



U.S. claim of lifting medicine embargo on Iran a sheer lie **2**



Zarif lauds China's successful measures to contain coronavirus epidemic **2**



Iranian women 3x3 basketball want a place at Tokyo 2020: official **11**



Action film "Day Zero" brings Jundallah founder Rigi back to life **12**

Iran third fastest growing tourism market



©World Expeditions/ Richard I'Anson

Foreign travelers look at ancient rock-hewn tombs and bas-relief carvings at Naqsh-e Rostam, which is situated near the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, southern Iran.

See page 8

Foreign investment in Iran up 50% in 10 months

TEHRAN — Foreign investment in Iran has risen 50 percent during the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019-January 20, 2020) from the same period of time in the past year, Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand announced.

Speaking in a press conference on Tuesday, the minister said the country has witnessed this rise in the foreign

investment despite the tough condition resulted from the unjust U.S. sanctions, IRNA reported.

The official also noted that the country's non-oil exports during the first 10 months of the current year have experienced a 20-percent rise in terms of weight.

The value of the country's foreign trade hasn't changed in the mentioned period compared to the figure for last year's nine-months, according to Dejpasand. ➔ **4**

CIA agent sentenced to death for espionage crimes: Iranian Judiciary

TEHRAN — Iran's top court has upheld a death sentence against a person who was spying on Iran's civilian nuclear sites for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Iranian Judiciary announced on Tuesday.

"The Supreme Court has recently confirmed a death sentence handed down to Amir Rahimpour, who was a highly-paid CIA agent, seeking to pass some information on Iran's nuclear program to the U.S. intelligence ser-

vice. He will soon be held to account," Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili told a regular news briefing, Press TV reported.

Esmaili added that two other spies, who were collecting information for the U.S. under the guise of a charity organization, have also been given ten year sentences each over espionage.

The pair also received a five-year jail term each for acts against national security. ➔ **2**

Referendum only solution to Israeli-Palestinian issue: parliament committee

TEHRAN — Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee issued a statement late on Monday condemning the so-called "deal of the century", asking all parliaments of Muslim countries to support the democratic solution of referendum in the occupied lands

The parliamentary committee said the

only solution for the Palestinian problem is to hold a referendum among the main residents of the Palestinian lands, including Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

In its statement, the parliamentary committee said the United States' new scheme is a declaration of war against Islam. ➔ **3**

EU rejects U.S. one-sided 'Deal of the Century'

In the statement, the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell noted that the plan introduced by U.S. President Donald Trump on 28 January departs from internationally agreed parameters, such as "the two-State solution, based on 1967 lines, with equivalent land swaps, as may be agreed between the parties, ... as set out in the Council Conclusions of July 2014."

"To build a just and lasting peace, the unresolved final status issues must be decided through direct negotiations between both parties. This includes notably the issues related to borders, the status of Jerusalem, security and the refugee question," the statement added, MNA reported.

"The European Union calls on both sides to re-engage and to refrain from any unilateral actions contrary to international

law that could exacerbate tensions," the statement said.

"We are especially concerned by statements on the prospect of annexation of the Jordan Valley and other parts of the West Bank. In line with international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the EU does not recognise Israel's sovereignty over the territories occupied since 1967. Steps towards annexation, if implemented, could not pass unchallenged."

"The European Union will continue to support all efforts aimed at reviving a political process in line with international law, which ensures equal rights and which is acceptable to both parties," the statement added.

The U.S. administration unveiled the so-called 'Deal of the Century' plan last week. The deal has been widely condemned among the Mus-

lim countries that believe it to flagrantly violate Palestinians' rights.

The American deal, which was negotiated with the Israeli regime but without the Palestinians, refers to Jerusalem al-Quds as the undivided capital of Israel and allows the regime to annex illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

■ Palestinian groups

All Palestinian groups have angrily rejected the plan, while Israeli groups of different political persuasions have enthusiastically embraced it, hailing it for offering them more than they expected.

Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas on Saturday cut relations with the U.S. and Israel after saying he did not want his name to go down in history for betraying the Palestinians. ➔ **10**

Israel, Sudan leaders 'secretly meet, agree on normalization'

A surprise meeting between Sudan's leader and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stirred controversy in Sudan Tuesday, with the government saying it wasn't notified ahead of time and critics lambasting the talks on social media.

Israel says it has reached an agreement with Sudan to jointly work towards normalization of ties, after leaders of the two sides held a secret meeting in Uganda, drawing angry reactions from all Palestinian factions.

The meeting took place between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the chairman of Sudan's ruling council, at the residence of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni in the city of Entebbe on Monday.

It was only made public when Netanyahu

claimed in a tweet, "We agreed to begin cooperation that will lead to the normalization of relations... History!"

Netanyahu's office later released a statement, saying the premier believes Sudan "is moving in a new and positive direction," and that he had expressed this point to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Burhan, it added, "is interested in helping his country go through a modernization process by removing it from isolation and placing it on the world map."

Separately, a senior Israeli official was quoted by The Times of Israel as saying that the two-hour-long talks between Netanyahu and Burhan "serves as the beginning of a process of bilateral

cooperation leading to normalization."

However, Sudan's information minister and government spokesman said he was not informed of the meeting and had received its news "through the media."

"We, the members of the cabinet, were not notified or consulted about this meeting. We are waiting for the chief of the sovereign council to return and give clarification about this," Faisal Mohamed Salih said in a statement.

A senior Sudanese military official, who was speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Times of Israel that the Netanyahu-Burhan meeting had been orchestrated by the UAE and that only a "small circle" of top officials in Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt knew about it. ➔ **10**

PERSPECTIVE

Masoud Hossein
Head of the Sport Desk of the TehranTimes

Iran football federation needs courage choosing new coach

The Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) is clearly in a dilemma about how to choose the new head coach for Team Melli. The federation needs courage to make the best decision since the Team have difficult job ahead to book a place at the final stage of the 2022 World Cup qualification.

Sepahan coach Amir Ghalenoei is a potential candidate to take charge of Team Melli but the Iranian club don't let him to leave the team since the Yellows are in a tight title race in Iran Professional League.

Furthermore, Sepahan will have to participate in the 2020 AFC Champions League, where the team have been drawn along with Qatari giants Al Sadd, Al Nassr of Saudi Arabia and Emirati outfit Al Ain.

Ghalenoei had an unsuccessful stint in Iran from 2006 to 2008. Under stewardship of the coach, Iran failed to book a place at the 2007 AFC Asian Cup semis after losing to Korea Republic on penalties.

Once bitten, twice shy; the federation should not make the same mistakes they did several years ago, since Team Melli have a difficult task ahead.

Vahid Hashemian is being considered for the job as well. The ex-Iran striker was Marc Wilmots's assistant and is well-informed about the team's condition.

The former Bayern Munich forward has gained B and A coaching licenses when playing in Germany, however, it's noteworthy that he is an inexperienced coach and needs more support to bring success to Team Melli.

Iran will have four must-win matches in late March and early June.

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

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

Iran, who are going to continue their quest for a sixth World Cup appearance, sit five points behind leaders Iraq in Group C but having played one game fewer.

The eight group winners and four best runners-up will advance to the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Finals and the final round of qualifying for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The next best 24 teams from the second round of the joint qualifiers will compete in a separate competition for the remaining 12 slots in the 24-team AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

ARTICLE

Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

Iran, under extreme pressure? Superb responses so far

To be quite clear, the bizarre creature who came up with the Israel/Palestine "peace" deal (that has been rejected most everywhere) is not very bright, and he is so waxen-looking that he belongs frozen in eternal silence in London's Madame Tussaud's museum. Except that he would not be acceptable there, even as a wax effigy, because he has never been good for anything.

That this guy, Jared Kushner, has any credibility at all is a miracle. He is a real estate slumlord and little more, whose sole claim to any knowledge about the Israel/Palestine matter is that, he asserts, he has read 25 books on the topic. Maybe there's something to having an undergraduate degree from Harvard, but his father, a convicted felon who spent time in jail, gave Harvard a sufficient amount of money to get his son into the university.

One need not write further about the proposed "deal". It's an abomination and even Israelis, some of them anyway but not Likudniks and settler extremists, oppose it. Worse, almost, is Trump's expanding ban on visits to the U.S. by Muslims, or people from more largely Muslim countries. This is a reelection strategy aimed at igniting right-wing nationalism and hatred amid his electoral base of lunatic fascists.

Adding to the misery is that the U.S. Senate, dominated by Republicans, refused to permit the calling of witnesses in Trump's impeachment trial. But never mind on that. Trump's conviction was unlikely from the get go, EVEN THOUGH Republicans have essentially admitted the charges against Trump (regarding Ukraine) were valid. Thus the faux (no witness) trial actually exposed the GOP members of the Senate as being anti-democracy, anti even the U.S. Constitution. But this is actually a good thing, because IF Trump had been convicted and removed from office, the standing of Republicans might have been enhanced rather than diminished, and their re-election chances come November more secure. As it is, some long established sinecures held by Republican dinosaurs in the U.S. Senate, people like Sen. ➔ **7**



© IRNA/ Asghar Khamsch

Oynar revives revolutionary Zainab Pasha on stage at Fajr

Oynar, a troupe from East Azerbaijan, performs "Zainab Pasha" about Zainab Pasha, a female revolutionary of Iran's Tobacco Protest in Tabriz during the 19th century, at the 38th Fajr International Theater Festival in the courtyard of Tehran's City Theater Complex on February 3, 2020.

Grossi: Iran's cooperation with IAEA has not been interrupted

By staff and agency

Rafael Grossi, the new director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, has said that the cooperation of Iran as an inspected state has not been interrupted.



"We are there, our inspectors are there. They are carrying out their activities, which is very important. At the same time, what our inspectors have been verifying is the diminishing degree of compliance of the agreement in 2015," he told Euronews in an interview published on Tuesday.

Asked if the nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, can survive, he said, "That is in the realm of politics and the countries that will explain why they do what they do, or why they don't do what they do."

