

Siavashi tweeted on Saturday that after the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces announced that the Ukrainian plane was targeted by the air defense systems due to human error, the Iranian Parliament has decided to discuss the issue in an open session tomorrow.

Senior parliamentarian Mohammad Reza Aref called on the officials to answer the questions disturbing the public opinion because of the news on the plane’s downing, and asked for sacking those involved in the tragedy.

The General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces said in a statement earlier on Saturday that Ukrainian Boeing 737 Plane has

IRGC aerospace unit, told a press conference on Saturday that Iran’s air defense systems had been put on the “highest level of readiness” and alerted to a possible cruise missile attack by the U.S. prior to the plane incident.

Taking full responsibility for the accident, the commander said he is ready to obey any decision made by officials.

Hajizadeh said the operator of an air defense base near Tehran mistook the doomed jetliner with a cruise missile.

He said the operator failed to obtain confirmation from the higher ranks because of disorder in the communication systems, and finally decided to fire at the target as there was only 10 seconds left for making a decision, Tasnim reported.

All 176 people aboard the Ukrainian plane died in the incident. The plane was flying from Tehran to Kiev.

The Armed Forces said those responsible for shooting down the passenger jet would “immediately” be brought before military court.

Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Quds Force, was assassinated in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad on January 3. The Pentagon announced that Donald Trump had ordered the assassination.

“United States’ President Donald Trump received bad consultation and took an adventurist decision to assassinate General Qassem Soleimani,” Iran’s ambassador to the UN said.

Takht-Ravanchi said that Iran’s response to the U.S. terrorist action is based on “the international law of enjoying right to defend itself”.

He said that Iran’s next action depends on the U.S.

Iran fired dozens of ballistic missiles at a U.S. military base in western Iraq on Wednesday in retaliation to the assassination of Soleimani.

families. I also express my deep condolences and sympathy of the Iranian government to the nations, governments, and families of non-Iranian victims. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be in full consular cooperation to identify and return the bodies of victims to their families.

This painful accident is not something that can be easily overlooked. Further investigation is needed to identify all the causes and roots of this tragedy and prosecute the perpetrators of this unforgivable mistake and inform the honorable people of Iran and the families of the victims about it.

It is also necessary to adopt the required arrangements and measures to address the weaknesses of the country’s defense systems to make sure such a disaster is never repeated.

Again, I extend my condolences to the families of the victims of this painful accident, praying for those who lost their lives and wishing their bereaved families patience and rewards.

been shot down as a hostile object due to human error at a time of heightened U.S. threats of war.

The statement said an expert investigation by the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces after the Ukrainian airline company’s Boeing 737 incident has found that flight 752 of the Ukrainian airlines has been shot down as a hostile flying object that was approaching a sensitive IRGC center and was shot down due to human error few hours after Iran’s missile attack on the U.S. and as Iran’s military was expecting attacks by the U.S. army.

“Following threats by the criminal U.S. president and military commanders to strike a large number of targets on the Islamic Republic of Iran’s territory in case of an Iranian attack and due to the unprecedented aerial movements in the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Armed Forces were on highest levels of alert to respond to any possible threats,” the statement said.

this is a severe mistake,” the political commentator said, referring to the U.S. assassination of General Soleimani.

“This is because Trump is coming up, he has an election coming, and more to the point he has an impeachment coming and this is a wonderful diversion for him and he doesn’t care if people die for his political aims,” he added.

The impeachment inquiry was launched by the House Democrats in September after Trump reportedly tried to find dirt on Joe Biden, a leading contender for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, by pressuring Ukraine and later tried to obstruct Congress from investigating the matter.

Soraya Sepahpour Ulrich, an independent researcher and writer from California, the other panelist invited to The Debate program, hailed the top Iranian anti-terror commander and called the country’s reprisal move “only a start.”

Trump assassinated Gen. Soleimani to create ‘diversion’ from impeachment

(Press TV) — The U.S. assassination of top Iranian anti-terror commander, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, was perpetrated on the direct orders of Donald Trump to serve as a “diversion” for the American president, who is presently grappling with an impeachment inquiry, overshadowing the upcoming U.S. presidential race and putting his re-election at stake, says a political analyst in New York.

Ian Williams, a senior analyst at Foreign Policy in Focus, made the remark in a Friday edition of Press TV’s The Debate program, while commenting on Iran’s retaliatory response to the U.S. assassination of General Soleimani, and his Iraqi trenchmate, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, with a barrage of missiles that hit two American military bases in Iraq.

Iran defended its missile strikes on U.S. bases in Iraq and described them as a slap in the face for the U.S., saying Tehran did not

mean to kill American troops but to damage the U.S. war machine.

Tehran, however, warned that the attack was only the start of a series of attacks that will take place across the entire region.

Iran also posits that the retaliation put across a strong message that U.S. military forces should voluntarily withdraw from the region before being driven out by force.

“The missile attack on the American bases showed that the Iranian missiles were highly accurate, dodged all of the anti-missile weaponry and I think deliberately avoided U.S. casualties so that Trump did not have an excuse to beat the war drums anymore... Everything is clear that it’s because of wisdom on the part of Tehran rather than anything that Trump did,” Williams told Press TV on Friday.

“This was a reprehensible, illegal act in international law. It was provocative, it was worse than a crime, it was a mistake and

We accept responsibility for plane incident

‘I wished I was dead as soon as I heard about the aircraft incident’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the aerospace unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), said on Saturday that he wished he was dead when he heard that his forces have downed a Ukrainian aircraft which crashed near the capital Tehran on Wednesday morning.

“After hearing the news in the country’s west after implementing the military operation against American bases and when I made sure that this incident has happened, I wished I was dead,” said Hajizadeh said a press conference on the Ukrainian plane crash.

“For a lifetime, we put our life on the line for the people, and today we put our honor on the line for God and face the cameras in such difficult circumstances,” he said.

Hajizadeh accepted full responsibility for the incident, saying he had notified related authorities immediately but the public announcement of the matter was pending an investigation by the Armed Forces General Staff as required by existing procedures.

“Neither the Guards nor the armed forces never intended to cover up, but this was a process that had to be perused,” he said, according to Press TV.

He added that further judgment on the matter was the responsibility of the higher authorities and the Judiciary and that “we will comply with any decision taken by them”.

All 176 crew members and passengers, 147 of whom were Iranians, died in the Ukraine International Airlines (UIA) crash which came a few minutes after take-off from Tehran to Kiev on Wednesday.

Hajizadeh said Iran’s air defense systems had been put on the “highest level of readiness” and alerted to a possible



cruise missile attack prior to the plane crash incident.

The IRGC aerospace chief added that the operator manning the system had repeatedly called for a halt in flights in the region during the night.

He added that the operator then identified what his air defense system had detected as an incoming cruise missile 19 kilometers away.

The operator, as required by military guidelines then proceeded to call for orders to deal with the perceived threat, but wasn’t able to do so as his

communication network failed to work.

Hajizadeh added that the operator then “took the wrong decision” of firing on the perceived threat in a “ten-second” time span to shoot or ignore the flying object.

The general added that Iran’s aviation authorities had no information regarding the matter and that they, along with the plane’s crew, had conducted no wrongdoing in the incident.

The General Staff of the Armed Forces also issued a statement on Saturday saying that the Ukrainian plane crash was caused by a “human error”.

Hajizadeh said Iran’s air defense systems had been put on the “highest level of readiness” and alerted to a possible cruise missile attack prior to the plane crash incident.

“The Ukrainian passenger plane was hit unintentionally and due to humane error, which unfortunately led to the martyrdom of a number of our people and also a number of foreign nationals,” the statement read.

“Following threats made by the U.S. President [Donald Trump] and military commanders of attacking targets on the soil of the Islamic Republic of Iran in case of Iran’s retaliatory operation, and due to unprecedented increase in movements in the region’s airspace, Iranian armed forces were at the utmost level of readiness and alert,” it added.

It came in the aftermath of a Trump-ordered U.S. attack at Baghdad’s airport on January 3 that killed top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani.

Last Saturday, Trump tweeted that if Iran attacks any American assets to avenge the killing of Qassem Soleimani, the U.S. has 52 targets across the Islamic Republic that “WILL BE HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD.”

“Let this serve as a WARNING that if Iran strikes any Americans, or American assets, we have.....targeted 52 Iranian sites (representing the 52 American hostages taken by Iran many years ago), some at a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture, and those targets, and Iran itself, WILL BE HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD,” Trump said. “The USA wants no more threats!”

Nevertheless, Iran took revenge for the assassination in the early hours of Wednesday.

The IRGC pointed to the successful Shahid (Martyr) Soleimani Operation against the Ain al-Assad base with tens of surface-to-surface missiles and warned the United States that any more aggression will receive more “painful and crushing” response.

Soleimani assassination put an end to pro-compromise mindset, says top MP



POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has said the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was the end of the pro-compromise mindset.

“Those who are after dialogue and friendship with America should know that the assassination of General

Soleimani is the end of the compromise line,” Mojtaba Zonnour told the Mehr news agency in an interview published on Saturday.

“They should know that this strategy should be shut down and be turned into confrontation with America,” Zonnour said.

He said Iran’s parliament as well as the national security and foreign policy committee will not allow any officials to pursue the “compromise line” and will definitely stand up to those who want to pay maximum attention to the West and the U.S.

“These people have shut their eyes to realities ... They should know that the more they talk and act from the position of weakness, the more the enemies will become greedy to harm Iran,” he added.

Zonnour further said that Soleimani’s blood rooted out all the evil conspiracies of the U.S. and the Zionist regime in the region and formed unbreakable link between the two nations of Iran and Iraq.

The United States assassinated Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, Iran’s top anti-terror commander, and his

comrades-in-arms in an airstrike in Baghdad on January 3.

The U.S. airstrike also martyred Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of the anti-terrorist Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).

Soleimani is recognized internationally as a legendary commander in the battle against terrorist groups, especially Daesh (ISIS). He commanded forces who resisted ISIS which was advancing toward the Iraqi Kurdistan and came close to Baghdad.

Officials in Tehran and independent generals in the world have said the Soleimani assassination amounts to an act of war against Iran.

On Wednesday morning, Iran carried out the Shahid (Martyr) Soleimani Operation against an American airbase in Iraq with more than ten missiles.

Iran had vowed to take “tough revenge” for Soleimani’s blood.

In a statement, the IRGC warned the United States that any more aggression or movement will receive a more “painful and crushing” response.

Borrell says EU has not discussed process leading to UN sanctions on Iran

By staff and agency

Josep Borrell, the European Union foreign policy chief, has said that European Union foreign ministers did not consider on Friday triggering a dispute resolution process under the nuclear 2015 deal that could lead to renewed United Nations sanctions on Tehran.

“We haven’t discussed whether it should be triggered or not,” Reuters quoted him as saying.

He also said, “We are willing to maintain this deal and for that we need Iran to fulfill its commitments.”

Borrell said in December 2019 that the nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, has benefits for Europe and efforts must be made to preserve it.

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

Under the JCPOA, Iran promised to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for the termination of economic and financial sanctions.

Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China, and Iran have been trying to salvage the pact. However, Europeans’ efforts to protect trade with Iran against the U.S. sanctions have



yielded nothing concrete so far.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the deal, Tehran announced that its “strategic patience” is over and began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals.

Iran’s moves are based on paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which “allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out

of compliance.”

In the first stage, Iran announced that it will not limit its stockpile of the nuclear fuel to 300 kilograms allowed under the deal. On that date (May 8) Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said if the remaining parties to the JCPOA, especially Europeans, devise a mechanism to protect Iran from the sanctions’ effect in the two-month deadline it will reverse its decision.

But since European parties missed the deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67%, thereby starting the second step.

Again, as Europe missed the second 60-day deadline, Iran moved to take the third step, removing a ban on nuclear research and development (R&D).

In the fourth step, which started on November 6, Iran began injecting uranium gas into 1,044 centrifuges at the Fordow nuclear site. It was done at the presence of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Iran on January 5 abandoned the remaining limits of the agreement.

In its fifth and final step in reducing commitments, Iran suspended all limits under the JCPOA.

Pakistani FM set to visit Tehran on Sunday

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Saturday that Pakistan’s foreign minister is scheduled to come to Tehran on Sunday.

According to Mousavi, Shah Mehmood Qureshi is set to meet his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, and other top Iranian officials during the trip, IRNA reported.

The trip would days after Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said his country is ready to play a positive role to de-escalate tensions between Iran and the United States.

Addressing a large gathering in Islamabad, he said Pakistan is likely to become a country that would help bring peace in other countries.

“I have also told Donald Trump that we are ready to play a positive role in reducing tensions between Iran the United States,” said Imran Khan.

He said war is in no one’s interest as in war nobody wins and everyone loses.

“We have paid a heavy price for participating in war against terror,” he added.

Imran Khan made the comments in the aftermath of the U.S. assassination of Iran’s top anti-terror general, Qassem Soleimani, in Iraq.

The assassination was conducted in a drone attack on January 3, at the direct order of Trump.

On January 8, Iran carried out the Shahid (Martyr) Soleimani Operation against an American airbase in Iraq with more than ten missiles.

Iran had vowed to take “tough revenge” for Soleimani’s blood.

In a statement, the IRGC warned the United States that any more aggression or movement will receive a more “painful and crushing” response.



Ukrainian plane downed due to human error: Armed Forces

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Armed Forces issued a statement on Saturday announcing that the Ukrainian passenger plane was shot down near the Imam Khomeini Airport due to a “human error”.

“The Ukrainian passenger plane was hit unintentionally and due to human error which unfortunately led to martyrdom of a number of our people and also a number of foreign nationals,” the statement read.

Following is full text of the statement:



1. Following threats made by the U.S. President [Donald Trump] and military commanders of attacking targets on the soil of the Islamic Republic of Iran in case of Iran’s retaliatory operation [to the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani], and due to unprecedented increase in movements in the region’s airspace, the Iranian Armed Forces were at the utmost level of readiness and alert.

2. Hours after the missile strike [by the IRGC against the U.S. base in Iraq], aircraft flights by U.S. terrorist forces increased near the Iranian borders and also some reports of air threats against the country’s strategic centers were delivered to defense units and some targets were seen on radars which caused increased sensitivity in air defenses.

3. In such sensitive and critical situation, flight No. 752 of Ukraine International Airlines departed from the Imam Khomeini Airport and while changing direction, it completely resembled a hostile target approaching a sensitive military center of the IRGC. In these circumstances, due to human error and unintentionally, the plane was targeted which unfortunately led to the martyrdom of a number of our dear compatriots and also a number of foreign nationals.

4. The Armed Forces offer condolences to the families of the victims and apologize for the human error. The Iranian Armed Forces Staff assures the people that it will make re-occurrence of such incidents impossible through conducting fundamental modifications in operations’ processes of the Armed Forces and it will also hand over the culprit to the military court.

5. It was also announced to relevant officials in the Guards to provide the people with a detailed explanation.

120 NAM states protest U.S. visa refusal to Zarif

The 120-member nations of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) have strongly opposed Washington’s refusal to issue Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif a visa to attend an upcoming United Nations Security Council meeting.

The NAM countries voiced their opposition to the U.S. move in a statement on Saturday by citing paragraph 24.6 of the final document adopted at their 18th summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, last April.



The document states that the U.S. visa denial constitutes an outright violation of the terms of a 1947 UN Headquarters agreement which requires Washington to allow foreign officials into the country for UN affairs.

“The Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) strongly rejects the denial of the issuance of the entry visa by the Government of the United States to Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to attend the United Nations Security Council Meeting at the invitation of the current President of the Security Council scheduled for 9 January 2020 as a flagrant violation of the provisions of the United Nations Headquarters Agreement as well as international law,” the NAM said in the statement.

“The Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) calls upon all countries hosting United Nations and other international meetings to abide by their obligations to issue, without discrimination and undue delay, entry visas to member country delegations in accordance with the host country agreements,” it added.

Zarif earlier said U.S. statesmen were vastly terrified of someone going to their country and conveying the truth to the American people.

The top Iranian diplomat explained that his ministry had “weeks ago” requested a visa to take part in the January 9 Security Council meeting on the importance of upholding the UN Charter, rejecting as false claims by American officials that they did not have time to process the application.

Zarif said the move was indicative of the moral bankruptcy of the U.S. administration and President Donald Trump’s team.

The Security Council meeting would have given Zarif a global spotlight to publicly criticize the United States for assassinating General Qassem Soleimani, which has prompted an outpouring of public anger worldwide.

Zarif last traveled to New York in September for the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations after the U.S. imposed sanctions on him in August for what Iran called “great fear” of his eloquent delivery of the Iranian nation’s message to the world.

(Source: Press TV)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	359807.1
IFX	4678.85

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,687 rials
GBP	54,868 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$64.98/b
WTI	\$59.04/b
OPEC Basket	\$67.26/b
Gold	\$1,564.10/oz
Silver	\$18.18/oz
Platinum	\$983.65/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Steel exports up 19% in 9 months on year

1 → Also, Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani says the country has achieved a proper self-reliance in steel industry. Steel industry is one of the industries in which some good investment has been made and today it has become a production advantage, according to Rahmani.



Iran's annual steel production is planned to reach 45 million tons by the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022), Sarqini has previously announced.

In mid-June last year, the official had announced that the country's annual crude steel production is planned to reach 30 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

He put Iran's crude steel production at 25 million tons in the past year.

Upward trend comes back to stock market

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — After experiencing consecutives drops in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), Iran's stock market witnessed growth on Saturday, IRNA reported.

TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 5,999 points to reach 359,807 in the first day of the Iranian week.

As reported, 1,634 securities worth 11.211 trillion rials (about \$267 million) were traded at this market.

Also, Iran over-the-counter (OTC) market known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB) witnessed growth of its main index IFX which rose 118 points to stand at 4,678 on Saturday.

Some 620.052 million securities worth 10.408 trillion rials (about \$247.8 million) were traded at IFB.

'Expo Dubai 2020 a great platform for presenting Iranian products'

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Expo Dubai 2020, which is going to kick off on October 20, 2020, will be a great opportunity for Iranian companies to showcase their latest products and achievements, Iranian deputy industry, mining and trade minister said on Friday.

"Increasing exports of products and services, as well as attracting foreign investment for contribution to the Iranian economy should be two important goals to follow in Expo Dubai 2020," Hossein Modares Khiabani said.



The official noted that Iran will also allocate space for startups and knowledge-based companies to put their products on display at the major international event.

He further called on all the related government and private sector bodies to collaborate closely in order to help the country's producers prepare themselves to have a significant presence in the mentioned expo.

Expo 2020 is a World Expo to be hosted by Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, opening on October 20, 2020. The Bureau International des Expositions general assembly in Paris awarded Dubai as the host on November 27, 2013.

The World Expo in Dubai in 2020 will be the first to be held in the MENA & SA (Middle East and North Africa & South Asia) region. UAE selected the theme "Connecting Minds. Creating the Future", sub-themes being Sustainability, Mobility and Opportunity.

IMIDRO revives 99 small mines since last March

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has revived 99 small mines in the country since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019), Khodadad Gharibpour, head of the organization, announced.

"In this way we have so far materialized 66 percent of our program for reviving 150 small mines in the present year", the official said, IRNA reported.

Reviving 150 small mines in this year is to create jobs for 3,000 persons, Gharibpour further announced.

He said based on an MOU signed two years ago, 500 small mines were planned to be revived throughout the country in a course of five years to create jobs for 25,000 people.

Based on the statistics released by Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade there are about 4,000 inactive mines in the country at present, the official said, adding they include nine percent of metals mines, 21 percent of decorative stones mines, 51 percent of constructional materials mines,



and 15 percent of other minerals mines.

Establishment of high-capacity industrial units recently in the country indicates the

need for the supply of more minerals as feedstock for these units.

This reason besides some other ones

such as sanctions on the country's economic sector have encouraged mining sector to revive the small mines which constitute 98 percent of mines in the country.

Previously, due to lack of liquidity and infrastructure, exploration projects were not seen economically viable for these mines, but now they have come under the spotlight.

And in this regard, mining sector has put a plan for reviving and renovating small mines on the agenda of its activity.

IMIDRO head has mentioned this plan as one of the most significant plans of "Resistance Economy", saying that his organization is strongly determined to carry out it.

The official has said reviving small mines stands among the top priorities of IMIDRO in the current Iranian calendar year.

Holding 68 types of different minerals Iran stands at the 10th place in the world in terms of diversity of its mineral reserves.

The country has over 60 billion tons of untapped mineral deposits, of which 40 billion tons are proven reserves, placing Iran at the 15th place globally.

Industry sector reports positive growth

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister said the country's industry sector registered a 0.4-percent growth in the end of the Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (September 22) while the growth rate was minus 9.5 percent in the end of the last Iranian year (March 20, 2019).

Speaking in a meeting with the board members of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives on Saturday, Reza Rahmani noted that communication between cooperatives and the Industry Ministry should not be just on theoretical basis and they should engage with each other.

According to Rahmani, cooperatives can contribute greatly to trade with the neighboring countries and the decrease in the value of the national currency has made exports more economically justifiable.

We have great potentials and capacities in various fields of production, such as ceramic tiles, and despite the increases in production, we can still double that capacity to export to global markets.



Cooperatives and especially the chamber of cooperatives should work on the export potentials to the 15 neighboring countries as well as the Eurasian markets, he stressed.

The official further noted that the Industry Ministry has it on the agenda to remove the barriers pertaining to liquidity, saying "we have reached agreements with the central bank and we have come up with new ways for financing export projects."

"Tavaniran system has been set up to identify and introduce the needs and capabilities of the country's exporters and the Chamber of Cooperatives can also benefit from this system," Rahmani added.

40,000 dismissed auto part industry workers re-employed

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The secretary of Iranian Auto Parts Makers Association said 40,000 workers who were dismissed by the country's auto parts makers have been re-employed following a boom in the auto industry, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Maziar Beyglou noted that if the current production trend continues, "we will expect an increase in the automotive industry's production next year."

Mentioning the industry ministry's strategies for promoting domestic production, Beyglou said: "Following the current policies, we will see the production of a number of new vehicles from domestic automakers in the coming years."

Domestic parts suppliers are able to play a key role in creating a boom in the country's manufacturing and employment industries, in addition to playing their leading role as the auto industry's intermediates, he stressed.

Beyglou pointed to relying on foreign sources, as the main reason for the decline in the country's car production after the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, saying "With the new policies adopted, if we provide funding for the country's auto parts industry, we will definitely witness the production of high-quality and up-to-date vehicles by domestic manufacturers."

In mid-May 2019, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani issued a directive on "strengthening domes-



tic manufacturing of imported auto parts".

Addressing two of his deputies, Farshad Moqimi, deputy for industrial affairs, and Mohammad-Baqer Ali, the board chairman of Iran's Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO), the minister put emphasis on using the highest potential of human resources for strengthening domestic manufacturing of auto parts which are currently imported to the country.

Also in December 2019, the Specialized Manufactures of Auto Parts Association announced that Iranian carmakers have prepared some incentive packages to encourage investment making by the auto parts manufacturers.

Given that 1.25 million vehicles have been anticipated to be manufactured in the country during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020), the part manufacturers need 150 trillion rials of working capital (about \$3.571 billion) for the purchase of raw materials and other required items.

Exports by Iranian SMEs exceed \$1.6b in 9 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) exported more than \$1.6 billion worth of commodities in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2019), IRNA reported, quoting an official with Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO).

"Foodstuff, household appliances, polymer and plastic materials, chemicals, rugs, leather and handbags were among the most exported commodities," ISIPO's Deputy Director for Small Industries Asghar Mosaheh told IRNA.

Helping set up export management companies and forming export consortiums are two of the major activities ISIPO is undertaking to improve SMEs' exports, according to Mosaheh.

"Up to date, 72 export consortiums and 65 export management companies have been formed and are operating across the country," he added.

He further noted that the presence of Iranian SMEs in international exhibitions could help them establish their products in the global markets so ISIPO is also organizing workshops for export consortiums and export management companies to familiarize them with the basics, principles and legalities of exports.



Back in August 2019, the head of ISIPO announced that over 33,000 SMEs are currently active in Iran of which 1,100 are exporting their products and services to foreign destinations.

According to Mohsen Salehinia, currently, 43,650 SMEs are based in over 800 industrial parks across the country, of which nearly 78 percent or 33,800 are active.

One of the major programs that ISIPO is following regarding the SMEs is reviving idle units and helping them to get back into the business to increase the country's domestic production and to boost exports to the neighboring countries.

Holding training courses, supporting SMEs' participation in international exhibitions, supporting SMEs research and study projects, and supporting knowledge-based SMEs are some other programs that ISIPO is following to help SMEs expand their activities, according to Salehinia.

Commodities worth 738\$m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), 674.201 tons of commodities valued at \$738 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

As reported by IME International Affairs and Public Relations Department, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of this exchange market, 242,111 tons of various products worth close to \$357 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 231,899 tons of steel, 4,740 tons of copper, 4,660 tons of aluminum, 110 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 12 tons of precious metal concentrates, 360 tons of zinc ingot and 10 tons of lead ingot as well as 23 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 431,606 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$401



million were traded.

On this trading floor, 132,555 tons of bitumen, 127,000

tons of VB feed stock, 75,813 tons of polymer products, 36,740 tons of lube cut oil, 29,185 tons of chemical products, 1,372 tons of base oil, 660 tons of insulation, as well as 29,095 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 814 tons of commodities were traded on the side market of IME.

As previously reported, the value of trades at IME rose 26 percent to reach 135 trillion rials (about \$3.2 billion) during the ninth Iranian calendar month of Azar (ends on December 21).

Some 2.851 million tons of commodities were reportedly traded at this market in the mentioned month to experience a growth of 16 percent.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

RIPI inks MOU with domestic university for research co-op

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran's **desk** Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Quchan University of Technology for cooperation in conducting research in oil, gas and petrochemical areas, Shana reported.

The MOU was signed by Jafar Tofiqi, the chairman of Research Institute of Petroleum Industry, and Head of Quchan University of Technology Ali-Asghar Beheshti on Saturday.

As reported, the agreement aims to conduct research for building and evaluating the performance of new catalysts for the petrochemical industry, and also for collaboration on joint implementation of research projects needed by the oil and gas industry, as well as transfer of knowledge and technologies required by both bodies.

Since the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, Iran has been encouraging domestic companies' presence in its oil and gas projects, in all sectors including research, exploration and development sectors.



Chairman of Iran's Research Institute of Petroleum Industry Jafar Tofiqi (R) and Head of Quchan University of Technology Ali-Asghar Beheshti exchange signed MOU documents in Tehran on Saturday.

In August 2019, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) signed four agreements

with universities and knowledge-based companies to conduct research in a variety

of oil-related areas including geophysics, geochemistry, unconventional hydrocarbon resources as well as drilling.

Later in November, deputy oil minister for engineering, research and technology affairs announced that the ministry had signed 26 major deals with the country's universities.

"Today, the Oil Ministry is conducting 26 research projects through cooperation with 16 top universities and research institutes of the country, and given that these major universities benefit from the contribution of a network of universities, so research measures of Oil Ministry are in fact applying a vast scientific potential in the country", Saeed Mohammadzadeh said.

Through this cooperation, universities help development of oil industry and Oil Ministry helps elevation of scientific status in the country, the official noted.

The official noted that NIOC subsidiaries were also tasked to increase their research activities and in this regard almost all of them were expected to sign similar research agreements in the future.

Metric shows expanding oil market supply

By Matthew V. Veazey

Supplies to the global oil market have risen for three consecutive weeks, according to EIU.

Despite recent escalating tensions between the United States and Iran that could affect crude oil production, supplies to the global oil market have expanded for three consecutive weeks.

That is the conclusion of The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) via its Oil Adequacy Index, which each week gauges the net change in oil supply from OPEC, Russia and the U.S. and in global oil consumption. According to EIU, an index value greater than 50 means the market's oil supply has increased from the previous week and a value less 50 means

it has tightened. A value of 50 reflects no change to the market.

For the week of Jan. 3 EIU reported an index of 56.2, showing relatively less robust growth than the 57.5 for the week of Dec. 27. The metric was at 53 for the week of Dec. 20 — a dramatic turnaround from the 40.9 and 40.6 figures from the weeks of Dec. 13 and Dec. 6, respectively.

"Seaborne crude oil exports dropped from both Iraq — 11 percent — and Iran — 12 percent — this week," EIU Global Economist Cailin Birch said in a written statement emailed to Rigzone.