Zarif lauds China's successful measures to contain coronavirus epidemic

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has lauded China's "successful measures" to fight the coronavirus epidemic.

"I expressed appreciation and gratitude for China's successful measures to fight the epidemic," Zarif tweeted in Chinese on Tuesday.

"China prevented the epidemic not only from getting worse at home but also from spreading internationally," Press TV quoted Zarif as saying.

Iran's foreign minister also condemned the United States for taking advantage of the epidemic.

"China is obviously more responsible and successful than the United States in preventing and controlling H1N1 flu (in the U.S.) in 2009," he added.

The U.S. has declared a public health emergency and denied entry to foreign nationals who had visited China in the past two weeks. The U.S. has confirmed 11 cases of the coronavirus.

Reportedly, there are more than 17,000 confirmed cases of the virus in China. Some 425 people have so far died in China.

In an interview with Fox News on Sunday, President Trump said the U.S. has "shut down" the coronavirus coming in from China.

"We've offered China help but we can't have thousands of people coming in who may have this problem, the coronavirus," he said. "So we're going to see what happens, but we did shut it down."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying complained that America's actions have "unceasingly manufactured and spread panic."

"It is precisely developed countries like the United States with strong epidemic prevention capabilities and facilities that have taken the lead in imposing excessive restrictions contrary to [World Health Organization] recommendations," she said.

Zarif also held a phone conversation with Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Monday, praising the Chinese government for its responsibility and efforts to control the crisis.

"MOFA of the IRI and his Chinese counterpart have discussed the latest efforts to contain the novel coronavirus. Dr. Zarif lauded the Chinese government for its responsibility and efforts to control the crisis and expressed his opposition to politicization of such issues," Iran's Foreign Ministry tweeted on Tuesday.

According to Xinhua, Wang expressed thanks to Iran for supporting China in fighting the epidemic, hailing Zarif as the first foreign minister publicly voicing support for China, which has shown the Iranian people's friendliness towards the Chinese people.

Wang also thanked Iran for providing China with medical supplies at the critical moment of epidemic prevention and control.

China has established a nationwide system to fight the epidemic with the strictest and most thorough measures, Wang said, adding that with his country's unremitting efforts, the fatality rate of the novel coronavirus nationwide has been controlled under 2.1 percent, far lower than the rate of any other epidemic in China, and also lower than the 17.4-percent fatality rate of the H1N1 influenza in the United States in 2009.

Wang said that China has full confidence and ability to win the fight against the epidemic.

In fighting the epidemic, China has been responsible not only for its own people, but also for the international community, he said.

CIA agent sentenced to death for espionage crimes: Iranian Judiciary

1 → Last year in April, Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi revealed that his ministry succeeded to identify 290 CIA spies in Iran and other countries.

"Our actions in identifying elements of this agency have caused disruptions in the CIA in a way that the U.S. formed committees and director of the CIA confirmed being harmed by Iran," he said during a speech to worshippers in Tehran at the time.

He said that Yahoo News conducted interviews with 11 U.S. spy experts who admitted that identifying CIA spies by Iran had been a "disastrous defeat" for the U.S.

In an article published by Yahoo News in November 2018, it is claimed that Iranian intelligence had gained access to a secret internet-based communications system of the U.S.

"When these types of compromises happen, it's so dark and bad," said a former official, speaking to Yahoo.

Alavi added that tens of spies employed by foreign intelligence services were identified in Iran's sensitive centers.

Alvai said, "Tens of spies who were employed by foreign intelligence services were identified in the country's sensitive centers and were arrested. Report on identifying these spies made all the ones who were informed about the Intelligence Ministry's performance surprised and also made the foreign services which employed the spies confused."

VP says U.S. claim of lifting medicine embargo on Iran a sheer lie

POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN — First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri said on Tuesday that the United States is lying when it claims that pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and foodstuff are not subject to its sanctions list on Iran.

The Trump administration is also lying that it has not blocked ways of procuring medicine and foodstuff by Iran, the vice president added.

"We have billions of dollars in different countries, including South Korea and Japan, but, the U.S. prevents us from utilizing our own money to procure medicine and foodstuff for the country," Jahangiri said on the sidelines of a ceremony at the Sharyati Technical and Vocational Center Tehran.

Jahangiri went on to say that the U.S. has formed the "most powerful and the largest monitoring organization" worldwide to make sure that its sanctions against Iran are perfectly fulfilled.

"If a tanker tries to transfer Iran's crude oil, it will be traced. If it (the U.S.-formed monitoring organization) can detect the tanker the monitoring organization will contact the tanker company and will urge it not to transfer Iran's oil. It is one of the most unprecedented sanctions," he lamented.

In a press conference on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said that a Swiss-U.S. "humanitarian" channel set up to enable medicine import to Iran was insufficient, reminding that the U.S. was originally banned by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) from subjecting Iran's much-needed medical supplies to sanctions.



"Medicine and foodstuffs were never subject to sanctions in the first place so that they can now create a channel with such a show," Mousavi said.

"We do not recognize any such so-called humanitarian channel," Mousavi added.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018 and restored the previous sanctions against Iran and ordered new ones.

Trump himself has called sanctions against Iran "economic war".

EU's Borrell: Europe to avoid taking Iran nuclear dispute to UN

By staff and agency

European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has said that the EU will extend indefinitely the time limit to resolve disputes in the 2015 nuclear deal to avoid having to go to the UN Security Council or triggering new sanctions.

"We are in agreement not to go directly to a strict time limit which would oblige (us) to go to the Security Council," Reuters quoted him as saying during a visit to Tehran on Monday.

In his remarks, broadcast on Tuesday, he said, "The willingness is not to start a process that goes to the end

of JCPOA, but to keep it alive."

Borrell was notified in January by Paris, London and Berlin that they had triggered the dispute mechanism.

Borrell said on January 24 that he had extended the time available to discuss ways to save the nuclear deal.

"There is agreement that more time is needed due to the complexity of the issues involved. The timeline is therefore extended," Borrell said in a statement.

In a separate with Borrell on Monday, President Hassan Rouhani criticized the EU for failing to honor its commitments under the JCPOA when the U.S. quit

the deal and reinstated sanctions on Iran.

Rouhani said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is still ready to cooperate with the European Union for resolving issues, and at any time that the other side (EU) fully observes its commitments Iran will also return to its commitments."

In May 2019 Iran started to reduce its commitments to the JCPOA at bi-monthly intervals in response to the abrogation of the pact by the U.S. coupled with the European Union's inaction to shield Iran's economy from sanctions.

Deterrence has erased military choice against Iran: defense minister

POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN — Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami said on Tuesday that it is a long time that the enemies have not said that military option against Iran is on the table, noting their retreat has roots in Iran's deterrence power.

"Today, we enjoy very good military might. You know that, a couple of years ago, the arrogant enemy was talking about choices on the table highlighting the military choice but today there is no any threat of this kind," the minister said while addressing Kerman province's administrative council.

Hatami visited Kerman province on Tuesday to attend the graveyard of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and other martyrs.

Hatami pointed to the IRGC's missile attack on January 8 on the U.S. airbase Iraq in response to the assassination of Soleimani in Baghdad on January 3, saying the IRGC gave a tough response to the U.S. which proved Iran's "firm will".

He added, "If the enemies make a mistake again they will face harsher response."

On Monday, the deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces highlighted Iran's might in any military field, saying in terms of mil-



Defense Minister Hatami (C) pays tribute to martyr General Soleimani in Kerman

itary power Iran is now at its best situation.

"Today, the current might of the Islamic establishment is more than ever," Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani said.

He added that the country's power is now sustainable.

In relevant remarks on Saturday, the Army Ground Force commander, citing military experts, said that the Iranian Army Ground Force is the fifth most powerful in the world.

"Iran's Ground Force is the 5th most powerful ground force in the world," Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari said as he visited a military training center in Tehran.

Modern guided missiles mounted on IRGC helicopters

POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has equipped its helicopter 214 with cutting-edge anti-armored guided missiles.

According to the report by Tasnim, the mounted missiles might be one of the models of Fatah, Sadid or Qaem.

The IRGC's airborne unit has, according to the report, mounted the mentioned modern missiles on transport helicopter 214 to reinvigorate its combat capabilities.

The report added that the newly-installed missiles with warheads can be utilized in destroying armored vehicles and strongholds.

A relevant report said in December 2019, the Iranian Army airborne mounted modern cannons and rocket-launchers on the transport helicopters.

Yousef Qorbani, the commander of the Iranian Army Airborne, announced at the time that his forces mounted modern cannons and rocket-launchers on the transport helicopters.

"Previously, helicopter 214, which is a transport helicopter, could not defend itself and that was a weak

point for the said helicopter. Today, the airborne unit's helicopters have been equipped with 20mm cannons and rocket-launchers," Second Brigadier General Qorbani said in the ceremony.

"The missiles that were previously mounted on our choppers enjoyed finally 3,500 meters of effective range but in the last 2 years the airborne with the cooperation of the country's defense industries and universities have managed to produce long-range missiles and have mounted them on the choppers," he explained.

The commander went on to say that the airborne unit attained self-sufficiency in producing its spare parts. "We are producing nearly 240,000 different parts inside the country."

He said, "The airborne unit turned sanctions into an opportunity."

In recent years, Iran has made great strides in the defense sector and become self-sufficient in producing essential military hardware and defense systems.

Iran has made it clear that its military might is merely defensive and that it poses no threat to other countries.

Iran, Pakistan highlight necessity of unity in Islamic world

POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi have rejected the so-called U.S. "deal of the century" and highlighted the necessity of maintaining unity in the world of Islam.

In a phone conversation on Monday, the officials said that unity and integrity in the world of Islam is essential to support Palestine.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced the general provisions of the plan at the White House with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his side on January 28.

The White House claimed that the plan is the most serious, realistic, and detailed plan ever presented, one that could make Israelis, Palestinians, and the region safer and more prosperous.

"This Vision is just the first step and provides the basis for historic progress toward peace. The United States hopes this Vision will lead to direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians," it added.

Politicians and analysts say that Trump is formally trying to give the Palestinian lands to Israel through his proposed plan.



Palestinian leaders, who were absent during the announcement and had rejected the proposal even before its release, denounced the plan as "a new Balfour Declaration" that heavily favored Israel and would deny them a viable independent state.

At their emergency meetings, both the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have rejected the deal of the century.

The 57-member OIC, which held its summit on Monday to discuss the plan in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah, said in a statement that it "calls on all member states not to engage with this plan or to cooperate

with the U.S. administration in implementing it in any form".

The meeting of the body came two days after the Arab League said, "It does not meet the minimum rights and aspirations of Palestinian people."

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has called the U.S. proposal the "slap of the century".

Sabah Zangeneh, former Iran's representative at the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), has said that the so-called peace plan does not enjoy international support.

In an interview with IRNA published on Saturday, Zanganeh described the deal of

century as "dangerous" which can throw international order into disarray.

Expressing concerns over the consequences of the plan, he said, "Apparently, this plan is supposed to boost economy in the region. However, in fact, it will cause challenges to regional economy."

In a series of tweets, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif castigated the plan.

"The so-called 'Vision for Peace' is simply the dream project of a bankrupt-cy-ridden real estate developer," Zarif said.

The foreign minister added the plan was a "nightmare for the region and the world and, hopefully, a wake-up call for all the Muslims who have been barking up the wrong tree."

Zarif also said the plan is "sleepwalking into a catastrophe" and likened it to "highway to hell".

The foreign minister also said Muslims must "wake up" to this plot as the United States has proven that it has never been an "honest broker" in mediation between the Palestinians and the Zionist regime of Israel.

"We Muslims need to wake up: The U.S. never was—and can never be—anything resembling an honest broker."

Deal of Century is Trump's last effort to escape big defeat: general

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top military advisor to the Leader, said on Tuesday that “Deal of the Century” is Donald Trump’s last efforts to escape a big defeat by the Resistance Front.

“Deal of the Century is the most disgraceful deal of the century, and as the Great Middle East project failed, so will the Deal of the Century,” Mehr quoted Rahim Safavi as saying.

“None of the Palestinian groups accepted this plan, while rulers of certain Arab countries have accepted the plan and cooperate with America’s policies in the region,” he said.

Addressing a pro-Israel audience at the White House with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by his side, Trump announced the general provisions of the plan on Tuesday.

The White House claimed that the plan is the most serious, realistic, and detailed

plan ever presented, one that could make Israelis, Palestinians, and the region safer and more prosperous.

“This Vision is just the first step and provides the basis for historic progress toward peace. The United States hopes this Vision will lead to direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians,” it added.

Palestinians took to streets in Gaza and the West Bank to protest the plan.

Rahim Safavi pointed to a prediction by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei who had said that the Zionist regime would cease to exist in 25 years, saying, “This is while some rulers of the Arab coun-



tries whose hands are in the hands of the Zionist regime will disappear sooner than that regime.”

The general further said Trump made two terrible mistakes, namely assassinating Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and announcing the Deal of the Century.

“The martyrdom of Hajj Qassem Soleimani will make the Islamic nations’ blood boil,” he said.

Trump ordered strikes that martyred General Soleimani, chief of the IRGC Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), on January 3.

“The martyrdom of Hajj Qassem Soleimani will make the Islamic nations’ blood boil,” he said.

Russian diplomat says Iran’s reducing nuclear commitments has been a ‘forced measure’

By staff and agency

Levan Dzagharyan, the Russian ambassador to Tehran, has said that Iran’s five steps to reduce its nuclear commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, were a “forced measure”.

“The United States has blatantly violated its commitments and international law, namely the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, and then started to baselessly accusing Iran of all problems,” TASS quoted him as saying on Tuesday.

“For today, Iran remains the most verifiable state in the world, and the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] has repeatedly underscored the country’s commitment to its obligations [under the nuclear deal],” he said.

He added, “Russia is not happy about the measures taken by Iran, but we understand that they were forced to do so. Moreover, all those measures are reversible.”

He also said that Russia is alarmed by Iran’s declared possibility of withdrawal from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in response to European states’ conduct.

“We are very alarmed by this issue, including by the fact that it was raised at the Majlis [the Iranian parliament],” he said. “To a significant extent, such an emotional reaction on behalf of our Iranian colleagues can be explained by the fact that Tehran had been honoring its obligations under the nuclear deal for quite a while. At the same time, the trio of European powers (the United Kingdom, Germany and France) was only making declarations.”

According to the diplomat, Russia has repeatedly urged Iran “to remain committed to NPT provisions and to remain a part of this very important international treaty.”

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has warned that Iran will consider quitting the NPT if the Europeans refer Iran’s nuclear case to the UN Security Council.

“If they (Europeans) take any action, the issue of quitting



the NPT will be raised based on the letter of the President dating May 2018,” Zarif told ICANA in an interview published on January 20.

The Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has received a plan to study Iran’s possible withdrawal from the NPT.

The plan has so far been signed by 19 MPs, ISNA reported on Saturday.

The Iranian government is duty bound to immediately quit the NPT and stop all cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency if Iran’s nuclear case is referred to the United Nations Security Council, the MPs said in their letter to the parliament speaker.

France, Germany and the United Kingdom, the three European states signatory to the JCPOA, issued a joint statement on January 14, announcing they have formally triggered the dispute mechanism which could bring the issue before the UN Security Council.

The EU’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on January 24 that he had extended the time available to discuss

ways to save the nuclear deal with Iran under the dispute mechanism triggered by the three European Union trio, also referred to as E3.

“There is agreement that more time is needed due to the complexity of the issues involved. The timeline is therefore extended,” Borrell said in a statement.

Borrell said the joint commission that regulates the Iran nuclear deal will meet in February but did not give a date.

He has said that the EU will extend indefinitely the time limit to resolve disputes in the 2015 nuclear deal to avoid having to go to the UN Security Council or triggering new sanctions.

“We are in agreement not to go directly to a strict time limit which would oblige (us) to go to the Security Council,” Reuters quoted him as saying during a visit to Tehran on Monday.

■ ‘Russia, Iran played key effort in countering terrorists in Syria’

Dzagharyan also said that Russia and Iran have played a key role in preventing terrorists from establishing their rule in Syria.

“If not for Russia and Iran, terrorists would have already won in Syria,” he said. “Thanks to our efforts, the legitimate government of [President] Bashar Assad is now in power. Even our adversaries admit it, albeit reluctantly.”

According to the Russian diplomat, Russian-Iranian relations have also been on the rise in past years.

“This is mostly due to the fact that on many issues our positions are either close or overlapping. Syria has become one of cooperation areas that has proven its efficiency,” he added.

“Fighting terrorism is a common challenge for Iran and Russia,” the ambassador continued. “We also have common goals and tasks regarding other regional problems. Besides, our countries are under Western sanctions. This certainly makes us closer.”

2 Iranian students file complaint after mistreatment, denial of entry into U.S.

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Two Iranian college students have filed civil rights complaints with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security over mistreatment and denial of entry into the United States by federal officials at Boston’s Logan International Airport.

According to Time magazine, Shahab Dehghani, who attends Northeastern University, and Reihana Emami Arandi, who had been set to start classes at Harvard University, have filed separate complaints with the agency’s civil rights office.

They have asked the agency to investigate the conduct of Customs and Border Protection officials.

According to the students, federal officials detained and interrogated them for hours at the airport before concluding incorrectly that they planned on staying in the country longer than their temporary visas allowed.

“I couldn’t and still cannot believe how I was treated and why I received such behavior,” Arandi said in her complaint.

“I have never had any interest in or intention to stay in the U.S. for the long term. In fact, Harvard is the only school in the U.S. I even applied to. It doesn’t make sense for anybody intending to immigrate permanently



to rest their hopes on one highly competitive program at Harvard.”

According to reports, dozens of Iranians have been denied entry into the U.S. since August.

The reports come as tensions run high between the U.S. and Iran, especially after the U.S. assassination of Iran’s top anti-terror general Qassem Soleimani.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has said its inspections take additional factors into account and can uncover details that didn’t come up in previous visa screenings.

There’s no guarantee, the agency said, that someone with a visa will be allowed to enter the United States. And every day, hundreds of people are denied entry at U.S. ports.

During his interrogation, Dehghani was

prevented from communicating with his attorneys and was subjected to a “threatening and uncivil interrogation” that focused on his religious and political beliefs.

Federal officials purposely ignored an emergency court order temporarily staying his removal until the case could be heard in court and forced him to board a flight bound for Paris, Dehghani’s lawyers argue.

“This entire situation is unacceptable and was handled in an utterly unprofessional manner,” the complaint concludes.

“This behavior by members of Customs and Border Protection cannot stand.”

Arandi said she was detained at Logan Airport on Sept. 18 and questioned for nearly eight hours about her work, family, travel and opinions about recent events in the Middle East.

She said officers also searched and confiscated her luggage, laptop and cellphone and did not allow her to make any calls, including to officials at Harvard.

Arandi said she also didn’t understand the legal implications of declining to sign a statement given to her by officials, which has now resulted in her being banned from entering the U.S. for five years.

China thanks Iran, others for humanitarian aid

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — China has thanked Iran and some other countries for their help in dealing with the novel coronavirus pneumonia outbreak, saying “a friend in need is a friend indeed.”

During a daily briefing on Monday, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said, “Since the novel coronavirus pneumonia outbreak, some countries have expressed understanding and support to China through various means. As of noon February 2, epidemic preven-

tion and control supplies donated by the ROK, Japan, the UK, France, Turkey, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Hungary, Iran, Belarus, Indonesia and the UNICEF have arrived in China.”

“A friend in need is a friend indeed. I’d like to thank them all, Hua added.

She also rejected a U.S. claim that China is refusing U.S. offer of help, saying, “As far as I know, the U.S. government has not provided any substantive help to

the Chinese side yet.”