"This is unlikely to be a result of recent U.S.-Iran tensions. Iraq's exports have eased back after a big increase the previous week,

and Iran's export volumes have been uncharacteristically volatile in recent months."

■ Risks to oil production

To be sure, Birch acknowledged that risks to oil production and prices have gone up with the spike in tensions.

"While neither Iran nor the U.S. wants to engage in a direct conflict, there is a high risk that a policy miscalculation could accidentally lead them into one," she said.

Birch also pointed out that collective seaborne crude oil exports from OPEC countries rose by 5.5 percent week-on-week. Russia posted a 12.2-percent increase for the period, she added.

"That said, the volume of weekly oil exports remains below the levels seen in mid-2019,

and OPEC producers continue to exercise restraint," Birch noted.

Birch also observed that U.S. oil production has begun to level off after a "remarkable growth streak" last year. She pointed out that oilfield services firm Baker Hughes Co. reported the number of active oil rigs fell to 670 in the first week of January — down by nearly 25 percent year from the same period in 2019.

"U.S. companies reined in their operations in the second half of 2019 in order to maximize profitability and pay down large stocks of debt," Birch said. The "U.S. is likely to have hit its peak production level in the current oil price cycle."

(Source: rigzone.com)

Dutch Gate LNG Terminal sets record in another sign of soaring European inventories

By Jamison Cocklin

Operators of the Gate Terminal in the Netherlands, a key entry point for liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Northwest Europe, said ship operations shattered previous records last year as the continent took in more supply, which flooded the global market.

Duth multinational Royal Vopak and midstreamer Nederlandse Gasunie, which jointly own the facility, join the chorus of portfolio players, traders and countries that reported increasing activity throughout the global LNG value chain last year, developments that should influence the North American sector, which has contributed to growth abroad.

Gate said it loaded or unloaded 171 ships last year arriving from a variety of countries, including the United States. That's up from the previous record of 104 ships in 2018.

In all, the terminal, which has a regasification capacity of about 424 Bcf, unloaded roughly 319 Bcf from 111 vessels. Eight were transshipments, where LNG is transferred from one ship to another. The terminal also loaded 52 smaller vessels. Most larger LNG vessels typically carry about 3 Bcf.

Gate also saw a record 3,466 trucks loaded with LNG, "mainly for distribution all over Europe," but also to China, a major importer. Like other terminals across the continent, Gate has tested interest in expanding the facility. It is also studying the possibility of moving LNG by rail, an option that's gaining traction in other parts of the world.



■ The national transmission network

The terminal said it also saw record nominations into the national transmission network, which were three times higher than in 2018. New records have continued to be set this month, Gate said.

Elevated LNG supplies at terminals across Europe have pushed benchmark prices lower. Meanwhile, countries like Norway and Russia that have long served the continent have been forced to reduce pipeline imports to keep prices from falling further.

As LNG supply has increased, buyers have been more willing to execute spot purchases versus the traditional long-term contracts that have long governed purchases. But as Asian imports have slowed, a more liquid European market where

stronger demand exists has lately served as a dumping ground for the fuel.

The continent's ability to continue taking on more gas supplies is coming into question, however, as a particularly warm stretch of weather shows no signs of breaking into the New Year.

The glut is evident as prices have moved lower. The balance-of-the-year strip at Asian benchmark Japan Korea Marker is near \$5.00/MMBtu, while the UK's National Balancing Point, a key marker for the European gas market, is below \$4.50/MMBtu, Houston-based Mobius Risk Group noted.

■ A globally traded product

"With natural gas increasingly becoming a globally traded product, weather in demand centers outside of the United States becomes more important," Mobius said.

If oftakers are unable to absorb all of the supply later in the year, U.S. liquefiers may be among the first to shut-in facilities, a theory that hinges on the ability to push feed gas back into the massive U.S. market, which could hang heavy on already stagnant prices.

The dynamics are also clouding the outlook for the more than 20 announced U.S. export projects totaling roughly 35 Bcf/d that are looking to catch the second wave in the next few years.

Europe's LNG imports have been steadily increasing since late last year, hitting a peak of 12.7 Bcf/d in November, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

(Source: naturalgasintel.com)

Why your 2020 resolution should be to buy more renewable energy stocks

By Matthew DiLallo

Last year was an excellent one for investors in renewable energy stocks. Solar stocks, in particular, were red hot as the top ones all generated triple-digit returns.

While the sector likely won't match that performance again this year, it has the potential to continue producing market-smashing returns given the growth that's ahead. That's because the global economy needs to invest trillions of dollars so that it can pivot from a reliance on fossil fuels to renewables in the coming years.

Given the growth that's still ahead for the sector, investors should resolve to buy more renewable energy stocks in 2020. Here's a look at three of the most appealing opportunities.

One of the hindrances to the adoption of renewable power sources is that they generate electricity intermittently -- the sun doesn't always shine on any given set of solar panels, and the wind doesn't blow consistently. Because of that, renewables haven't been able to provide firm baseload capacity, which is driving the construction of new natural gas power plants.

However, thanks to significant declines in the cost of both wind and solar components as well as large batteries, it's becoming increasingly more economical to add battery storage to new renewable energy projects. One of the leaders in deploying energy storage systems is utility NextEra Energy (NYSE:NEE). Last year, it unveiled a first-of-its-kind energy facility in Oregon that will co-locate wind and solar power generation, and battery storage.

■ The solar energy product

NextEra also detailed its plans to build the world's largest solar-powered battery system in Florida, which will connect an existing solar energy project to a new energy-storage center.

With battery storage costs declining, NextEra believes that solar electricity generation will grow at a faster rate than wind power in the coming years because it's becoming a more cost-effective option. That forecast bodes well for solar panel and component makers, as well as the companies that supply



raw materials and manufacture batteries.

While NextEra has been the renewables leader in the utility sector in recent years, a growing number of its peers are focusing on generating cleaner power too. Xcel Energy (NASDAQ:XEL), for example, became the first one in the sector to pledge to become carbon neutral by 2050. Its example spurred several of its peers to get more serious about reducing their carbon footprints.

Duke Energy (NYSE:DUK), for example, announced plans to cut its carbon emissions in half by 2030, and is aiming to become carbon neutral by 2050. NRG Energy (NYSE:NRG) publicly set those same ambitious targets last year.

One key to reaching those goals will be an accelerated investment in renewable energy. That has the potential to enable those utilities to generate outside total returns, given how successful NextEra's renewables-focused investment plan has been. The company has grown its earnings at an 8.5% compound annual rate since 2005, which is the highest among the 10 largest power companies.

As a result, NextEra's total returns have not only outperformed its utility sector peers, but also 86% of the stocks in the S&P 500 during that time frame.

■ The growth plans and dividends

Renewable energy yieldcos have not yet lived up to their initial hype. These companies, which operate portfolios of cash-flow generating renewable energy facilities, were supposed to offer income-seeking investors fast-growing, high-yielding dividends. Instead, many had to cut their payouts because they couldn't simultaneously support both their growth plans and their dividends.

This niche, however, has undergone some changes in recent years as new sponsors took control of the yieldcos.

Leading alternative-asset manager Brookfield Asset Management (NYSE:BAM), for example, took the reins of wind and solar power producer TerraForm Power (NASDAQ:TERP) in late 2017.

Brookfield implemented a turnaround plan aimed at increasing the profitability of TerraForm's legacy assets while also shoring up its balance sheet and giving it the capital it required in order to grow. That enabled TerraForm to reinstate a high-yielding dividend, which it has the capacity to increase by 5% to 8% per year through at least 2022.

With renewable yieldcos now back on a more solid footing, they're becoming increasingly attractive options for dividend investors.

Climate change concerns and falling costs are proving to be powerful catalysts for renewable energy development. Because of that, the sector should continue growing at a brisk pace. That could give renewable energy stocks the power to continue producing strong returns, which is why investors should resolve to add more of them to their portfolios this year.

When investing geniuses David and Tom Gardner have a stock tip, it can pay to listen. After all, the newsletter they have run for over a decade, Motley Fool Stock Advisor, has tripled the market.

David and Tom just revealed what they believe are the ten best stocks for investors to buy right now ... and TerraForm Power wasn't one of them! That's right -- they think these 10 stocks are even better buys.

(Source: fool.com)

Study looks at how the global energy mix could change over the next 20 years

By Mark Dwortzan

The AES Corporation, based in Virginia, installed the world's largest solar-plus-storage system on the southern end of the Hawaiian island of Kauai. A scaled-down version was first tested at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

When it comes to fulfilling ambitious energy and climate commitments, few nations successfully walk their talk. A case in point is the Paris Agreement initiated four years ago. Nearly 200 signatory nations submitted voluntary pledges to cut their contribution to the world's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, but many are not on track to fulfill these pledges. Moreover, only a small number of countries are now pursuing climate policies consistent with keeping global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius, the long-term target recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

This growing discrepancy between current policies and long-term targets — combined with uncertainty about individual nations' ability to fulfill their commitments due to administrative, technological, and cultural challenges — makes it increasingly difficult for scientists to project the future of the global energy system and its impact on the global climate. Nonetheless, these projections remain essential for decision-makers to assess the physical and financial risks of climate change and of efforts to transition to a low-carbon economy.

To that end, several expert groups continue to produce energy scenarios and analyze their implications for the climate. In a study in the journal *Economics of Energy & Environmental Policy*, Sergey Paltsev, deputy director of the MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change and a senior research scientist at the MIT Energy Initiative, collected projections of the global energy mix over the next two decades from several major energy-scenario producers.

■ The notable findings

Aggregating results from scenarios developed by the MIT Joint Program, International Energy Agency, Shell, BP and ExxonMobil, and contrasting them with scenarios assessed by the IPCC that would be required to follow a pathway that limits global warming to 1.5 C, Paltsev arrived at three notable findings:

Fossil fuels decline, but still dominate. Assuming current Paris Agreement pledges are maintained beyond 2030, the share of fossil fuels in the global energy mix declines from approximately 80 percent today to 73-76 percent in 2040.

In scenarios consistent with the 2 C goal, this share decreases to 56-61 percent in 2040. Meanwhile, the share of wind and solar rises from 2 percent today to 6-13 percent (current pledges) and further to 17-26 percent (2 C scenarios) in 2040.

Carbon capture waits in the wings. The multiple scenarios also show a mixed future for fossil fuels as the globe shifts away from carbon-intensive energy sources. Coal use does not have a sustainable future unless combined with carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology, and most near-term projections show no large-scale deployment of CCS in the next 10-15 years.

■ The natural gas consumption

Natural gas consumption, however, is likely to increase in the next 20 years, but also projected to decline thereafter without CCS. For pathways consistent with the "well below 2 C" goal, CCS scale-up by midcentury is essential for all carbon-emitting technologies.

Solar and wind thrive, but storage challenges remain. The scenarios show the critical importance of energy-efficiency improvements on the pace of the low-carbon transition but little consensus on the magnitude of such improvements. They do, however, unequivocally point to successful upcoming decades for solar and wind energy. This positive outlook is due to declining costs and escalating research and innovation in addressing intermittency and long-term energy storage challenges.

While the scenarios considered in this study project an increased share of renewables in the next 20 years, they do not indicate anything close to a complete decarbonization of the energy system during that time frame. To assess what happens beyond 2040, the study concludes that decision-makers should be drawing upon a range of projections of plausible futures, because the dominant technologies of the near term may not prevail over the long term.

"While energy projections are becoming more difficult because of the widening gulf between current policies and stated goals, they remain stakeholders' sharpest tool in assessing the near- and long-term physical and financial risks associated with climate change and the world's ongoing transition to a low-carbon energy system," says Paltsev. "Combining the results from multiple sources provides additional insight into the evolution of the global energy mix."

(Source: phys.org)

China's solar energy companies could lead climate change fight

Australia's horrific brush fires may prove a catalyst to kick the global battle with climate change into higher gear. If so, investors should look again at China, particularly the Chinese companies dominating sales of solar-energy equipment.

At least 80% of solar modules and panels worldwide are produced by Chinese manufacturers. Neither U.S. tariffs, which affect just 10% of the global market, nor market competition seems likely to shake that position in the near term. "China's dominant role is the status quo," says Kevin Tu, a Beijing-based fellow at Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy.

The "companies excel throughout the value chain from silicon to finished panels."

Not that stocks like JinkoSolar Holding (ticker: JKS), Xinyi Solar Holdings (968.Hong Kong) and Daqo New Energy (DQ) have had a smooth ride. As in any emerging industry—global solar installations increased tenfold during the 2010s—producers have had trouble calibrating supply to demand, and staying profitable. The sector pitched into crisis in mid-2018, when China's government slashed its own subsidies for solar. Domestic installations fell by more than 15%, and stocks dropped by a third or more.

Chinese demand contracted again in 2019, but the rest of the world more than made up for it. Solar-module exports from China jumped 90% in the first half of last year on vigorous orders ranging from the Netherlands to Vietnam, and 2020 should be better, says Corrine Lin, chief analyst at PV InfoLink in Taiwan.

Economics, not ephemeral government policy, is increasingly driving the market now, says Philip Shen, senior researcher for clean technology at Roth Capital Partners. The Chinese crash forced equipment prices down by a quarter, pushing solar toward the critical benchmark of "grid parity" with fossil-fuel power in many parts of the world. "We're entering a new era for solar, when more and more demand is unsubsidized," he says. "We see earnings quality steadily improving in the years ahead."

(Source: barrons.com)

TEHRAN TIMES

Iran's Leading International Daily

Advertising Dept



Tel: 021 - 430 51 450

times1979@gmail.com



tehrantimesdaily



tehrantimes79

Modern Stadium of Martyrs of Khuzestan Football Club (KSC)



PIC-COLLAGE



English page of Mehr News provides you
with great opportunity to advertise.

Get in touch

www.mehrnews.com

Cath up with the latest news in Iran and beyond with



Mehr News English



en.mehrnews.com



@Mehrnewscom

No winners in any war

Latest U-turn from war, first real chance for de-escalation of tensions

1 → Post 1979 Islamic Revolution he began his ascent to the military by receiving just six weeks of tactical training before seeing combat for the first time in Iran's West Azerbaijan province. He fought with distinction as a member of IRGC in the Iran-Iraq war and was from 1998 the founder and commander of its Qods Force, formed for extra-territorial operations.