On the contrary, she continued, the U.S. was the first country to withdraw its consulate staff from Wuhan, the first to suggest the partial withdrawal of embassy staff, and the first to announce a ban on entry by Chinese citizens after the WHO made it clear that it doesn’t recommend and even opposes travel and trade restrictions against China.

“What the U.S. has done could create and spread panic,” she concluded.

Rouhani felicitates Sri Lanka on Independence Day

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has congratulated Sri Lanka’s government and nation on the anniversary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka’s independence.

Sri Lanka’s Independence Day is a national holiday celebrated annually on February 4 to commemorate the country’s political independence from British rule in 1948. Usually, the main celebration takes place in Colombo, with flag-hoisting ceremonies, parades, and performances.

In a message to Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Rouhani wished prosperity and felicity for the Sri Lankan nation, according to the president’s official website.

Referendum only solution to Israeli-Palestinian issue: key parliament committee

1→

According to the committee, the so-called solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a clear violation of international resolutions and law.

Despite Washington’s claim, the plan will not bring peace, rather it will increase tensions in the region, the statement added.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers resistance as the only way to confront the Zionist regime, it said.

The committee urged parliaments of Islamic countries to condemn the U.S. proposal and support the Palestinians’ rights.

U.S. administration unveiled the highly controversial plan last week. The deal has been widely condemned among Muslim countries as a flagrant violation of Palestinians’ rights.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi described the move as “treason of century” against the inalienable rights of Palestinian people and called for the governments and freedom-seeking nations to counter the move.

Larijani censures EU inaction in face of U.S. assault on nuclear deal

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani has censured the United States’ continuous assault on the Iran nuclear agreement and criticized Europe’s inaction in the face of Washington’s anti-Iran campaign.

Larijani made the criticism in a meeting with European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell in Tehran late on Monday, when the two sides discussed the nuclear deal-related issues among other things.

The parliament speaker also voiced Iran’s readiness to help resolve regional issues.



Borrell voiced the European Union’s readiness for cooperating with Iran on bilateral and regional issues.

He also expressed his condolences over the assassination of Iran’s top anti-terror general Qassem Soleimani, who was targeted in a U.S. drone strike ordered directly by U.S. President Donald Trump.

This was the new EU foreign policy chief’s first visit to Tehran since taking office.

Borrell, Spain’s former foreign minister and ex-speaker of the European Parliament, replaced Federica Mogherini as the new EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in late 2019.

During his visit to Tehran on Monday, he also met with President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

President Rouhani also criticized the European Union for failing to honor its commitments under the 2015 nuclear pact, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

On May 8, 2018, the U.S. unilaterally pulled out of the JCPOA and began adopting an extreme hostile policy toward Tehran under the name of “maximum pressure”.

Under the maximum pressure policy, the U.S. targeted Iran’s oil exports with sanctions. It also blacklisted top Iranian officials and commanders.

On May 8, 2019, Iran began a bimonthly process of reducing its commitments to the JCPOA under the historic pact’s provisions.

The move was intended to push European countries to salvage the JCPOA from U.S. pressures. Iran argued that the three European members of the deal, namely France, Britain and Germany, have done nothing of value to protect Iran’s benefits from the deal.

Finally, Iran announced in January that it is taking the last and final step to suspend all of its commitments to the JCPOA. The decision was based on Europe’s failure to keep up its part of the deal, but Tehran clarified that it will return to the deal as soon as Europe fulfils its obligations.

[correction]

In our Monday issue, on page 3, a news story headlined “Iran dismisses as ‘insufficient’ Swiss-U.S. humanitarian channel”, a photo of the Swiss Ambassador to Tehran Markus Leitner is attached to the story. However, there was no caption to describe the photo. The name of the ambassador was not also mentioned in the story. The mistake is regretted.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	440199.1
IFX	5545.00

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,453 rials
GBP	54,641 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$54.88/b
WTI	\$50.88/b
OPEC Basket	\$58.94/b
Gold	\$1,571.40/oz
Silver	\$17.78/oz
Platinum	\$981.95/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Foreign investment in Iran up 50% in 10 months

1 → He further mentioned the significant role of banks in the expansion of the country's economy, saying that by diversifying banking services, revenue can be increased by 30 to 50 percent, while using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in banks can increase revenues by 17 percent and reduce costs by 25 percent.



In early December 2019, Dejpasand had announced that foreign direct investment (FDI) in Iran has risen 20 percent during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 21, 2019) year on year.

As previously announced by the official, the foreign investment attracted to the country during the current year's summer period (June 22-September 21, 2019) increased by 20 percent compared to the last year's same period.

Dejpasand also elaborated on his ministry's programs to nullify the sanctions through measures such as strengthening trade and exports and providing required funds for infrastructure and production projects especially through the allocation of banking facilities.

He further mentioned reforming the banking system as one of his major programs since taking his post as the minister.

Global factory revival in doubt as coronavirus spreads

Global manufacturing appeared to be steadying after a long slowdown, but is set to suffer a fresh setback due to China's isolation in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

In the U.S., the Institute for Supply Management's manufacturing index rose to 50.9 in January from 47.2 in December, indicating a return to growth for the first time since July as new orders and production picked up. A reading above 50 indicates activity is expanding across the manufacturing sector, while below 50 signals contraction.



The increase "echoes the message from the other surveys that the prospects for factory sector activity are starting to improve, while adding to the broader evidence that the economy is turning a corner," said Andrew Hunter, an economist at Capital Economics, in a note to clients.

Tim Fiore, who oversees the ISM survey of factory purchasing and supply managers, welcomed January's reading. But he questioned whether the expansion would be sustained in the coming months given weakness in some January inputs, including supplier deliveries, inventories and imports.

A small number of businesses

A small number of businesses in the survey commented on the coronavirus, Mr. Fiore said, although by the time the survey collected its data the scale of the outbreak was only just beginning to unfold.

"I'm sure it's going to have a pretty strong impact in February," he said.

Meantime a final IHS Markit manufacturing survey for the U.S. released Monday dipped to a three-month low as exports fell, although it also remained in expansionary territory last month at 51.9, down from 52.4 in December.

January surveys of factories in Asia and Europe showed a slower decline in output, with shrinking inventories and stabilizing new orders pointing to a rebound in activity over coming months.

But those surveys were largely completed before uncertainty over the virus disrupted world-wide trade and supply chains. China is the world's largest manufacturing economy, and factories around the globe rely on its products to make their own, and produce goods that are used in Chinese production.

The "interruption of supply chains could have a snowball effect if stocks of essential electronic components from China are depleted," said Timme Spakman, a trade economist at ING Bank. (Source: wsj.com)

Iran not relying on Swiss mechanism for supplying medicine, basic goods

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati has said Iran is not relying on the recently launched Swiss-based mechanism for supplying agricultural commodities and medicine.

"Our imports of medicine and pharmaceuticals over the past 10 months have been over 2,000 times the volume of imports from the Swiss financial channel," Hemmati said.

He noted that so far about \$2.5 million worth of medicine has been imported to Iran through the Swiss mechanism, while over \$4 billion worth of such commodities have been imported into the country without the aid of such trade channels.

Referring to the ongoing U.S. obstruction against the transfer of resources for commodity and medicine exchanges, Hemmati emphasized that if Americans really claim to be cooperative regarding the supply of medicines and agricultural goods, they must



provide a banking mechanism for direct transfer of funds for such commodities.

The central bank and other government bodies have been countering the sanctions so far, and the country's medical needs have been provided so far and will continue to be provided in the future.

According to Hemmati, launching a technical mechanism without the possibility of transferring resources is not sufficient.

According to the Swiss Embassy in Iran, on January 27, an initial payment for a shipment of medicines to Iran was approved after which the Switzerland payment mechanism for humanitarian supplies to Iran named SHTA officially took effect.

"Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA), a payment mechanism to enable humanitarian goods to be delivered to Iran, is about to be implemented," Swiss embassy in Tehran announced in late January and later the embassy unveiled some medicine imported through the mechanism.

Exports of dairy products to reach 1m tons by mid-March

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iran is expected to export over 1 million tons of dairy products by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), according to the deputy agriculture minister.

Regulating the market and meeting the domestic needs is one of the agriculture ministry's top priority and exports are only pursued if the domestic needs are met, Morteza Rezaei said.

According to the official, necessary measures should be taken so that exports of such products would not lead to a rise in prices inside the country.

The official noted that currently, the country has an ideal and favorable condition in all fields of production and supply of livestock products such as milk, poultry, eggs, and red meat.

Poultry production increased by more than 11 percent over the past year, he said.

In late December 2019, the secretary



of Iran Dairy Industries Union said over \$700 million worth of dairy products are exported from Iran annually.

Iran is among the top milk-producing countries in the world.

"Close to 7 million tons of milk is produced in the country annually, 450,000 tons of which are exported as dairy products," Reza Bakeri said.

The official noted that Iran's main dairy importers are Iraq, Afghanistan, and Russia, adding that Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, Japan, Azerbaijan, and Armenia are other export destinations.

Iran has capacity for \$31b of exports to 3 neighbors: official

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Chairman of Iran-Iraq Chamber of Commerce said on Tuesday Iran has the capacity to export \$31 billion worth of products to the neighboring countries of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"Export-based perspectives should be taken into consideration for promoting exports and boosting the quality of products is a prerequisite for spurring export in the country," Yahya Al-e Es'hagh said.

Based on official studies, the volume of trade exchanges between Iran's 15 neighboring countries stands at about \$1,000 billion, he added.

Iran's 15 neighboring countries are home to about 500 million people, he said, adding, "these countries provide

between \$200 and \$250 billion worth of exports capacity for the Islamic Republic of Iran."

If barriers facing trade and business activities are removed, Iran will be able to export \$50 million worth of products to these countries, Al-e Es'hagh noted.

He put the volume of products exported from Iran to neighboring Iraq over the past year at \$13 billion while about \$9 billion worth of products were exported to Iraq in the nine months of the current year (from March 21 to Dec. 22).

Iran enjoys high potential to export up to \$20, \$6 and \$5 billion worth of products to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan respectively, he stressed.