In 2003 the U.S. invaded Iraq creating the mother of all chaos which eventually saw the end of Saddam Hussain's Ba'athist government. The power vacuum allowed the rise the Daesh (ISIS) who terrorized the region for years to come.

General Soleimani (AKA Haj Qassem) was famous for waging effective asymmetric wars enhancing Iranian influence in Arab countries with a significant Shia population such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

Untainted by corruption he was popular in all factions of Iranian population, from all walks of life and a wide spectrum of political views.

He emerged a national war hero for the missions he led across Iraq's border. In 2006 when after the 34-day war between Hezbollah and Zionists, Haj Qassem had a key role when a disciplined Hezbollah surprised Israel with its training, tactics and weapons.

In 2017, the U.S. indirectly collaborated with Hashd Al-Shabi (PMU) created by General Soleimani in putting an end of Daesh.

■ Bracing the global impact of Soleimani's Martyrdom

Iran's Response: On January 8 Iranian missiles fell on Erbil and Al-Asad bases housing American troops in Iraq. No Americans were harmed. Obviously no harm was intended.

Trump's live message: A day after Iranian missiles fell on two U.S. basis Trump backed away from further military against Iran. He said instead that he would rather



Qassem Soleimani, commander of Iran's Qods Force. (Photo AP)

up sanctions on Iran.

UNSC: Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had sought to give a speech condemning the U.S. assassination of Gen. Suleimani but the Trump administration has barred Iran's top diplomat from entering the U.S. to address the January 9 meeting of United Nations Security Council. By doing so the Trump administration violated the terms of a 1947 Host agreement requiring Washington to permit foreign officials into the country to conduct UN business.

JCPOA: On January 5, Iran announced that it would no longer abide by limits stipulated in the terms of the Nuclear Deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, putting the final nail in that coffin. However, Iran has maintained that if the sanctions are removed it will reverse

all the steps taken so far and will return to the nuclear deal.

Worth mentioning is that Iran had fully complied with the terms and conditions of this historic nuclear deal and in the future the nuclear deal could have been a platform for other nations wishing to join the nuclear energy club.

Oil prices: Within hours of the January 3 assassination of General Soleimani global oil prices saw a four percent rise due to the "fear premium". Crude oil prices rose by roughly another four percent on initial reports Tuesday night that Iran had launched missiles on two U.S. basis in Iraq.

Oil prices soared on the news of Iranian revenge attack on American bases. Prices for Brent crude, the international oil benchmark, jumped above \$70 a barrel in futures markets,

a nearly 4 percent rise from a day earlier, before easing back.

Iraq is the second-largest producer in OPEC after Saudi Arabia, and its oil fields have been largely unaffected. Iraq's exports around four percent of world supplies and any disruptions could drastically propel global oil prices.

So far there is no talk of closing down the Strait of Hormuz, through which around 18 million barrels a day of oil is transported. Occupying the eastern side of the narrow strait, Iran can easily temper with oil flow and global oil supplies.

The downward pressure on prices due to unprecedented rise in U.S. oil production over the last decade to more than 13 million barrels a day, making U.S. the world's biggest producer. It imports about four million fewer barrels of oil a day than in 2008 because of the production surge and greater use of more fuel efficient vehicles.

White House internal tensions: The unease was laid bare on as Mark Esper, defense secretary, contradicted Trump's call to target culturally significant sites in response to any retaliation from Tehran. Esper confirmed that U.S. would abide by the laws of armed conflict – which prohibits targeting such sites.

When Trump initially talked about targeting Iranian cultural sites it reminded me about the incident in 2001, when Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar ordered the destruction of the monumental Buddha statues by dynamite over several weeks. The event was televised live.

For the time being news of an imminent Iran-U.S. war in the Persian Gulf has mellowed down. But let's not forget that a war would be a disaster for the world in general and no winners are expected out of it. The worst case scenario I can imagine is Trump using nuclear weapons to make "a short and decisive victory."

Trump is the most dangerous man in the world: Adib-Moghaddam

1 → The Obama Presidency, where diplomacy and alliance building superseded the politics of sanctions and unilateral war, was an exception, and not the rule. The United States is not one-dimensional, of course, but it seems that the democracy of the country has turned into an increasingly illiberal direction, and one that benefits a presidential policy that is certainly arbitrary, and almost dictatorial. If anything, the fact that this President can simply kill a high-ranking military official in a foreign country without approval of the parliament or in this case the US Congress, reveals the structural deficiency of this democracy.

■ What is your assessment of Iran's response to this, given the message of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who announced that he would take tough revenge on the US?



A: So far Iran and its allies have been giving the best response possible by rallying the people together in a show of unity, that is necessary in order to demonstrate that a war with Iran would have catastrophic consequences. This kind of nationalism as a unifying force, is very different from psycho-nationalism which separates state and society, and makes the latter vulnerable to nefarious outside interference. Politically, the Iranian state is well advised to further rally society behind a just cause, i.e. the defense of Iranian sovereignty and the national independence of the country's allies throughout the region, which are drawn even closer now. Ultimately, Iran needs to start a politico-legal battle against the Trump administration, that exhausts all the opportunities that international law gives the country. A military response is neither necessary, nor prudent in a situation where Iran clearly has the moral high-ground. This in itself avenges the injustices committed against the country, and would be jeopardized if Iranian policies, domestic and foreign would be militarized.

This comprehensive strategy requires a political climate that remains inclusive. The ultimate aim must be to prevent a war and further escalation. Above everything else, there needs to be patience to wait and see if Donald Trump gets re-elected. If he is, then it may be necessary to have a thorough re-assessment of Iran's strategic culture and national security paradigm, including an appraisal of the nuclear programme as a potential part of it. It may be necessary, to minimize the break out capability as a part of this revision.

■ The UN Special reporter described the assassination of Sardar Soleimani as a violation of international law. What is your assessment?

A: It clearly is, even US politicians agree, and certainly UN officials. There was no declaration of war, the killing of Al-Muhandis and Soleimani happened in Iraq without the approval of the Iraqi state. A drone attack doesn't negate collective and individual criminal culpability. Furthermore, the threat of Donald Trump to attack cultural sites in Iran, should be picked up as a threat of state sponsored terrorism as cultural installations are clearly civilian.

Iran-U.S. tussle: Rupee-Rial trade to grind to a halt in 3-4 months

The rupee kitty with Iran began to shrink soon after India completely stopped crude oil imports from the country around six months ago

Amid the ongoing tussle between Iran and the U.S., the Indian exporters to Iran are worried. Indian exporters may find their payments getting blocked over the next three to four months. They are concerned about the rupee-denominated bilateral trade mechanism put in place by both the countries a year ago, as the rupee kitty with Iran, through which the payments to Indian exporters happen, is fast depleting. Unless an alternate mechanism is put in place, the Rupee-Rial trade might come to a grinding halt in a few months.

The rupee kitty with Iran began to shrink soon after India completely stopped crude oil imports from the country around six months ago. As per the agreement, India was supposed to import oil from Iran using a rupee-based payment mechanism where 50 per cent of the payment towards oil imports will be earmarked for clearing off the payments due to the exporters of other goods from India.

With the rupee flow in lieu of oil import payments drying up, it is only a matter of time before Indian exporters start experiencing payment problems.

"The biggest issue which is challenging India, irrespective of the new development in the Middle East, is the fact that we have stopped importing oil from Iran, which has limited the money available in the rupee account. We have been told that the money lying there will suffice our exports for the next three to four months. What happens thereafter is an issue," says Ajay Sahai, director general and CEO of Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO).

India's main exports to Iran include rice, tea, steel and pharmaceuticals. The main import used to be crude oil as India used to meet about 10 per cent of its oil requirement from imports from Iran until recently.

India's oil imports in 2018-19 stood at \$111.9 billion. As much as \$13.52 billion came from Iran during this period. By comparison, India's exports to Iran during this period stood at \$3.51 billion.

However, Iran-U.S. tension is also having its own problems for Indian exporters. "The kind of posture that the U.S. President and the Iranian authority have adopted, it makes long-term commitment little difficult for exporters. So far neither the insurance company nor the shipping companies are backing out, so there is no disruption either of the insurance or the shipping," Sahai says.

The exporters are watching the situation as any escalation in tension resulting in attacks on ships or the shipping lines could see the shipping insurance premium skyrocket, thereby disrupting the trade. The association of rice exporters is known to have issued an advisory to their members to be a little cautious in dealing with Iran.

"I spoke to tea exporters because tea is a new commodity going in pretty large numbers, and it seems right now there are no concerns. They are keeping their fingers crossed as what will happen next," Sahai adds.

(Source: Business Today)

A letter about General Soleimani's Assassination to members of Congress

The unlawful and provocative assassination of Iran's top general, Qasem Soleimani, has already given rise to an escalating spiral of lethal events. The greatest risks are to stumble escalating into a devastating war in the Middle East with grave consequences for the peoples of Iran and Iraq and likely across the region. Such a war would have disastrous effects for this country, for the region and the world. It is certain to do further harm to the reputation of the United States, which already is perceived in much of the world as an irresponsible and criminal political actor in the region, using military force in ways that have made already difficult situations catastrophic by taking various dangerous military, economic and quasi-diplomatic initiatives misleadingly presented as "maximum pressure."

It is imperative for the well-being of our country, and indeed the world, that the Congress of the United States fulfill its most solemn constitutional responsibility, and impose effective restraints on the war-making actions of this impeached president. This is a moment when partisan politics should be put aside, not only for the sake of national interests but for the benefit of humanity -- we should realize that these unilateral actions by the United States have put the entire world at risk. It is also a moment when Republicans as well as Democrats must stand up for a sane foreign policy, and for diplomacy and peace instead of aggression and war, and fulfill their duties as Members of Congress.



The Iranian people have endured decades of economic warfare waged by the US and its allies. Since the revolution of 1979 in Iran and the end of a mutually beneficial relationship between the US and Iran's autocratic leader, the Shah, the US has imposed numerous sanctions on Iran under various guises, threatened it with war and inflicted pain and suffering on its



people. What is desperately needed with respect to Iran is not any further recourse to coercive diplomacy based on escalating threats, crippling sanctions, and tit-for-tat military actions. What is urgently needed is an immediate shift to restorative diplomacy based on mutual respect for international and domestic law, with the objective of peace, stability, and cooperation.

From all that we now know, General Soleimani had come to Iraq without stealth on a commercial plane. He came to Iraq on a diplomatic peacemaking mission at the invitation of the Baghdad Government, and with a meeting scheduled on the following day with the Prime Minister that was part of an ongoing effort to seek a lessening of tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. In reaction to major violations of its sovereignty, the Iraqi Parliament has voted to expel U.S. troops from their country. In place of what seemed a promising regional initiative the assassination of General Soleimani has resulted in an intensification of conflict, further massive suffering, and the likelihood of dangerous escalation.

We call on Congress to act with urgency to stem this slide toward war and regional chaos.

We urge you to consider imposing ironclad restraints on the authority of the President to make any further use of international force without a clear and definite authorization by the U.S. Congress, which itself should respect the relevant prohibitions of international law and the provisions and procedures of the UN Charter.

Respectfully yours,
Noam Chomsky
Richard Falk
Daniel Ellsberg
Judith Butler
Hatem Bazian
Vida Samiian

Taiwan's election and its standoff with China

TAIPEI — Taiwanese are casting their votes Saturday for the president and legislature of a self-governing island that acts like a sovereign nation yet is not recognized by the U.N. or any major country.

China regards Taiwan, which lies 160 kilometers (100 miles) off its east coast, as a renegade province. Taiwanese are increasingly asserting an independent identity despite the population's mostly Chinese roots.

The election pits President Tsai Ing-wen of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party against challenger Han Kuo-yu, a populist mayor from the China-friendly Nationalist Party. A third-party candidate, James Soong, is also running.

■ What is taiwan?

Taiwan, whose more than 23 million people are squeezed onto a mostly mountainous island roughly the size of Maryland, has only 15 diplomatic allies, all smaller nations. However, it issues its own passports, has a foreign minister and maintains its own military and legal system. Economically, it is an important hub in the global high-tech supply chain.

■ How did it come to be?

Most of the island's residents are descendants of migrants who began arriving from China's Fujian province in the 1600s, when Taiwan was a Dutch colony. The emigration flow grew after Taiwan was incorporated into China under the Qing Dynasty later in the 17th century, but Taiwan



The results of Taiwan's election scheduled to be announced by 10 p.m. on Saturday night. (CAN photo)

was not given formal status as a Chinese province until 1885. A decade later, it was transferred to Japan, which ruled it as a colony until the end of World War II. It then split again from China in 1949 after Chiang Kai-shek relocated his Nationalist government to the island after being driven off the mainland by Mao Zedong's communists. Aiming to retake power on the mainland, Chiang and his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, maintained martial law

on the island until 1987, when the democratic opposition began to gather its strength.

■ Relations with China

Talks in 1992 ended the long, formal silence between Taipei and Beijing, but tensions have risen and fallen since then. Fearful that Taiwan was headed for a declaration of formal independence, China lobbed ballistic missiles into the seas north and south of the island ahead of the first fully democratic

presidential election in 1996. The tactic was seen as backfiring badly, with China's bete noire, the pro-independence Lee Teng-hui, winning handily and the U.S. Navy deploying two aircraft carrier battle groups in waters near the island in a demonstration of Washington's determination to follow through on its own legal requirement to consider threats to Taiwan a matter of grave concern.

■ No talks

Beijing claims Taiwan as its own territory, to be annexed by force if it deems necessary. It demands that Taiwan recognize the 1992 consensus that it says recognized Taiwan and the mainland as part of a single Chinese nation, though defined separately as the People's Republic of China or the Republic of China, Taiwan's official name. Tsai has refused to do so, maintaining that Beijing has no claim over Taiwan. Her government has repeatedly called for the reopening of talks between the sides, but without this or any other preconditions.

■ Election stakes

A win by Tsai would likely lead to more diplomatic, economic and military pressure on the island in a continuation of Beijing's campaign to compel her government to agree that Taiwan is a part of China. Han is not expected to win, but his Nationalist Party is fighting to overturn the majority held by Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party in the 113-seat parliament.

(Source: AP)

Scientists use ancient marine fossils to unravel long-standing climate puzzle

Cardiff University scientists have shed new light on the Earth's climate behavior during the last known period of global warming over 14 million years ago.

During this period, known as the middle Miocene Climate Optimum, global temperatures were as much as 3 to 4 degrees warmer than today's average temperatures, similar to estimates for 2100. The position of the continents were similar to today and the seas were flourishing with life.

This period, which occurred between 15 and 17 million years ago, has puzzled geologists for decades as they have tried to explain the initial cause of the global warming and the environmental conditions that existed on Earth afterwards.

It is already known that this period of global warming was accompanied by massive volcanic eruptions which covered most of the modern-day Pacific Northwest in the USA, called the Columbia River flood basalts.

Around the same time a significant oil-rich layer of rock, known as the Monterey Formation, was created along the coastline of California as a result of the burial of carbon-rich marine life.

Up until now scientists have struggled to piece together the puzzle and come up with a viable explanation for the origin of the warmth and the link between the volcanic eruptions and the increased amounts of carbon burial.

Prof Carrie Lear, the senior scientist on the study and based at Cardiff University's School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, said: "Our planet has been warm before. We can use ancient fossils to help understand how the climate system works during these times."

In their study, published today in the journal Nature Communications, the team used the chemistry of marine fossils taken from long sediment cores from the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans to fingerprint the temperature and carbon levels of the seawater in which the ancient creatures once lived during the middle Miocene Climate Optimum.

Their results showed that the massive volcanic eruptions of the Columbia River flood basalts released CO₂ into the atmosphere and triggered a decline in ocean pH. With global temperatures rising as a consequence of this, sea-levels also rose, flooding large areas of the continents.

This created the ideal conditions to bury large amounts of carbon from the accumulations of marine organisms in sediments, and to transfer volcanic carbon from the atmosphere to the ocean over tens of thousands of years.

"The elevated marine productivity and carbon burial helped to remove some of the carbon dioxide from the volcanoes and acted as a negative feedback, mitigating some, but not all, of the climatic effects associated with the outpouring of volcanic CO₂," said lead author of the study Dr Sindia Sosdian from Cardiff University's School of Earth and Ocean Sciences.

Past large episodes of volcanism throughout Earth's history have been linked to mass extinctions and widespread oxygen depletion in the oceans; however, there was no such occurrence in the middle Miocene Climate Optimum.

Co-author of the study Dr Tali Babila from the School of Ocean and Earth Sciences at the University of Southampton added: "During the Miocene Climatic Optimum the response of the oceans and climate was remarkably similar to other massive volcanic eruptions in the geological record. The presence of the Antarctic ice sheet and the relatively slow release of carbon however minimised the magnitude of environmental change and the associated consequences on marine life during this event."

"Thanks to our findings we now have a very clear picture of what was going on over 14 million years ago and this will change the way that scientists look at this period of global warming," continued Dr Sosdian.

"We know that our current climate is warming much faster than the Miocene Climatic Optimum so we won't be able to rely on these slow natural feedbacks to counteract global warming. But this research is still important because it helps us understand how our planet works when it is in a warm mode."

(Source: Science Daily)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Fuerte de Samaipata

The archaeological site of Samaipata in Bolivia consists of two parts: the hill with its many carvings, believed to have been the ceremonial center of the old town (14th–16th centuries), and the area to the south of the hill, which formed the administrative and residential district.



The huge sculptured rock, dominating the town below, is a unique testimony to pre-Hispanic traditions and beliefs, and has no parallel anywhere in the Americas.

The site is known to have been occupied and used as a ritual and residential center by people belonging to the Mojocoyas culture as early as 300 CE, and it was at this time that work began on the shaping of this great rock.

It was occupied in the 14th century by the Inca, who made it a provincial capital. This is confirmed by the features that have been discovered by excavation - a large central plaza with monumental public buildings around it and terracing of the neighboring hillsides for agriculture - which are characteristic of this type of Inca settlement. It formed a bulwark against the incursions of the warlike Chiriguano of the Chaco region in the 1520s. The strategic location of the site, which had attracted the Inca to it, was also recognized by the Spaniards.

(Source: UNESCO)

Maymand: A very old village of troglodytes

TOURISM TEHRAN — The term "cave dwellers" conjures up prehistoric images in your mind when caves served as one of the earliest dwellings for human beings. Here we want to take a look at Maymand, an exemplar manmade-cave dwelling in southeast Iran, where people made a living about five or six millennia ago.

The cultural landscape of Maymand was named a UNESCO World Heritage in 2015 as an exemplar system of manmade cave dwelling that is believed to be practiced in the region to cope with its harsh climate.

Maymand is situated near Shahr-e Babak in the southeastern Kerman Province. Its self-contained, semi-arid area is sprawled at the end of a south-facing valley at the southern extremity of Iran's central mountains.

Sandwiched between a desert and a mountain, Maymand has cold winters and exceedingly hot summers yet abundant with mulberry and blackberry trees. Living conditions in the village are considered as severe due to the aridity of the land, high temperature in summertime and very cold winters.

It is believed to be one of human's primary residences in the country as its history stretches far back in time to about 10,000 years ago. Some of its natural and manmade caves are still used for housing and shelter.

The houses in the continually inhabited village are carved like caverns inside the mountain. The internal spaces have corridors and pillars featuring a rural architecture. The



A view of rock-hewn houses in Maymand

houses are situated in four or five stories, one on top of the other.

Narratives say the early residents did not use hammer and chisel, but rather a type of local, pointed stone which was hard enough to carve images onto the rocks. This method of carving is still practiced in the region.



A typical cave residence in the UNESCO-registered village of Maymand, southeast Iran

Narratives say the early residents did not use hammer and chisel, but rather a type of local, pointed stone which was hard enough to carve images onto the rocks. This method of carving is still practiced in the region. Some of stone engravings in the village date back to 10,000 years ago.

Making the most of meeting a friend of a friend abroad

By Julie Weed

Getting together with a local can take you beyond the tourist sites and Instagram opportunities.

You're planning a trip to a new place, say, Copenhagen. When you mention it to your pal she exclaims, "I have a friend in Copenhagen! You should meet them!"

Grab that chance. Getting together with a local can take you beyond the tourist sites and Instagram opportunities, allowing you to more deeply experience the community and culture you are visiting.

Here's how to get the most out of your meet-up.

■ Research the culture

Take some time in advance to learn about your destination and its culture. Is there appropriate dress you need to be aware of? Are shoes taken off before entering a home? Your host may feel they'd be embarrassing you by pointing out the cultural norms, so research them beforehand.

Personal space may be different than what you are used to. Shaking hands with the opposite gender may not be the norm in a conservative country. Mediterranean cultures prefer closer interactive distances, according to a study published in the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, than those in Northern Europe.

Topics of polite conversation may be different as well. Americans often ask, "so what kind of work do you do?" as a way to find common ground when talking with someone new. In some countries, that question can feel intrusive.

Finally, learn some of the local language — at least the words to say "hello," "how are you," and "thank you."

■ Ask about your host

Knowing more about your host from your



mutual friend, and what you may have in common, can help your conversation get beyond the niceties and into a more authentic interchange of ideas.

On her first trip to Asia four years ago, Nora Forbes met up with her best friend's college best friend in Singapore. After getting to know each other over dinner, the two ended up talking long into the night about what it was like to be a queer person in Singapore and the community there, versus the more liberal atmosphere of an American college campus. "It was the kind of conversation you don't have with a tour guide," said Ms. Forbes.

■ Be a gracious guest

Suggest a few different activities to do together such as meeting at their favorite coffee shop or visiting a new museum exhibition, but note you are flexible. They

Some of stone engravings in the village date back to 10,000 years ago.

The majority of inhabitants are semi-nomadic shepherds. They raise their animals on mountain pastures, living in temporary settlements in spring and autumn.

The community has a strong bond with the natural environment that is expressed in social practices, cultural ceremonies and religious beliefs.

The local dialect contains words from the ancient Sassanid and Pahlavi languages. The dialect has been barely changed due to the remoteness of the village.

The area is also home to various animals such as snakes, lizards, hedgehogs, deer, leopards, wolves, foxes and also birds of prey.

There are few seasonal springs around the village which contribute to the flourishing of agriculture in the area. In such an arid climate, residents have to collect every drop of water to make a living as their ancestors did.

■ Under tourists' eyes

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the prehistorical village have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

■ "Interesting"

If it's your first time visiting a cave village, then you can't but be impressed. Walking around, meeting locals, tasting their food or simply assisting their prayers it's an authentic experience. Life here stopped years ago and sleeping in one of those cave houses is a must-to-do experience. You can trek around, find a family that share dinner with you, and one of our best sleeps on a rocky bed. Recommend! (Andrea Lehotska from Milan, Italy; Date of experience: June 2019)

■ "Worth to visit and stay 1-2 night"

I visit when on the way from Yazd to Persepolis, this place is one of the interested place on my trip in Iran, we stay there for 1 night and i really hope can back there and

stay 1-2 weeks to discover more about local residence/ enjoy atmosphere, there a cave about 10km from village with old painting on rocks from ancients, hearing these cave-house is a kind of copy from the big cave. (Huynh W from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Date of experience: February 2018)

■ "Unique cave guest house"

A good and rare chance to experience a night stay in the ancient rocky cave guest house. It's cooling during day but cold at night. Fortunately, it's equipped with heater.

The village lady caters meal for stay in guests, but the food is very basic.

Remind to pack dry food as not to starve the whole night. Otherwise, one can make it a day trip and put up in Kerman hotel that is about 1.5 hour driver from Meymand. (Limleak from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Date of experience: April 2017)

■ "A memorable experience"

I were amongst those in our group, who insisted on spending a night in this very old village of troglodytes, in Meymand. It was indeed a memorable experience sleeping the night in the cave, the walls of which are completely black from the fire the locals used to lit near the entrance of the cave, to keep the interior warm. The dining room-kitchen, is about 150 meters away from the caves and so are the toilets and showers. It was cold, so walking in the cold after taking a shower was not very appealing.

On top of this and to make things worse, when the night fell we were alarmed by the jackals that were howling nearby. We heard them again just when we were ready to go to sleep, so our good driver went out with the car and made a round, just to make sure we were safe. And we were apparently, the night was good, it was warm and we had a lot of fun. The food was simple but delicious. It was well worth the experience! (Rhodes Maria from Heraklion, Greece; Date of experience: January 2017)

■ Don't be a burden

Don't ask the host to be your translator, driver, restaurant guide and source of all cultural information. Do not bring your laundry to wash!

Establish a clear start and end time when meeting up. This lets your host carve out the right amount of their day for you, and you won't be eyeing the door, trying to figure out how to leave when the conversation lulls.

"I love sharing my culture," said Ms. Palinko, including Budapest's underground music scene and smaller museums she knows that tourists generally don't get to. "But I don't want to be responsible for planning their whole itinerary."

Jonathan Englander, an American who lives in Bangkok, has hosted many friends of friends over the years. "Don't be helpless or at least don't let your helplessness overburden the host," he said. "I've had a friend of a friend email me pictures of Texas to ask my opinion on which was best suited for a proposed trekking trip."

Mr. Englander also said he hopes his visitors will excuse him from accompanying them to the most famous tourist attractions. "I get hives at the prospect of yet another trip to the main temples," he said.

■ Above all, respect your friend's relationship with your host

Don't overstay your welcome. Keep away from any touchy personal subjects and don't tell stories about your mutual friend's less-than-sober or less-than-stellar exploits. In short, when you leave, your friend's relationship with the person they have generously shared with you should be stronger because you made a great impression.

(Source: The New York Times)

Iran fourth top publisher of nanotechnology articles

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iran was ranked fourth among 20 leading countries publishing nanotechnology articles in 2019, holding 6 percent share of the world's publications relating to nanoscience, according to StatNano website.

In 2019, over 40 percent of the world's publications relating to nanoscience were from China, followed by the United States, India, and Iran, holding 13.5, 8.5, and 6 percent of the publications, respectively, ISNA reported.

Accordingly, a total of 178,000 nanoscience articles were published in the journals indexed by the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) in 2019, around 74,000 of which were from China.

Following China, the United States ranked second with around 24,000 nanoscience articles. India, Iran, and South Korea took the next places, respectively.

Apart from the number of nanoscience articles of different countries, the share of their nanoscience articles in their total publications can be considered as an indication of the priority they give to this field of science. From this viewpoint, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and India, respectively, placed a higher priority on nanoscience in 2019 as compared to other countries.

Iran's nanoscience articles published in 2019 comprise more than 21 percent of its total scientific publications in this year.

These statistical data are monthly gathered by StatNano using a search string relating to nanoscience and nanotechnology in the Web of Science. Statnano portal has been publishing reports about various aspects of nanotechnology since 2010.



20% of areas in Iran at high risk of flood



ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Twenty percent of areas across Iran are highly prone to flooding, Khosro Shahbazi, head of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization (FRWMO), has said.

"Precipitation in Iran is one-third of the world's average, as the country is located in a dry and fragile region where we experience 11 millimeters decrease in precipitation each 10 years and an increase in evaporation of more than 50 millimeters every year," he explained, ISNA reported.

Rainfall fluctuations usually lead to flood and devastation, so a comprehensive planning for watershed management and flood control is required, he noted.

Since most of the water supply is extracted from groundwater resources, the country is in a critical condition in terms of groundwater resources, he stated, highlighting, because perception is less than water withdrawal from the aquifers, so the best way to store rainwater is watershed and aquifer projects.

■ Main factor in disaster management

Having tackled over 34 out of 41 natural disasters identified worldwide, Iran

is among the top countries most prone to natural disasters, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Disaster management is a cycle consisting of mitigation, preparedness, response and ended with recovery, the most neglected among which is preparedness in the country.

However, the response cycle is the most experienced part, with preparedness effectiveness and efficiency of response will increase.

Generally, crisis planning needs sufficient information from databases, but Iran suffers from lack of access to great databases like spatial database information and Geographic Database Information and communication among organizations to interchange information.

Another problem is lack of an organization to compensate for the destruction, as insurance plays a main role in risk transfer and funds for rebuilding.

Finally, preparedness of people for emergency situations is a vital factor which needs appropriate public education in self-protecting behaviors, relief aids, mitigation etc. and Iran has not done much to improve effectiveness except for some maneuvers and limited educations.

Grass found growing around Mount Everest as warming climate melts ice



Grasses and shrubs have been found growing in increased numbers around Mount Everest and across the Himalayas as ice in the area continues to melt.

Scientists used satellite data to study the proliferation of subnival vegetation – plants which grow between the treeline and snowline – in the vast region.