400 kilometers of highways to be inaugurated by Feb. 11

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – About 400 kilometers of highways will be inaugurated throughout Iran during the Ten-Day Dawn (Feb. 1-11 which marks the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution), IRNA reported, quoting Deputy Transport Minister Kheirollah Khademi.

Speaking in a highway inauguration ceremony on Sunday, Khademi said: "Every year, 1000-1200 kilometers of the country's roads are turned into highways, which significantly increases the safety of the transportation lines."

According to the official, currently more than 7,700 km of highways are under construction across the country.

"This year, 1.2 trillion rials (about \$285.7 million) has been only allocated for the construction of the country's east-to-south-west corridor," he said.

In late January, Khademi had announced that six prioritized freeways projects with a total length of 550 kilometers (KM)



are planned to be inaugurated in the country by the Iranian Calendar year of 1400 (starts in March 2021).

Coronavirus hammers Chinese stocks as economic toll mounts

By Martha C. White

Most Asian indices plunged on Monday as worry about economic impact of the coronavirus escalated.

In China, the Shanghai composite dropped by more than 7 percent on its first trading day following the Chinese Lunar New Year, and the Shenzhen composite fell by more than 8 percent.

Market observers said it is unlikely that U.S. stocks will record a similar plunge, but added that the recent spate of volatility should serve as a wake-up call to investors lulled into complacency by the market's recent meteoric rise.

"Their market is just catching up to the rest of the world because they've been closed for a week," Mitchell Goldberg, president of ClientFirst Strategy, said of the Chinese selloff. "It's just that it's all happening in one day."

China's economy already was on the ropes as a result of its trade war with the U.S. Profits fell in its industrial sector in 2019 for the first time in four years, and economists warn that the virus likely could push the country's GDP



growth below 6 percent.

The "expectation is that most of the global economic hit will be reflected in China. For 2020, China is expected to show only a 5.7 percent growth in GDP," said Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist at CFRA Research.

A broad-based selloff

While experts say a broad-based selloff is unlikely in the U.S. market, certain sectors are struggling as the coronavirus — which has sickened more than 17,000 people — continues to gain traction: Airlines, which have curtailed flights to China and lost that business, are the most visible casualties.

Energy stocks are sagging on the expectation that the travel and work stoppages virtually sealing off China from the rest of the world will crimp demand, and expectations for a key profit metric for financial companies have slipped.

The "thought is, with energy, if we have reduced economic growth for 2020, that would drive down demand for energy," Stovall said. "With interest rates coming down so dramatically, that would reduce net interest income banks can receive," he said.

Investing experts say the biggest variable is one that still is, and likely will remain, an unknown for some time to come: How far and for how long the virus ultimately will spread.

National and global health organizations have expressed concern that containment measures put into place by countries, including the U.S., will have limited effectiveness if the illness can be transmitted before people start showing symptoms, as scientists suspect is the case.

A rebound in demand

"If this doesn't last for a long time, then I think investors expect a rebound in demand

and the stock market," Goldberg said. "If this goes on for a few more weeks, you can basically kiss the entire first quarter good-bye and then earnings estimates and global GDP would be on the chopping block. If you expect that to happen, then a selloff is justified," he said.

China's position at the epicenter of global trade raises the complicating factor, and the stakes, for U.S. businesses, said Jacob Kirkegaard, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

"Normally, you'd say that the spillover would come from a slowdown in Chinese growth but this time the bigger and more immediate impact is to supply chains," he said. "China is the biggest trading nation in the world, the assembly line of the global economy."

While countries might be able to source products or components from other countries, China's dominance in sectors like electronics and inputs containing rare-earth could leave manufacturers outside of China scrambling.

"This is a very interdependent global economy," Kirkegaard said. The "clock is ticking." (Source: nbcnews.com)

23 major gas projects to be inaugurated during Ten-Day Dawn

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Managing Director of Iran Gas Engineering and Development Company (IGEDC) said 23 major gas supplying projects are going to go operational or begin during the Ten-Day Dawn (Feb. 1-11 which marks the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution), IRIB reported.

According to Bahram Salavati, over 27 trillion rials (about \$640 million) plus €900 million of investment has been attracted for the mentioned projects.

As reported, the projects include

gas transmission lines, gas pressure boosting stations, several dispatching and telecommunication units as well as buildings.

Seven of the mentioned projects worth 8.33 trillion rials (about 198.4 million) will go operational, while the executive operations for the other 16 projects will also begin in the said period, according to Salavati.

Every year, during the Ten-Day Dawn celebrations numerous infrastructure projects are inaugurated or commenced to mark the development of the country after the Islamic Revolution.



Based on NIGC data, some 1,162 or 98 percent of the country's cities are currently joined to the country's national gas network

and about 24,000 or 78 percent of the country's total number of villages are also connected to the national network.

PNG government walks away from gas talks with Exxon

According to Reuters, the government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) has ended talks with Exxon Mobil Corp. regarding a key gas project, putting plans to double gas exports from PNG in doubt.

PNG Prime Minister, James Marape, reportedly ended negotiations with Exxon on the P'nyang field, claiming that the energy giant would not budge on a proposed deal that was "out of the money".

Marape said in a Facebook post: "I am sorry but if you show little respect to our motive to gain extra for the country, you will lose my support."

According to Reuters, Oil Search Ltd – one of Exxon's partners in the PNG project – said that the terms the government wanted would make the project unprofitable.

In a statement, Oil Search said: "Under the terms proposed by the State, the joint venture partners were unable to obtain a return on their investment that made the project investable and bankable."

Reuters reports that the P'nyang agreement was one of two key agreements necessary for Exxon and its partners to proceed with the \$13 billion plan to double LNG exports from the country.

The other agreement – the Papua LNG



project – has already been finalized, having been sealed with Total SA in September last year.

According to Reuters, a source close to the negotiations said that the government wants terms that would give it more than the 45 – 50% take that PNG is set to reap on the returns from the Papua LNG project, and significantly higher than the terms negotiated with Exxon in 2008 for

the PNG LNG project.

■ New LNG trains

P'nyang and Total's Papua LNG project were designed to feed three new LNG trains at Exxon's PNG LNG facility. The two projects were set to share infrastructure in order to save \$2 billion – \$3 billion on construction expenditure.

According to Reuters, Oil Search has announced that it will now focus on the

Papua LNG project, which will feed two new trains, adding 5.5 million tpy to the plant's 8 million tpy capacity.

The company went on to say that the joint venture partners are set to meet "in the short term" to plan the next steps.

According to analysts at Bank of America, separating the projects would reduce the cost savings by approximately one-third, and delay first production from the Papua LNG project by a period of 18 months (to 2026).

Andy Forster, senior investment officer at Argo Investments, which owns Oil Search shares, said: the "two projects are rather entwined. There's a bit of uncertainty now. Everything's going to be delayed for quite a period of time."

Exxon, however, is still hopeful that talks with the PNG government could be picked back up in future, but has numerous other projects it could proceed with elsewhere, so is in no immediate rush to do so.

Speaking analysts, Darren Woods, Exxon Chief Executive, said: "But I also think we've got some time given all the other opportunities in front of us and, frankly, given where we're at today in the supply-demand balance of LNG."

(Source: ingindustry.com)

Oil prices rebound, fueled by hopes for OPEC+ supply cuts

Oil prices clawed back ground on Tuesday, rising as much as 1% after the previous session's slump, amid hopes for new output curbs from OPEC and its allies to offset any drop in fuel demand that might be triggered by China's coronavirus outbreak.

Brent crude was at \$54.94 a barrel by 0824 GMT, up 49 cents, or nearly 0.9%, and U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was up 68 cents, or 1.3%, at \$50.79.

Despite Tuesday's gains, an extended slide over the last two weeks on concern over the global economic impact of the coronavirus means prices are still more

than 20% lower than this year's peak on Jan. 8. Monday's drop left crude prices at their lowest in more than a year.

People familiar with the matter told Reuters on Monday that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies including Russia, known as OPEC+, were considering cutting crude output by a further 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) due to the impact on demand from the coronavirus.

A "some half-a-million barrels (per day) cut is expected but we won't rule out an even deeper cut should the situation

worsen," said Margaret Yang, analyst at CMC Markets.

Despite the return to calmer trading, mirroring other financial markets on Tuesday, Goldman Sachs warned that while it sees oil producers responding to the situation by cutting supply, the coronavirus outbreak's impact on demand is likely to keep volatility in spot prices elevated.

The coronavirus has now claimed more than 420 lives in China and resulted in deaths in the Philippines and Hong Kong. (Source: uk.reuters.com)

Second Announcement



National Iranian Oil Company
IRANIAN OFFSHORE OIL COMPANY
INVITATION TO PUBLIC TENDER (Pre-Qualification)
TENDER NO. 096/98/OT
Provision of Subsea Engineering & Diving Services, Personnel, Equipment and Tools in the Persian Gulf
1398,6921

Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) intends to open Pre-Qualification above tender for Three (3) Years with the following conditions:

Scope of work:

Provision of Subsea Engineering & Diving Services, Personnel, Equipment and Tools in the Persian Gulf

Location:

IOOC Oil Fields in Persian Gulf

Performance Period:

3 Years

Other item shall be considered:

- 1: Ability of submission Bid Bond as in the amount of Iranian Rial 32,198,071,000 and for Iranian Bidders and EURO 219,992.00 for Foreign Bidders.
- 2: Ability of submission 10% of total Contract Price value as Performance Guarantee and deduction 10% from each invoice as Good Performance Guarantee.
- 3: Bidder should be in the Core Business of diving, subsea construction and possess the required main assets such as IMR DSV to fulfill the Tender's subject independently without MOU or Backup letters from a third party for their main assets.
- 4: Proposals shall be submitted with no condition, incomplete, ambiguous or adverse of Package specification in due date.
- 5: Article of Association for Company Perusal.

Bidders who have ability and are willing to participate in the Pre-qualification are requested to submit a written request to Contract Department, within Ten Days from Second Announcement by representative.