By studying images taken by Nasa's Landsat satellites between 1993 and 2018, they found a small but significant increase in vegetation across four height brackets from 4,150 to 6,000m above sea level.

"A lot of research has been done on ice melting in the Himalayan region, including a study that showed how the rate of ice loss doubled between 2000 and 2016," said Dr Karen Anderson, of the Environment and Sustainability Institute on Exeter's Penryn Campus in Cornwall.

"It's important to monitor and understand ice loss in major mountain systems, but subnival ecosystems cover a much larger area than permanent snow and ice and we know very little about them and how they moderate water supply."

While the study, published in Global Change Biology, did not examine the causes

of the change, the researchers said their findings were consistent with modelling showing a decline in "temperature-limited areas" – where temperatures are too low for plants to grow – due to global warming.

Dr Anderson said the increase in subnival vegetation could play a role in the region's water supply, which feeds Asia's 10 largest rivers and supplies up to 1.4 billion people.

"Snow falls and melts here seasonally, and we don't know what impact changing subnival vegetation will have on this aspect of the water cycle – which is vital because this region, known as 'Asia's water towers', feeds the 10 largest rivers in Asia," she said.

She said "some really detailed fieldwork" was required to understand how plants in the high-altitude zone interact with soil and snow.

Dominic Fawcett, who coded the image processing, said: "These large-scale studies using decades of satellite data are computationally intensive because the file sizes are huge."

"We can now do this relatively easily on the cloud by using Google Earth Engine, a new and powerful tool freely available to anyone, anywhere."

(Source: The Independent)

Iranian students win bronze medals at KIDE 2019

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A team of Iranian students won seven bronze medals at the Kaohsiung International Invention and Design EXPO (KIDE) 2019, which was held in Taiwan, December 6 – 8, 2019, IRNA news agency reported.

The Iranian students won seven bronze medals in the field of medicine and medical engineering.

The event was organized by World Invention Intellectual Property Associations (WIIPA) and Taiwan Invention Products Promotion Association (TIIPA).



An exhibition of top high-tech developers and the university competitions also took place on December 15-29, 2019.

Technology and information using wireless sensor networks in medicine is a hardware and software project that can change the medical world in Iran and end all the problems of hospitals including bureaucracy, Amir Abbas Mohammadi-Koushki, head of the Iranian delegation said.

"We have so far piloted this project in a hospital in Iran and hope that the Ministry of Health will support it so that such problems of hospitals and medical centers can be resolved," he concluded.

This international event was the first exhibition which combined "Invention", "Design" and "International Conference", with participants from more than 26 countries with more than 500 entries in attendance.

4000-year-old stamp proposed to become national environment protection symbol

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — A group of cultural heritage and environmental activists have proposed to introduce the imprinted image on a 4,000-year-old stamp, found in western Lorestan province, as a symbol of the country's environment protection.



A moulage of the ancient stamp, called Virdar (an ancient name meaning guardian), has been made by Amir-Hossein Kulivand, an artisan from Lorestan.

Given that Iran's environment has not a historically valuable symbol, this 4,000-year-old stamp can be regarded as the logo of Department of Environment (DOE), researcher and archeologist Ata Hassanpour, told ISNA.

The stamp depicts a man who has embraced two wild goats sympathetically and protected them from lions and leopards, he said, adding, this picture shows protection of animals, which was common among Iranians over the long sweep of history, he explained.

The cylindrical stamp is made out of limestone, which is about 4 centimeters long with a diameter of 2 cm, which goes back to the late second millennium and early first millennium BC, he added.

"The stamp can have a message to today's generation that our ancestors played roles in protecting animals they have not always been hunting and feeding, while in specific seasons such as the birth season known as «Verda» (meaning hug of mother) hunting was avoided, he concluded.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

First Rwandan genocide film opens in Kigali

(October 28, 2002)

The first feature film about the 1994 Rwandan genocide has opened in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. The producers of the film are delighted that it has sold more tickets than an American Hollywood import showing alongside it. This report from Mark Doyle. **Genocide** might seem an unlikely subject for a **cinema feature**, but several internationally successful films about the genocide of the Jews, such as 'Schindlers List', have shown that it is possible to popularize tragic historic events.

This story of the Rwandan genocide, titled '100 Days', shows us how a beautiful young Rwandan woman and her handsome fiancée experience the killings. This romantic **Boy-Girl story** is designed to be universal and **appeal to audiences** from Toronto to Tokyo.

Set in the haunting beauty of the Rwandan countryside, 100 Days has **tension** from the moment the killers plot their work to the military intervention of the rebels which stopped the mass killing.

Most of those **appearing in** '100 Days' are Rwandans **with little previous acting experience**. The producers are hoping that the successful commercial **premiere** in Uganda will be followed by more **screenings** worldwide.

■ **Words**
genocide: the murder of a whole community or race
cinema feature: a full-length film

Boy-Girl story: a story of love between a boy and a girl
appeal to audiences: interest cinema-goers

set in: (the story) takes place in
tension: if a story has tension, you feel nervous or excited while you watch it

appearing in: acting in
with little previous acting experience: these actors had not appeared in many films before

premiere: the first time a film is shown

screenings: if a film has a screening, it is shown in a cinema
(Source: BBC)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → B

\$7b to be allocated to retrofit, rebuild flood-devastated houses

A budget of 290 trillion rials (nearly \$7 billion) will be allotted to reconstruct and repair housing units destructed by flood in 18 provinces across the country, Mehdi Jamalinejad, deputy interior minister for urban and rural development has announced

Flood has devastated some 169,377 housing units, 68,333 of which are beyond repair and must be reconstructed, he stated

Moreover, household appliances of 109,832 families also have suffered damages, he further regretted

He went on to say that 20,000 housing units, undergone devastation by recent flooding in Aq-Oala county in northern Golestan province, are under construction

Non-repayable loans amounting to 25 trillion rials (nearly \$600 million) will be provided for retrofitting of houses, 7.4 trillion rials (around \$177 million) will also be earmarked to compensate for the infrastructure damages, he explained

اختصاص بیش از ۲۹ هزار میلیارد تومان برای بازسازی خانه های سیل زده

معاون عمران و توسعه امور شهری و روستایی وزیر کشور گفت: براساس مصوبه اخیر هیأت وزیران مبلغ ۲۹ هزار و ۱۳۰ میلیارد ریال برای بازسازی و جبران خسارات ناشی از سیل در بخشهای مختلف ۱۸ استان پرداخت می شود.

بر اساس ارزیابی های انجام شده در ۲۱ استان کشور، بیش از ۱۶۹ هزار و ۳۷۷ واحد مسکونی شهری و روستایی در سیل های اخیر در کشور آسیب دیده اند که باید دوباره احداث شوند. جمالی نژاد بیان داشت: در اثر سیل به ۱۰۹ هزار و ۸۳۲ واحد مسکونی نیز خسارت معیشتی وارد شده است.

وی اضافه کرد: امروز ساخت ۲۰ هزار دستگاه واحد مسکونی که در سیل آسیب دیده بودند نیز در آق قلا شروع شد.

دبیر کمیته نوسازی و بازسازی قرارگاه بازسازی مناطق سیل زده در ادامه گفت: ۲۵ هزار میلیارد ریال تسهیلات قرض الحسنه و همچنین مبلغ ۷ هزار و ۴۶۰ میلیارد ریال برای مرمت زیرساخت های آسیب دیده از سیل پرداخت خواهد شد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“co-, col-, com-, con-, cor-”

■ **Meaning**: with or together

■ **For example**: What will it take for us to **coexist** in peace?

PHRASAL VERB

Nose out

■ **Meaning**: to find out or discover information, secrets, etc.

■ **For example**: He nosed out their plans.

IDIOM

Crocodile tears

■ **Explanation**: To shed crocodile tears means to shed false tears or show insincere grief

■ **For example**: Caroline pretended to be sad but we all knew her tears were crocodile tears.

Tunisia parliament rejects gov't of PM-designate Habib Jemli

Tunisia's parliament has rejected a government proposed by Prime Minister-designate Habib Jemli after months of negotiations between political parties to fill positions.

During a heated day-long parliamentary session on Friday, only 72 of the 213 legislators present voted in favour of Jemli's cabinet.

Jemli, an agricultural engineer by training, had in early January announced the formation of a cabinet made up of independent technocrats, a move that came a month after being nominated by the moderate Islamist Ennahdha party to head a new government.

Ennahdha emerged as the most powerful party after winning the most seats in the country's October parliamentary election. But the self-described Muslim Democratic party's 52 of a total 217 seats available for grabs meant that it still needed to win the backing of other parties.

Tunisian President Kais Saied, who was also elected in October, now has 10 days to designate a new prime minister. If Saied's appointee fails to form a government, parliament is dissolved and a new election will be called.

Friday's vote is seen as a big setback for Ennahdha, which has been directly or indirectly in power for a large part of the last nine years, and it risks delaying reforms needed to revive the country's stuttering economy.

In a move that demonstrated the difficulties for Tunisia's divided political class to form a strong and consensual government, Ennahdha had admitted on Thursday to having "reservations" over the team presented by its own nominee.

(Source: al Jazeera)

Merkel, Putin discuss Middle East flashpoints at Kremlin meeting

German Chancellor Angela Merkel met Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin Saturday for talks set to focus on flashpoints in the Middle East.

Merkel and Putin shook hands at the start of the meeting which the German leader said would cover topics including turmoil in Libya and the Syria conflict as well as Ukraine's war with pro-Russian separatists.

"There is a lot to discuss," said Merkel, adding that "talking with one another is always better than talking about one another."

Putin thanked the chancellor for visiting and said they would focus on "the hottest" topics. The leaders were set to give a press conference afterwards.

Germany and Russia said ahead of the talks that they would cover the confrontation between Washington and Tehran over the US killing of a top Iranian general and turmoil in Libya.

The visit by Merkel was her first to Russia since May 2018 when the leaders met at Putin's Black Sea residence.

Putin visited Syria and Turkey this week and is keen to stress his role as a regional powerbroker.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, who accompanied Merkel, said a "key reason" for the meeting was the escalating crisis in Libya, where Berlin is acting as a mediator in a conflict he has warned could become a "second Syria".

"We are involving Europe and those players who are influential there, for that we need Russia," Maas told Germany's NTV television. "For us, it's not too far to fly to Moscow to discuss that with Putin."

Merkel is to invite Putin to a Berlin conference on Libya later this month, diplomatic sources told AFP.

Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for a ceasefire in Libya on Wednesday, although they are seen as supporting opposing sides in the conflict.

(Source: AFP)

Iraq in talks to buy Russian S-400

➔ Earlier talks — after alleged Israeli strikes on Iran-linked targets in August — were suspended over U.S. threats of sanctions, he said. The S-300 manufacturer is subject to U.S. and European sanctions.

"We expect pushback from the U.S. on this matter," al-Haider told RIA. Al-Haider said he was unaware what stage the Russian-Iraqi negotiations have reached, but noted that Baghdad's leadership has authorized the S-300 purchase.

Iraq has expanded its defense cooperation with Russia in recent years with increased purchases of Russian aircraft and tanks.

Iran fired missiles Wednesday at bases in Iraq where U.S. troops were stationed in retaliation for Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani's killing in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad on Jan. 3. U.S. President Donald Trump said he authorized Soleimani's assassination because the Iranian commander had planned to blow up a U.S. embassy.

In August, Russia's ambassador in Baghdad told Iraq's parliamentary speaker that Moscow was ready to support its UN Security Council initiative to expand its air defense capabilities.

An Iran-linked militia leader visited Moscow in September in what analysts said was "probably connected to Iraq's interest in expanding military-technical contacts with Russia and purchasing Russian air defense systems."

(Source: Moscow Times)

ISIL praises 'allied' U.S. for assassinating Gen. Soleimani

➔ Furthermore, there are multiple reports of American aircraft airlifting Daesh commanders from various parts of Syria to safe places.

In November 2017, Russia's RIA Novosti news agency cited several eyewitnesses as saying that US aircraft had recently picked up Daesh commanders from the town of Mayadin, which was later liberated.

A month earlier, reports from a group affiliated with the Syrian opposition also alleged that the US military had several times airlifted Daesh Takfiri terrorists amid the Syrian army's advances on Dayr al-Zawr province.

The US has long been accused of colluding with Daesh to provide safe passage and logistical support to its members in conflict zones.

The Syrian army troops, backed by Russian airstrikes, managed to remove Daesh from all of its urban strongholds in the country. In Iraq, the PMU forces, better known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha'abi, did the same against the terror group, prompting former Iraqi prime minister Haider al-Abadi to announce the total defeat of Daesh in the Arab country in late 2017.

(source: agencies)

Oman swears in successor to Sultan Qaboos

Sultan Qaboos dies at 79



Oman's Minister of Heritage and Culture Haitham bin Tariq al-Said has been sworn in as new ruler of the Arab country after the death of his cousin Sultan Qaboos bin Said al-Said.

"Haitham bin Tariq was sworn in as the new sultan of the country... after a meeting of the family which decided to appoint the one who was chosen by the sultan," the Omani government said in a tweet on Saturday.

Meanwhile, state television broadcast images of funeral procession in the capital Muscat amid tight security.

The casket was carried into Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, where people joined prayers inside.

In his first address to the nation, Haitham vowed to uphold the Persian Gulf country's foreign policy, which he said was built on "peaceful coexistence" and friendly ties with all nations.

"We will continue to follow in the same course the late Sultan adopted... embracing foreign policies based on peaceful coexistence among peoples and countries without any interference in the domestic affairs of other states," he said in a televised speech after the funeral service.

"We will continue as always ... contributing and calling for peaceful and amicable solutions for all disputes," he added.

The new sultan further promised to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor and "remain guided by his wisdom into the future,

and preserve ... the achievements he made." Sultan Qaboos, the Arab world's longest-serving ruler, died Friday aged 79.

"With great sorrow and deep sadness... the royal court mourns His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, who passed away on Friday," said a statement from the royal court.

Muscat announced three days of national mourning after the Sultan's death.

Sultan Qaboos was unmarried, had no children and had not appointed a successor.

The Omani Constitution requires the royal family to choose a new sultan within three days of the throne falling vacant. Should that fail, a letter written by Sultan Qaboos will be opened before military and government officials revealing his choice for a successor.

Sultan Qaboos had been ill for some

time and was believed to have been suffering from colon cancer.

Last month, he returned home after undergoing medical checks and treatment in Belgium.

The sultan rose to power in the former British protectorate in a 1970 coup that was assisted by London.

(Source: Press TV)

Iraq's PMU commanders hold summit over U.S. assassinations

Operation commanders of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units have convened to examine recent developments in the country, specifically U.S. assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani and the Iraqi deputy PMU head Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

Iraq's al-Furat news channel reported on Friday that participants of the PMU summit, which also included administrative officials from different parts of the organization, stressed the PMU's complete readiness to defend Iraq.

The PMU officials said the organization was committed to pursuing its objectives in compliance with the law, respecting the government's authority and following the orders of the Iraqi military's chief of staff.

The report did not further elaborate on results of the discussions.

The summit comes after Washington assassinated Muhandis and Soleimani, a formal guest of the Iraqi government, last week.

The assassinations have since led to major anti-American protests across Iran and Iraq and other parts of the region and the world.

Following Iran's missile strike on the U.S. airbase of Ain al-Assad in Iraq's Anbar province on Wednesday, various Iraqi groups affiliated with the PMU have also vowed to respond to the American assassination.

During the PMU summit on Friday, participating officials stressed that the



legacy of figures such as Soleimani and Muhandis further motivates the resistance organization to pursue its objectives.

The PMU officials also expressed gratitude to mourners for participating in funeral processions held for the assassinated commanders earlier this week.

The officials also thanked Iraq's clerical establishment, led by Iraq's prominent Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, for its support and added that the PMU was committed to observing its instructions.

The PMU was formed following a June 2014 fatwa by Ayatollah Sistani calling on Iraqi citizens to volunteer and defend their country against Daesh terrorists who had unleashed a terror campaign across large parts of the country.

Daesh was consequently vanquished by the Iraqi forces and is currently limited to dispersed cells operating in more remote areas of the country.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. rebuffs Iraq's call to withdraw troops from Arab country

The United States has rejected Iraq's call to pull American forces out of the Arab country, claiming that their presence was "appropriate."

In a telephone conversation late Thursday, Iraqi caretaker Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi asked U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to "send delegates to put in place the tools to carry out the parliament's decision."

Last week, Iraq's parliament approved a resolution that called for the expulsion of all foreign forces from Iraq.

However, the State Department said in a statement on Friday that Washington would not hold discussions with Baghdad regarding U.S. troop withdrawal.

"At this time, any delegation sent to Iraq would be dedicated to discussing how to best recommit to our strategic partnership — not to discuss troop withdrawal, but our right, appropriate force posture in the Middle East," State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortogus said.

"There does, however, need to be a conversation between the U.S. and Iraqi governments not just regarding security, but about our financial, economic, and diplomatic partnership," she added.

Separately on Friday, Pompeo indicated that American troops would remain in Iraq.



Speaking at the White House, he said a NATO team was at the State Department working on a plan "to get burden-sharing right in the region, as well, so that we can continue the important missions to protect and defend, and keep the American people safe" while reducing costs and burdens borne by the U.S.

On January 5, the Iraqi parliament voted to obligate the Iraqi government "to work towards ending the presence of all foreign troops on Iraqi soil."

Trump impeachment charges may go to Senate as early as next week

The Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives will send formal impeachment charges against President Donald Trump to the Senate as early as next week, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Friday, setting the stage for his long-awaited trial.

Pelosi, the top Democrat in the House, has been engaged in a three-week cat-and-mouse game with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell over the rules for Trump's trial in the Republican-controlled Senate.

Democrats have demanded it include new witness testimony and evidence about the Republican president's pressuring of Ukraine to probe former Vice President Joe Biden, a leading Democrat running for the right to face Trump in the November election.

McConnell slammed the door on that idea this week, saying he had enough Republican votes to start the trial without a commitment to hear from additional witnesses, including former Trump national security adviser John Bolton.

Democrats are trying to convince a few moderate Republican senators to allow witnesses. One moderate, Senator Susan Collins of Maine, told reporters in her home state that she and a "fairly small group" of her fellow Republican senators are working to ensure witnesses can be called.

The Senate is expected to acquit Trump before the 2020 presidential election campaign heats up, as no Republicans have voiced support for ousting him, a step that would require a two-thirds majority.

In a letter to House Democratic law-



makers on Friday, Pelosi said a resolution could be brought up next week to appoint House "managers" to prosecute the case against Trump at the trial and to transmit the impeachment charges to the Senate.

Last month, the House adopted a rule allowing Democrats to quickly bring up a resolution naming managers, and to vote on it after only 10 minutes of debate. That means the House could vote as soon as Tuesday.

House Democrats have said Pelosi could name up to 10 lawmakers as managers, including House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, who spearheaded the impeachment probe, and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler.

Pelosi has declined to submit the charges, or articles of impeachment, to the Senate. She was seeking leverage for Democrats to negotiate rules of the trial, which cannot begin until the charges are transmitted.

(Source: Reuters)

Trump-Kim 'personal feelings' are not enough for restarting talks with U.S. – N. Korea

North Korea won't engage in negotiations with the U.S. unless the latter makes real concessions, the country's foreign ministry said, adding that Washington "deceived" it and they were "caught in dialogue" that was a waste of time.

The statement, spelling doom for prospects of the already stalled U.S.-N. Korea negotiations, was released by the country's state media on Saturday. While N. Korea's leader and U.S. President Donald Trump might have good personal relations, it won't get the two countries anywhere.

"Although Chairman Kim Jong Un has

good personal feelings about President Trump, they are, in the true sense of the word, 'personal'," the statement reads, adding that the country's leader "would not discuss the state affairs on the basis of such personal feelings, as he represents our state and its interests."

Washington-Pyongyang negotiations, that have blossomed in 2018 and early 2019 turned out to be a waste of time for the country, the Foreign Ministry said. The talks have been stalled since March 2019, when Trump-Kim summit in Hanoi flopped.

N. Korea will not make any new gen-

erous proposals, like it did before – for instance, dismantling of nuclear facilities in exchange for UN sanctions relief – and won't seek engaging into talks with the U.S. altogether until the latter makes some real concessions first.

"The reopening of dialogue between the DPRK and the U.S. may be possible only under the condition of the latter's absolute agreement on the issues raised by the former, but we know well that the U.S. is neither ready nor able to do so," the statement reads.

(Source: RT)



Iran edge Korea to book a place at Olympic Qualification Tournament final

S P O R T S T E H R A N — Iran d e s k earned a hard-fought win over Korea at the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) 2020 Olympic Qualification Tournament semis in Jiangmen, China on Saturday.

Team Melli defeated Korea 3-2 (22-25, 25-21, 25-18, 22-25, 15-13).

Kwang-In Jeon led Korea with a match-high 25 points and Ali Shafiei scored 17 points for Iran.

“It was a very special game for us as team Korea put us under pressure from the beginning of game. They had good serves and position in defense. We didn’t find a way to make some good serves. But after the first set, we started to play much better, fighting for each point until the end,” Iran coach Igor Kolakovic said in the post-match news conference.

“And I am very happy to qualify for the final. I don’t care about who our opponents will be on Sunday,” he added.

Iran captain Saeid Marouf also says the Korean team put them under pressure.

“First of all, I’d like to say congratulations to team Korea, because today they did an amazing job and put us under a lot of pressure,” Marouf said in the post-match news conference.

“We had some mistakes but in the tie-breaker, we didn’t lose our focus and won this game. Now I want to say we are happy to go to the final. We don’t know which other team will qualify yet, but it will be much harder so we need to recover and forget this game,” he added.



“We have to play more than 100 per cent tomorrow. Today it was a good experience for us anyway,” Marouf concluded. Iran will play China on Sunday.

The winners will book a berth in the 2020 Olympic Games.

Iranian trio shortlisted for Team Melli hotseat



S P O R T S T E H R A N — Ali Daei, the legendary Iranian goalscorer, alongside ex-Iran captain Yahya Golmohammadi and Sepahan’s coach Amir Ghalenoei have been shortlisted for leading Iran football national team.

Iran football federation spokesman Amir Mehdi Alavi implicitly confirmed the candidacy of the trio for the Team Melli hotseat.

“In recent weeks, members of the federation’s board of directors have been meeting and overseeing all matters regarding Iran national team,” Alavi said. “The board has assigned the task of selecting the new head coach of Team Melli to Heydar Baharvand, acting president of Iran football federation. The report of Technical and Development Committee of the Iran Football Federation regarding the coaching of the national team has been delivered to the board of directors and the members discussed about it in detail,” Alavi said.

With less than three months remaining until the restart of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualification, the Iranian federation has not introduced the new head coach.

Marc Wilmots left his role as coach of Team Melli in early December, just seven months after replacing Carlos Queiroz at the helm of the three-time Asian champions.

Speaking about the nomination of Ali Daei, Yahya Golmohammadi and Amir Ghalenoei for coaching the national team, Alavi praised their personal and technical qualities: “The three coaches are among the most respected ones in Iranian football. Golmohammadi is one of the best of the new generation of Iranian football coaches. Ghalenoei is the most decorated coach in Iranian football club history and Daei also is a legend of our country. We respect all of them and the federation will take into account all the consideration to make the best decision on the future of national team.”

Iran football federation had already announced that it has reached an agreement with former Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic but it seems the federation has changed the decision.

Team Melli will entertain Hong Kong on March 26 in Tehran and will meet Cambodia five days later in an away match.

Iran will face Bahrain and Iraq on June 4 and 9 in Tehran.

Sayyadmanesh: We could have beaten Uzbekistan

Wonderkid Allahyar Sayyadmanesh revealed his frustration after Islamic Republic of Iran emerged from a strong performance against defending AFC U23 champions Uzbekistan with a 1-1 draw in their Group C opener on Thursday.

The 18-year-old forward was part of an Iranian attacking unit which produced 16 shots on goal but spurned several scoring opportunities as Hamid Estili’s side were forced to settle for a one point instead of three at Tinsulanon Stadium.

With Sayyadmanesh often serving as the creator, Team Melli Omid crafted clear cut chances both before and after Islomjon Kobilov’s penalty gave Uzbekistan a 40th minute lead, but only Reza Dehghani’s equaliser 13 minutes after half time brought reward for their endeavour.

While Iran made what most considered to be an impressive start to their campaign, Sayyadmanesh couldn’t help but feel disappointed to have missed out on a win.

“I think we started the match very well, and we played very well,” Sayyadmanesh told the-AFC.com.

“We could have scored in the first half, but we made a mistake which gave them a penalty and we were losing at half-time.

“In the second half we came back and scored a goal, but we could have been the



winner of this match and taken three points. Hopefully we’ll play this way again and we’ll win the second match.”

Sayyadmanesh’s performance showed both his quality and his versatility, as he aided the Iranian cause in separate roles from one half to the next.

Having started at the point of the attack, he moved into a deeper role after the half-time introduction of Mehdi Ghayedi, but he was effective throughout, creating wonderful chances for both Ali Shojaei and Mohammed Mohebbi and carrying a goal threat of his own.

Sayyadmanesh said he was prepared for the reshuffle by his ongoing loan spell at Turkish club Istanbulspor, where he is also deployed in multiple roles.

“At my club it’s the same. I can play as a forward or as a winger,” he declared.

“It’s no different for me. If the coach wants to pick me, I’ll play wherever he wants. It’s not a problem for me.”

After bursting onto the scene with three goals at the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup, and becoming Iran’s youngest senior international goal scorer while still a 17-year-old last summer, the teenager believes his game has benefitted from his well-documented move to Turkey, where he signed for 19-time national champions Fenerbahce in June.

His time with the Istanbul giants included friendly match cameos against the likes of Bayern Munich and Real Madrid before moving on loan to second tier Istanbulspor and he believes the lessons learned since making the move provide him with a priceless opportunity.

“It’s a different level (in Turkey) and a different quality,” he declared. “I’ve learned many things in this new experience for me, and it’s been really great.

“I hope I’ll continue my career either in Turkey or somewhere else in Europe. It’s been really important for me.”

Iran’s AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 campaign continues against Korea Republic on Sunday.

(Source: the-afc)

Nadal’s Spain to meet Djokovic’s Serbia in ATP Cup final

Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic will face each other in the final of the inaugural ATP Cup after winning epic three-set matches Saturday to steer Spain and Serbia into the decider.

World number one Nadal ground down pumped-up Australian Alex de Minaur to guide the Davis Cup champions through their semi-final while Djokovic battled past Russia’s Daniil Medvedev.

Under the format of the innovative team event in Sydney, the top-ranked singles players from each country play each other, ensuring the two legends clash for a 55th time since their first showdown in 2006.

World number two Djokovic leads the head-to-heads 28-26, including beating his arch-rival in the Australian Open final last year.

Nadal outlasted De Minaur 4-6, 7-5, 6-1 after unflappable teammate Roberto Bautista Agut tamed Nick Kyrgios 6-1, 6-4.

Djokovic had an equally tough time against impressive fifth-ranked Medvedev, coming through a top-draw contest 6-1, 5-7, 6-4 on the back of Dusan Lajovic beating Karen

Khachanov 7-5, 7-6 (7/1).

“Alex was playing at a very high level and for me my energy was a little bit lower than usual. But it has been a very emotional evening and a pleasure playing here,” said Nadal.

“We know it’s going to be a super tough final (against Serbia),” he added. “Novak likes a lot to play here, he’s had a lot of great results. So let’s see. We have a good team too.”

De Minaur had a furious start, breaking Nadal in the opening game of the match and then keeping the pressure on, restricting the Spaniard’s trademark forehand to take the first set in 46 minutes.

Full of energy, his serve was on fire and he was winning the baseline rallies, but Nadal weathered the onslaught and finally won a break point, converting to take the second set.

De Minaur was deflated and the fight went out of him as the 19-time Grand Slam showed him who was boss, racing through the deciding set.

Unassuming world number 10 Bautista Agut was



in control and all over the groundstrokes of temperamental Kyrgios, who looked lost as he crashed 6-1 in the first set.

The Australian regained some lustre in the second set. But he was broken in the fifth game, mangling his racquet in frustration, and despite saving two match points with booming aces was outplayed.

(SOURCE: AFP)

Vahid Hashemian linked with Persepolis job

PLDC — Former Bayern Munich forward Vahid Hashemian reportedly is a candidate to take charge of Persepolis.

Persepolis Argentine coach Gabriel Calderon will most likely part company with the team after the Iranian club failed to meet his expectations.