Closing Date for submission of the Pre-Qualification Documents shall be up to 14 days after the deadline of receiving Pre-Qualification Documents. Place and time of submission and opening of proposals will be stated in Tender Documents.

Address for willing to participate and submission Pre-Qualification: 5th Floor, #12, Khakzad st., Vali-e-Asr Ave., after Balal Mosque, before Modarres Crossroad, Tehran, Iran.

Telephone: +98 21 23 94 25 11 Fax: +98 21 22 66 42 34

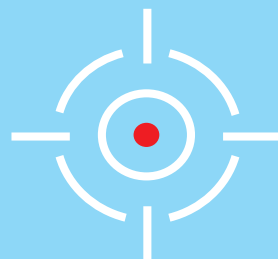
Note: Additional information is available at IOOC website address: www.iooc.co.ir

Iranian Offshore Oil Company Public Relations

TEHRAN TIMES

Iran's Leading
International Daily

Advertising Dept

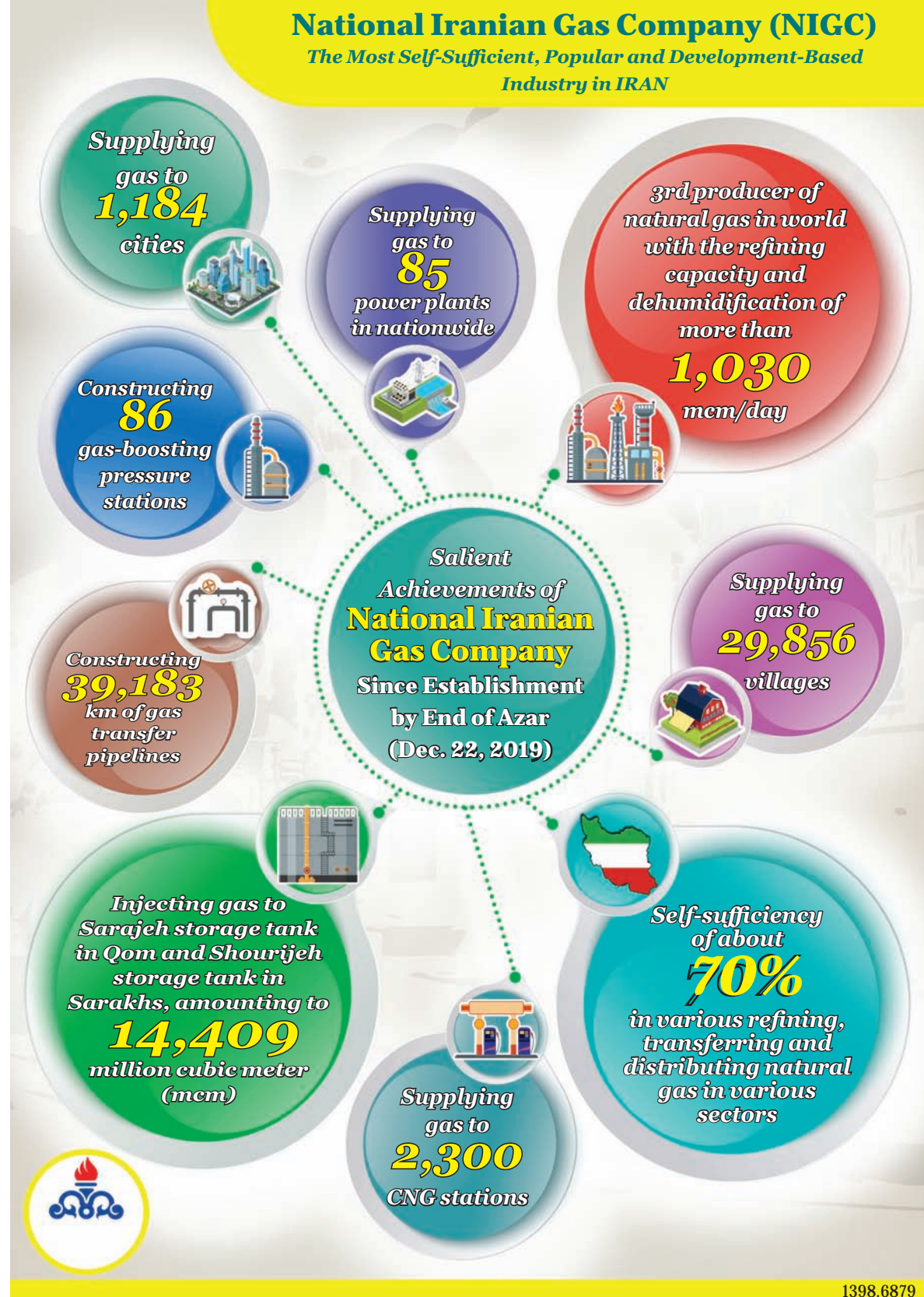


:Tel

021 - 430 51 450

National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)

The Most Self-Sufficient, Popular and Development-Based Industry in IRAN

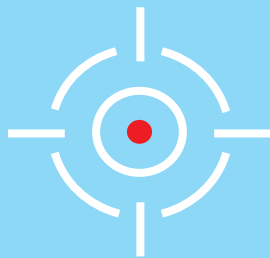


CAR FOR SALE

A Kia Sportage 2011 is for sale. The car may be inspected at the Embassy of Brazil (located at 22 Parzin Baghdadi, Zafaraniyeh) on February 5th, 6th and 9th, from 14h30 to 17h00. The offers must be given in closed envelopes, no later than February 9th. The payment must be in dollars or euros.

TEHRAN TIMES
Iran's Leading International Daily

Advertising Dept



Tel: **021 - 430 51 450**

times1979@gmail.com

ELAHIEH

500 sq.m, 5 bedrooms, penthouse, big terraces with amazing view of garden and city, housekeeping, fully furnished, pool, sauna, Jacuzzi, spa
Ehsan (0912 43 88 634)



TEHRAN TIMES
Iran's Leading International Daily

Advertising Dept:
times1979@gmail.com



+9821 430 51 450

www.tehrantimes.com

Modern Stadium of Martyrs of Khuzestan Football Club (KSC)



A Brief review on Yearlong Achievements of National Iranian Oil Co. (NIOC) in 41st Victory Anniversary of the Islamic Revolution

Bringing Honor in Oil Industry, Relying on National Will & Determination

As forerunner and pioneer in producing oil and gas in the country, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) plays a leading and key role in socioeconomic and political development in the country. Therefore, a major and important part of Iran's economic and development objectives has been defined in this giant company.

Over the past year, despite US reimposition of sanctions and restrictions caused by US withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal dubbed "JCPOA", the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) took a giant stride and managed to move out of recession successfully.

With its accurate planning, the company managed to overcome this critical condition and turned all threats into opportunity for the growth and promotion of internal activities of the oil industry.

The successful workbook and activity of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) in realizing 130 percent exploratory objectives and detection of four giant oil and gas fields over the past year along with the completion of mega-sized projects of South Pars Joint Gas fields, stepping for the production of 1,000 million cubic meters of gas in near future, development of Karun West Joint Fields, as an axis of realizing objectives of the resistance economy in oil industry, conclusion of effective contracts in the development of oil industry's activities with Iranian firms such as conclusion of contract for manufacturing industrial pumps of Jask Fuel Oil strategic pipeline plan, launching oil exchange market, successful conducting of projects for keeping the production capacity and also abiding by social responsibilities and also helping materialize social justice in the country indicate that National Iranian Oil Company [NIOC] as the world's

second largest oil company managed to overcome sanctions. Benefited from the most experienced manpower and engineers, the National Iranian Oil Company took giant strides since the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution and will remain stable with more perseverance to materialize its objectives.

To learn more about the details, a brief report on the activities and performance of the company from Feb. 2019 to Feb. 2020 is presented which comes as follows:

● South Pars Gas Field, Manifestation of Two Decades of Glory in Iranian Oil Industry

As the most important and largest project in Iranian oil industry, South Pars is the outcome of achievement of more than two decades of round-the-clock effort in the oil sector. Today, with the help of these efforts, completion of the projects related to the 24-group phases of this joint field is at the final station.

In this field, practical steps have been taken for creating the daily production capacity of 1,000 million cubic meters of gas in the country in very near future.

If all phases predefined in South Pars Gas Field are put into operation, the gas production capacity of this joint field will hit more than 800 million cubic meter/day as well as gas condensates exceeding one million barrels per day.

This subject has been made in line with fulfilling assignments predefined for increasing oil and production, the issue of which is of the main and specialized pillars of the resistance movement in the oil and gas field.

Under the auspices of the efforts made in this regard, development of South Pars Gas Field in the beginning first five years



of the government dubbed 'Hope and Prudence' has been terminated. With the commissioning of offshore part and completion of operation on share part [Phase 14], Iran's gas output will exceed 1,000 million cubic meters/day.

Accordingly, with the operation of two offshore platforms in Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field, totally, six offshore decks have become operational, the issue of which is regarded as a new record in implementation of development projects in South Pars Gas Field. With the installation of 3rd production platform in Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field in July 2019, this plan will be put into operation in very near future.

With the launch of platform of Phase 23 [second main platform in phases 22 to 24] on Nov. 12 and also platform in Phase 24 on Nov. 15, attaining the daily production capacity of 56 million cubic meters of gas from these phases has made 'possible'. Also, it is predicted that the development of offshore sector of this phase will be put into operation before the termination of the current year (to end March 20, 2019).

● Four Discoveries in Four Seasons

In line with realizing its exploratory programs, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has tried, in addition to compiling new working policies, to materialize its previous commitments.

The achievement of these policies led to the four discoveries in four seasons in a way that these discoveries started with the discovery of Minoo oilfield in Minoo Island, in the vicinity of Abadan during winter 2018 and was finally led to discovery of Eram Gas Field in Summer 2019.

"Eram" is a square at the distance of

200 km southern part of Shiraz which enjoys rich reserves [equivalent to in situ 19 billion cubic feet (equivalent to a phase in South Pars) which 13 billion cubic feet is extractable with the modern-day technologies. If this gas field is put into operation, it can bring about \$40 billion worth of revenues for the country.

The news of the discovery of large gas tank named 'Namavar' in Nov. 2019 brought about a new wave of hope and pleasure in the country. With 53 billion barrels of in situ oil tank, Namavar is the second largest tank discovered in Iran after Asmari in Gachsaran Gas Field which can add 22 billion barrels of oil to the in situ reserves and 2.2 billion barrels to the extractable oil reserves of the country.

● Maintaining and Increasing Production Capacity Guarantees Oil Authority

In addition to fulfilling its main mission, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has compiled effective steps in the discovery and development of oil and gas fields in order to retain and increase production from hydrocarbon fields. Accordingly, 33 projects have been approved in the field of retaining and increasing oil production in the oil industry.

Increasing daily production capacity of 280,000 barrels of oil and generating employment have been defined as two main aims in these 33 projects. These 33 projects have been planned in line with revising the working fronts for Iranian companies [including domestic contractors and manufacturers as well as application of the drilling masts and equipment].

With the implementation of these projects in seven provinces of Khuzestan, By A.Saeidi

Bushehr, Fars, Hormozgan, Kermanshah, Ilam and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, in addition to yielding income for country, suitable ways will be paved for generating employment in the deprived and disadvantaged provinces as well as promoting domestic contractors and industrialists. According to the law, more than 51 percent of these contracts should be inked with competent domestic companies which means taking giant strides in line with supporting Iranian products.

To realize this objective, 10 contracts, valued at \$6.2 billion, were inked in Oct. 2019 and Feb. 2020, so suitable ways have been paved for realizing these projects:

In continuation of programs related to the oil and gas production growth, other giant steps have been taken in affiliated production companies of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) over the past year (ended March 20, 2019), the most important of which can be referred to: signing the first Iran Petroleum Contract (IPC) related to the fields under operation entitled "Brown Field", planning for 70% production boom in Naftshahr Oilfield, development project of Danan Oilfield, signing and sealing contract for constructing Homa and Varavi gas-boosting pressure stations, expansion project of second phase of Tang Bijar Oilfield and planning for the completion of first phase of development plan of Azar Oilfield by the end of 2019.

● Focusing on Strengthening Domestic Production and Generating Employment and Raising Hope

After imposition of US sanctions and despite existence of problems facing Iranian economy as a result of high fluctuations of exchange rate, the predefined project entered the new phase for attaining self-sufficiency in Iranian oil industry as well as generating employment in cooperation with capable domestic engineers.

In continuation of maximum use of capability of domestic industrialists, the indigenizing plan of 300 parts, highly

consumed and used in the drilling industry, was kicked off as of the beginning of 2019.

In continuation of implementation of indigenizing plan of 10 groups of commodities in 2018, production of NIC pipes and sheets prevented capital flight, worth of about €300 million, for the first time in the country.

● Guaranteeing Purchase of Quality Goods Required in Oil Industry and Supporting Startups

The plan of guaranteeing purchase of products is one of the most important moves taken in line with maximal supporting of domestic industrialists and manufacturers. This plan will be executed with the special emphasis of the oil minister based on purchasing goods required in oil industry.

Given the all-out support of oil industry and National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) from knowledge-based companies and startups, the plan of setting up Oil Innovation Fund was approved with the initial capital of 100 billion toman.

● Increasing Storage Capacity of Crude Oil, an Oil Anti-Sanctions Strategy

With the imposition of new round of sanctions against Iran, the storage capacity of crude oil, as one of the main strategies of the National Iranian Oil Company, was raised in order to neutralize and undermine sanctions. In this line, a contract was inked for storing 10 million barrels of crude oil in Genavah and its offsite facilities in Jask Port.

However, with the completion of construction of storage tanks and facilities and measuring stations of gas condensates in Bushehr province, the possibility of storage of produced gas condensates has been provided for a number of refineries in South Pars with the nominal production capacity of 2.5 million barrels of oil.

If the remaining three storage tanks are put into operation, the storage capacity of the gas condensates in South Pars Gas Field will hit four million barrels.



شرکت ملی نفت ایران
NIOC

The Zionist Terrorism play War Games

By Diego Vida

ITALY — The mutual murder of the recent Ukrainian Airline 752 including the previously assassination of the LT General Qassem Soleimani from the evil Zionists stryking by remote missels likely stingers - drones, it was a low level act of cowards, like cruel guys playing bad videogames from home just easily pushing a button to cancel a life from this world without respect the valor of the human being.

The future of these terrible weapons is heading us to a new generation of war made by PMC (private military company) and remote weapons ready to hit in distance from any part of the world the target selected by clicking the joystick through the keyboard. Everyday these criminals sit comfortably in a control room shooting the enemy in turn over. Nowadays these terminator machines fly in the sky frequently spying us and out of the sudden they could attack us for any reason.

Truly convenient to erase a bothering opponent, politician, military, business man or just a leader of a sovereign country. Also the guardian of internet a cyber artificial intelligence work to acquire all informations surfing the web as applications as well, Whatsapp, Telegram, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, Google, are a data detected collectors; all of them belong to several jewish families working day by day in releasing dangerous software tools of death for losing our privacy and freedom.

Taping some words like Allah, Terrorism, President, America, Zionism, Israel, Iran, North Korea it start an alert interceptor mode sending the alarm to the secret services in this case some offices specialized in transmissions like NSA to report all the informations acquired. From the other hand these offices makes propaganda over and over, basically through a large number of corrupted media in world wide releasing a bunch of fake news in favour of their geopolitical strategy involving all the people around the world from the teenagers, till the adults, then everyone connected in internet is controlled by them in a global brain wash.

Unfortunately the same technology is working on the car, plane, train, ship and so on, in fact the transponder IFF of a plane can be changed hacking the network system, so a domestic flight identification code could be turned in a military jet, everything is possible specifically when this advanced technology is in the hand of the Zionists. Now in west Google is advertising the function to control the cars by using the voice to program the vehicle.

Another terrible thing is the PMC cause these companies specialized in providing mercenaries deployed in the all war zones are increasing their team of soldiers becoming much more larger than an usual national army of each country. PMC work strictly with the better offent in this case the same Anglo American countries attacked Iraq, Sirya, Libya and so on.

A reason to maintain in poverty the African land is because Zionists need to hire



mercenaries, desperate people ready to die for a couple of hundred euro monthly cash, some foreign fighters reach till 800 euro per month. Previously only the French Legion named Legion Etrangere and the Tercio (the Spanish Legion) used to give a salary for 5 years and the citizenship after these years; untill last century they used to hide criminals giving them another identity, now a days all the selections are much more harder because the global system of part time jobless soldiers are pushing the candidates towards the PMC without having an opportunity to make career inside the regular army of their home land (avoiding the patriotism to fight for their country) but only to work in freelance for another country in a period of sessions provided to survive to resign for another mission.

A Mafia work inside of these organizations, in fact to get the opportunity to participate in a war mission, each soldier must anticipate to them a one month salary including the extra benefits. UN the core of the imperialism domain impose to the all countries to pick up the refugees from the war zones but including lands where the war is not working at all in this case the Africans coming in Europe with smartphone, only young men able to fight; indeed most of them use to work in PMC as mercenaries in Sirya, Yemen, Libya, Niger, Kenya, so the day a civil war will come in Europe just these people will be ready to do what they have done recently with their terrorist actions, then Zionists will accomplish their geopolitical evil plan.

It's a new business of this century to control the masses of each country and imposing their influence. Indeed all the people around the world use their technologies, internet, vehicles, digital devices, medicines, language, fashion, media, atheist religion, drugs, ect... Their Hollywoodian industries belong to the Zionists, all the movies are tools of death, promoting the cruelty, the violence, the pedophilia, the gay sodomia, the adult films in favour of prostitution and the mistreatment towards the family in order to destruct the family values cause the humanity is increasing reaching the 8 billions of citizens in world wide

and they want to reduce the human being.

In the US every year die 2500000 citizens, for homicide, suicide, illness, old age, accidents, and poverty, that's strange some organizations by UN about the human rights like the popular Amnesty International never report and blame the USA. MS illness is an artificial disease, nobody knows where it come from, sure the ONG and governmental research facilities promote this illness but they never go deep to show the origin of this ghost disease like the HIV - AIDS; all of these illness are remote biological weapons ready to be active any time. Microphone, Speakers, Handsfree, Television devices basically are transmitters like walky talky even in stand by people are spied frequently, now with smart television in video too.

Moreover the television broadcasting channels do the rest with their corrupted media around the world delivering fake news and imposing their dictatorship in the several sovereign countries, one of the bigger in news production like SKY belong to the Comcast group belong to a jewish business man, or like Reuters belong to the a jewish family the same bankers in Iran during the Shah Qajar and Pahlavi were controlling the central bank of Persia. However their mediatic war over and over 24 hr for 7 days every week just play digital hybrid weapons to keep the citizens of each state under their satanist domain; for example in Italy there are several British channels making propaganda against the family, showing the man (husband, fiancée) in killing or beating the woman (wife or fiancée) because their purpose is separate the relation between men and women, unfortunately they succeed because in Europe the economy crisis is helping the people to commit suicide - homicide. On the aviation navigation charts named Inflight AIP (Aeronautical Information Publication) is monopolized by the US government basically all the flights are managed by ther map, so who give to us the confirmation about the earth is a globe? Who give to us the safety to fly in a secure area?

Who give to us the reality of the distances? Who give to my friend work in Rome at the airport

of Fiumicino as controller inside the radar tower and he told me to fly from Tokyo Narita Airport to Los Angeles International Airport just the plane never trim by the pacific ocean to come in front of California but fly from Japan, to south Korea, north Korea, Russia, Artic, Alaska, Canada and United States of America landing at Los Angeles International Airport, so why this important information no any media tell us? also before the departure it is required a flight plan cause without it risk to being shot down. So why nobody says anything about the military jet can fly at 10 km higher than a domestic flight?