Now, Persepolis officials are going to find a replacement for Calderon.

Hashemian was named as Marc Wilmots’s assistant in Team Melli in late May.

He started his coaching career in October 2012 and was appointed as coach of Regionalliga side SV Halstenbek-Rellingen in the Hamburg Oberliga but after a successful run with the team, he announced his resignation at the end of the season.

In 2014, he continued his UEFA Pro License under Pep Guardiola at Bayern Munich.

Ex-Persepolis players Mehdi Tartrar, Ali Karimi and Ali Daei are among the candidates.

Three Iranians advance to Karate 1-Series A Santiago finals

TASNIM — Three Iranian karate athletes booked their places at the 2020 Karate 1-Series A Santiago.

Rozita Alipour defeated her Turkish rival in -61 kg female kumite semifinals and booked a place in the final match.

Zabiollah Poorshab beat Ivan Kvesic of Croatia in the -84kg male kumite semifinals and will face a Turkish athlete in the final match on Sunday.

In the +84 male kumite, Sajad Ganjzadeh qualified for the final match after defeating his countryman Saleh Abazari.

Nearly 500 athletes from 65 countries are in Chile for the first event of the season.

In addition to launching the year of international karate, the Karate 1-Series A Santiago is the last tournament of the Olympic qualification period to be held in the American continent.

Esteghlal eye Australian forward Bernie Ibini

IRNA — Bernie Alpha Ibini-Isei, also known simply as Bernie Ibini, has been linked with a move to Iranian football club Esteghlal.

The 27-year-old forward currently plays at South Korean football team Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors.

After Esteghlal failed to sign Ayanda Patosi, the Blues are going to sign the Nigerian-Australian striker.

Bernie Ibini-Isei immigrated to Australia from Nigeria when he was a child and grew up in Sydney’s Canterbury-Bankstown region.

Esteghlal are favorites to win Iran Professional League after seven years.

We know Korea very well: Hamid Estili

Islamic Republic of Iran head coach Hamid Estili believes his side will arrive for Sunday’s AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 clash with Korea Republic armed with all the information they need to get a positive result.

Having impressed in a 1-1 draw against defending champions Uzbekistan on Thursday, Team Melli Omid can take a major step towards the knockout stage as well as their ultimate goal of a first Olympic football qualification since 1976, with a win against the Koreans.

In stark contrast to Iran’s Olympic drought, Korea Republic haven’t missed out on the Games since 1984, but Estili is confident his staff have pinpointed a path to victory at Tinsulanon Stadium.

“My analysis team is really great,” said the former Persepolis star. “We had great analyses about Uzbekistan and Korea Republic is the same. (Korea Republic) are a good team but we know them very well and we have good information about them. We will go to the second match with more power to win.”

Iran created a wealth of scoring opportunities in their opening match, conjuring 16 shots at goal, with 18-year-old Allahyar Sayyadmanesh and half-time substitute Mehdi Ghayedi both able to regularly unlock Uzbekistan’s defense.

Wastefulness in front of goal prevented Iran from starting their campaign with a win, but Estili believes cutting out defensive errors – like the once which allowed Islmonjon Kobilov to put Uzbekistan ahead from the penalty spot – is just as crucial.

“I think we played well against Uzbekistan and if it was not for a few personal mistakes, we would not have allowed them any chance,” Estili reflected.

“But unfortunately, it was our mistake that gave them the chance to score from a penalty. We will go to win in the second match because we want to qualify for the next round.”

Kim Hak-bum’s Korea Republic side were also guilty of profligacy in their first outing – a 1-0 win over China PR – something the Asian Games gold medal-winning boss put down to opening night anxiety.

“We had a lot of scoring chances, but I think because it was the first game a lot of the players were a little bit nervous,” said Kim.

“They should have played with more calmness and composure, but I’m sure the players will overcome those obstacles in the next game.

“(Our approach on Thursday) was more of an adjustment for the China team, and I expected a lot more from the game, but it didn’t happen, unfortunately. It was a tough three points.”

(Source: the-afc)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com
■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
» Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79 Tehrantimesdaily

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.o. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

O, those of you who are attached to greed, stop for a while following it, for worldly men fear nothing but the unpleasant gnashing of teeth at distress and grief. O, people, educate yourselves, and remove ugly ways and despicable habits.
Imam Ali (AS)

“No Fly Zone” picked as best film at Ammar festival

➡ Several documentary films were also awarded during the closing ceremony of the festival, which was held at Tehran’s Andisheh Hall on Friday.

“War 29” by Mehrdad Haqshenas won the award for Best Documentary on the Sacred Defense, while “The Fame Club” by Mohammad-Hassan Yadegari received the Golden Lantern for Best Documentary on Soft War.



A scene from “No Fly Zone” by Amir Dasargar.

The Golden Lantern for Best Documentary on Champion Nation was awarded to “Motorcycle Diary” by Amir-Hossein Noruzi, and the award for Best Documentary on the Defenders of the Holy Shrines was presented to “The Sweetness of Damascus” by Alireza Baghsheni.

“Mr. Change” by Mehdi Ansari was named Best Documentary on World Resistance, while “Father Taleqani” by Mohammad-Ali Mohammad-doost and “Exam” by Sajjad Riahi shared the award for Best Documentary on National Memory.

Iranian popular author Mohammadreza Sarshar was also honored for his lifetime achievements at the festival.

Saeid Abdi named Iran’s best Quran reciter of the year

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Saeid Abdi has been named Iran’s best Quran reciter of the year at the 4th Fajr Tilawah Festival.



Iranian Quran reciter Saeid Abdi in an undated photo.

He was selected from those finalists who previously had performed during the 14th edition of the Chamber Recitation Festival, which was held at Tehran’s Milad Tower, the organizers announced on Saturday.

“Abdi was picked as the winner by over one million individuals who took part in a poll and a jury of some outstanding Iranian reciters,” said the director of the festival, Davud Jafari.

Mohammad-Javad Hosseini, Vahid Nazarian, Hamid Shakernejad, Amin Puya, Seyyed Karim Musavi and Qasem Moqaddami were the members of the jury.

“The festival began in 1916. The first year it was held in Tehran Province but gradually it developed, and this year the festival held nationwide,” Jafari said.

Independent film festival in China shuts, says ‘impossible’ to pursue independence

SHANGHAI (Reuters) — One of China’s longest-running and largest independent film festivals has suspended operations “indefinitely”, with the organizers saying it was now “impossible” to organize a festival with a “purely independent spirit”.

The China Independent Film Festival (CIFF), which was established in the eastern city of Nanjing in 2003 and has held 14 sessions so far, made the announcement late on Thursday.

It did not provide more details of what pushed it to such a decision, but the move comes amid growing media censorship in China, which has seen regulators crack down on content they believe to violate “socialist core values”.

“We believe, that under current local organizational conditions, that it is impossible to organize a film festival that truly has a purely independent spirit and which is effective,” the CIFF said on its official WeChat account.

Fajr Film Festival announces official lineup

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A lineup of 22 movies will go on screen in the official competition of the 38th edition of the Fajr Film Festival, the president of the festival Ebrahim Darughezadeh announced on Saturday.

“Abadan Eleven 60” by Mehrdad Khoshbakht, “Atabay” by Niki Karimi, “The Clouds about to Rain” by Majid Barzegar, “Toman” by Morteza Farshbaf, “Exit” by Ebrahim Hatamikia and “Good, Bad, Garish 2: The Secret Army” by Peyman Qasemkhani are among the competing films.

The lineup also includes “Day Zero” by Saeid Malekan, “Walnut Tree” by Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian, “Amphibian” by Borzu Niknejad, “I’m Scared” by Behnam Behzadi, “Shahre Qesseh Cinema” by Keivan Alimohammadi, “The Pulp” by Soheil Beirazi and “Day of Chaos” by Behruz Shoeibi.

The festival will also screen “To Die in the Pure Water” by Tehran-based Afghan brothers Jamshid and Navid Mahmudi, “The Night”, a co-production between Iran and the U.S. by Iranian-American director Kurosh Ahari, “Skin” co-directed by Bahram and Bahman Ark and “The Sun” by Majid Majidi.

Also included are “Butterfly Stroke” by Mohammad Kart, “Bone Marrow” by Hamidreza Qorbani, “Qasida of White Cow” by Behtash Sanaeiha, “There Was Blood” by Masud Kimiai and “Three Puffs of Prison” by Saman Salur.

The 38th Fajr Film Festival will be held in Tehran from February 1 to 11.



A scene from “To Die in the Pure Water” by Tehran-based Afghan brothers Jamshid and Navid Mahmudi.

Trumpism cartoon contest to organize workshops with Kustana, Pamarthy

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The International Trumpism Cartoon and Caricature Contest plans to organize workshops with Jitit Kustana from Indonesia and Shankar Pamarthy from India.

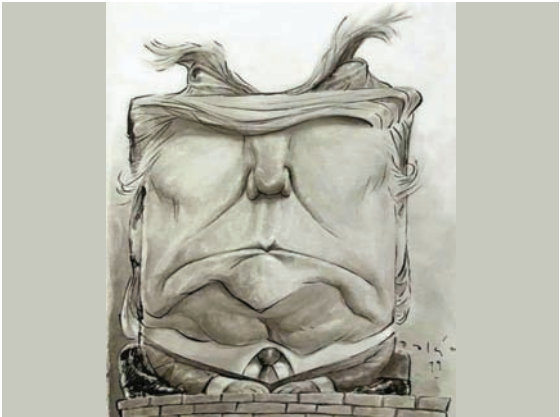
The workshop will be held today at the Isfahan branches of the Art Bureau and Cartoon House.

The poster for the workshops bears a caricature of President Donald Trump created by Pamarthy.

The Art Bureau in Tehran organizes the competition in collaboration with the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense Museum.

A selection of the submissions to the contest was showcased in an exhibition that opened Saturday at the museum.

Over 600 artists from Iran and other countries have submitted about 1800 cartoons and caricatures to the contest.



Brazilian artist Dalcio Machado’s work won first prize in the caricature section at the 2nd International Trumpism Cartoon and Caricature Contest.

12th Tehran Auction set for January 17

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Over 110 lots of modern and contemporary Iranian art will be offered during the 12th Tehran Auction on Friday.

The auction, which is among the largest auctions in the Middle East, will take place at Tehran’s Parsian Azadi Hotel, and a preview will be arranged from January 14 to 16, the organizers announced on Saturday.

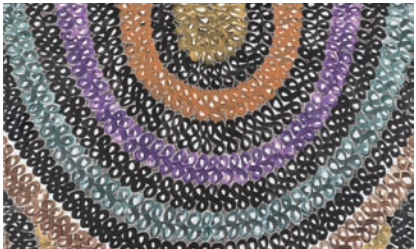
The collection includes precious paintings and sculptures by renowned deceased and living artists, including Hossein Zendebrudi, Parvaneh Etemadi, Parviz Kalantari, Abbas Kiarostami, Aidin Aghdashlu and Jazeh Tabatabai.

Hossein Zendebrudi’s painting “Voute Azurée” estimated at 30 billion to 40 billion rials (over \$700,000 to \$900,000) is the highest-priced item, which will go

on sale at the auction.

The Tehran Auction organizes two sales every year. The first sale is dedicated to classic artworks and the second sale focuses on modern and contemporary artworks.

Art expert Alireza Sami-Azar, a former director of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, is the director of the auction.



“Voute Azurée” by Hossein Zendebrudi is the highest-priced item, which will go on sale at the Tehran Auction.

DiCaprio’s Earth Alliance gives \$3M to Australia fire relief



LOS ANGELES (AP) — Leonardo DiCaprio’s Earth Alliance environmental organization will donate \$3 million to help wildfire relief efforts in Australia.

The foundation said Thursday that it has started the Australia Wildlife Fund to help with an “international response to the catastrophic bushfires” currently raging in the country.

The wildfires have scorched an area twice the size of the U.S. state of Maryland, killed at least 25 people and destroyed 2,000 homes. The fires, fueled by drought and the country’s hottest and driest year on record, have been raging since September, months earlier than is typical for Australia’s annual wildfire season.

The Academy Award-winning actor serves as Earth Alliance’s co-chair along with philanthropists Laurene Powell Jobs and Brian Sheth. The organization was

launched last year to combat climate change and biodiversity loss.

The fund will work with local Australian partner organizations including Aussie Ark, Bush Heritage, and Wires Wildlife Rescue.

DiCaprio joins a growing list of other celebrities that have rallied to donate big bucks. Australian actor Chris Hemsworth and Elton John who each offered \$1 million through social media earlier this week.

Nicole Kidman, Pink and Keith Urban have donated as well.

Metallica said they will donation \$750,000 to a firefighting agency and emergency services agency in Victoria. Phoebe Waller-Bridge said she would auction off her Globe outfit and have the proceeds go to firefighter relief at the Golden Globes on Sunday.

Oscars to go host-less for second year, ABC says



The Best Picture award for “Green Book” at the 91st Academy Awards - Oscars Show in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, U.S., February 24, 2019. (Reuters/Mike Blake)

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — The 2020 Oscars ceremony in February will again have no host, the head of ABC Television Entertainment said on Wednesday.

“Let me confirm it now. Together with the Academy (of Motion Pictures), we have decided there will be no traditional host again this year,” Karey Burke, president of ABC Entertainment, told television reporters.

The 2019 Oscars was the first in 30 years to have no host and saw the audience on broadcaster ABC (DIS.N) rise to 29.6 million Americans, breaking a four-year trend of falling viewership for the live ceremony.

Burke said the decision not to have a host for the Feb. 9 event, the most prestigious awards in the movie business, was prompted by good reviews last year, when rock band Queen opened the show with a live performance to celebrate the box office success of the musical “Bohemian Rhapsody.”

Burke said organizers planned on “repeating what worked for us last year - huge entertainment value, big musical numbers, big comedy.”

“A lot of incredible elements have already come together and convinced us that we are going to have an incredibly entertaining show again,” she added, without giving details.

Nominations for the 2020 Oscars will be announced on Monday.

Finding a host for big awards show has become increasingly difficult in recent years. Comedian Kevin Hart pulled out of the 2019 Oscars job after being slammed on social media for comments he had made in the past. He apologized.

Other comedians, including Ricky Gervais at Sunday’s Golden Globes, have met with criticism for being either too harsh, too political, or too soft in their jokes.