Of course because they are just weapons against the all population eventually something it goes in the wrong way they can do whatever they want, just remember the case of Andreas Lubitz the co-pilot of the Germanwings 9525 accident in 2015 depicted by the all corrupted media like a suicide man on a domestic flight, but some witness villagers living in the town of the Alps they said to have heard a big noise like a explosion and the plane crashed was completely destroyed deployed in a large area of 3 km likely stryked during the flight because those day an exercitation of NATO against Russian aviation remote forces was working in the Alps, moreover the all the intercontinental planes use the FBW (fly by wire) a system that replaces the conventional manual flight controls of an aircraft with an electronic interface CPU in remote control either.

Like for the 11 september 2001 who knows what really happened but for sure this guy of 27 years old wasn't a suicide, now it is possible to understand the decision of the Alitalia airlines to cancel Rome to Tehran in 2018 cause they knew about the American conflict risk. All of these horrible remote weapons are in the hands of the Zionist criminals, the only people capable to use their advanced technology to destroy any country making any sort of proxy war. So no problem for Pentagon because they want to keep the Zionist power by clicking a button on the keyboard to kill the next human being that fight to prevent their hellish domain.

To do that they are developing new digital robotic weapons like the cyber dog a 4 feet machine capable to walk and run in the desert transporting weapons and shooting like a sniper and releasing mini drones to open the way to their army, all in all like in the videogames cause the life of the human being value almost nothing.

The Italian citizens of the Tuscany region of the association for a sovereign Italian country away from US - NATO just wrote a condolence letter to the Iranian ambassador in Italy mr Hamid Bayat saying their concern about the decision to kill the LT General Qassem Soleimani and they condemned the United States of America and the Nato for assassination asking to the other countries to do the same in taking distances from this cruel homicide and reflect in regard of the use of drones and the all remote digital weapons mentioned because all of them are a concrete threat for the life of the human being.

Iran, under extreme pressure? Superb responses so far

1 -> Mitch McConnell of Kentucky who has done tremendous damage to "democracy" in America, may not be reelected given the faux trial which still does not exonerate Trump from his misdeeds. Once Impeached, always impeached at least.

At any rate, Democrat voters may be on track to nominate the first Jew ever who has a shot at becoming President. This is remarkable and Sen. Bernie Sanders is more deserving than anyone in recent memory, and soon he may be the winner of the Iowa caucuses and the Democratic primary in New Hampshire, and then maybe more in South Carolina and Nevada – which could well sew up the nomination significantly, if not completely.



Sanders supports many, many good ideas: among those ideas are withdrawing support for Israel's apartheid, getting the U.S. out of wars of choice in the Middle East, perhaps even restoration of some accord with Iran and the dropping of sanctions. Sanders also wants Medicare expanded to all Americans, and the reduction of the role of big money in elections. It almost sounds too good to be true, and maybe it is, but the world could be surprised.

Except that the usual attack dogs, including Zionist Jews like Alan Dershowitz, a former Harvard Law professor who has become notorious for defending the guilty, including Trump. In his defense of Trump he may have gone too far, asserting essentially that Trump could do whatever he wanted if he thought his reelection would be "good" for the U.S. (which is an insane notion in any democracy.) But now Dershowitz is threatening to subject Bernie Sanders to the Jeremy Corbyn treatment using faux allegations of anti-Semitism if Sanders secures the nomination. But maybe such a strategy would backfire? Are Americans still so ignorant not to figure out the odious grip the Zionists have on the U.S.? The fealty to Zionism by the "establishment" has already half wrecked the U.S. this century so far.

One country that has so far played a lousy hand superbly well has been Iran. The missile attack on 'Ain al-Asad base in western Iraq in retaliation for the murder of General Soleimani was a thing of beauty for what it accomplished, and those accomplishment were many. Above all, it signaled to the world that Iran is no patsy, that it will defend itself, is afraid of no "superpower". The human toll at the base is still being covered up, too, by the U.S., and that toll is just right: no deaths, just enough human damage to suggest or forecast tremendous U.S. soldier carnage should the U.S. unleash an all-out war on Iran.

And those missiles! Such accuracy, which begs the question whether Iran had some assistance from Russia. Some use of Russia's satellite guidance system is likely. The Russians well know that if Iran is ever destroyed by the U.S. and its poodles, the next target will be Russia itself, and then on to China, which is groaning under the Coronavirus epidemic. Never has the world seemed more complicated or at risk, but it would be a mistake to literally believe so. Worse times there certainly have been.

U.S. has to end illegal occupation in Iraq: American analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A California-based political analyst highlighted the importance of a million-man rally in Iraq against the US military presence and said American troops will finally have to leave the Arab country and end their "illegal occupation".

"The huge demonstration and parliamentary vote cannot be ignored or dismissed by the US indefinitely; eventually, they will have to leave," Rick Sterling from San Francisco Bay said in an interview with Tasnim.

"The continuing US military presence is an illegal occupation," he said, adding, "In addition, the US bases in Iraq support the continuing illegal US bases in Syria."

Sterling is a retired aerospace engineer who now writes about international issues. As a member of the Syria Solidarity Movement and a prominent analyst, his works and interviews have appeared in media outlets around the world.

The following is the full text of the interview:

■ Iraqi people from all walks of life recently took to the streets in the capital, Baghdad for a million-man rally to call for an end to the military presence of the United States in their country. The rally was called by senior Iraqi resistance figures, a few weeks after the parliament voted to expel American troops following an illegal US airstrike in Baghdad that led to the assassination of Iranian IRGC Quds Force Commander Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani and the Deputy Commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. What do you think about the massive anti-US demonstration and how do you predict its outcome?

A: The recent march in Iraq calling for "US Out" was an important message to the world. It clearly showed how unpopular the continued US presence is. In the United States, the media did not dare show how huge it was. The media talked about "thousands" of demonstrators instead of hundreds of thousands. In photos, they showed a small segment of the march instead of photos which show how massive it was. But certainly, the



political and military establishment knows very well how big it was. The massive march in Iraq was a warning to the US occupying force to get out soon.



■ As you know, the massive demonstration and the Iraqi parliament's resolution calling for the expulsion of the foreign forces from the Arab country have called into question the legitimacy of Washington's military presence in Iraq. Do you think that the Iraqi administration would finally be forced by the people and the parliament to expel the foreign troops?

A: The US is showing its hypocrisy by ignoring the wishes of the Iraqi people. The US claims to seek freedom and democracy, yet they refuse to leave Iraq when they are not wanted. The huge demonstration and parliamentary vote cannot be ignored or dismissed by the US indefinitely. Eventually, they will have to leave. The continuing US military presence is an illegal occupation. In addition, the US bases in Iraq support the continuing illegal US bases in Syria. For both Iraq and Syria, the US troops need to get out. Iraq is increasingly looking to China for reconstruction support and this is another milestone showing Iraq

is better off without US interference. Sooner or later the Iraqi government will require the US to leave despite the wishes of the US military and foreign policy establishment.

■ What do you think about the impact of the US move to assassinate Lt. Gen. Soleimani and revered commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis on the unity of the Iraqi people and their call for the expulsion of the American troops?

A: Many US commentators have said the killing of these highly respected leaders was counter-productive for US imperial interests. Why? Because the assassinations galvanized opposition to the US. On the other hand, US and Israeli ultra-hawks and reactionaries may have hoped that Iran would respond more aggressively. If Iran had retaliated by killing many US troops, which they could have, the US would have launched an even more bloody and dangerous aggression. The Iranian response was measured and avoided falling into the trap. Step by step, the US troops are going to be forced to leave Iraq and Syria. Hopefully, it will be with a minimum of bloodshed, but this depends on the US.

 N.I.O.C 1398.6849		Second Announcement Call for public tender (First/Second publish) Two-Stages (semi compressed) tender Subject of Tender: HWDP (HEAVY WEIGHT DRILL PIPE)		 National Iranian Drilling Company
Tender descriptions:				
The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indnt No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)	
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,227,628	Tender No.: FP/17-98/163-2 Indnt No.:43-22-9704648004	43, 969, 464, 000	
Qualitative evaluation of tenderers				
Method	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Based on minimum scoring (50) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.			
Purchasing & Submitting				
Tender Document Distribution by Company	Distribution Place	Hall No.:113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-34148656 -06134148615 Room No. 431, 4 th floor ,Oil central building No.8,Yaghma alley, Jomhori Islami st., Tehran – Iran.		
	Submitting Method	• Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491(Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. • Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.		
Documents Receiving Method	Closing date	• 14 Days after the last time of Purchasing.		
	Address	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569		
Tender Guarantee				
Value of guarantee	2,199,000,000 Rial / 18,329 Euro			
Type of guarantee	✓ Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓ Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.			
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.			
(Name of department)				
More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۸/۱۱/۱۵ نوبت دوم ۹۸/۱۱/۱۶				

Hot pots helped ancient Siberian hunters stay alive, warm

Without heat-resistant pots, ancient Siberian hunters might have disappeared during the last ice age. According to a new study, these hardy humans survived the frigid temps with the help of hot pots.

For the new study, scientists extracted and analyzed fats and lipids from some of the oldest pieces of pottery in the world, fragments sourced from dig sites across Russia and ranging in age from 12,000 to 16,000 years old.



Fats and lipids preserved in the pores of ancient pottery fragments found in Siberia suggests early groups of hunters were processing fish and extracting marrow from bones as early as 16,000 year ago. Photo by Yanshina Oksana

The research, published over the weekend in the journal *Quaternary Science Reviews*, suggests hunters living in Siberia as early 16,000 years ago were using clay pots resistant to heat. The technology would have allowed ancient hunters to take advantage of a variety of nutritional resources.

"This study illustrates the exciting potential of new methods in archaeological science: we can extract and interpret the remains of meals that were cooked in pots over 16,000 years ago," Oliver Craig, professor of archaeological science at the University of York in Britain, said in a news release. "It is interesting that pottery emerges during these very cold periods, and not during the comparatively warmer interstadials when forest resources, such as game and nuts, were more available."

Fats and lipids preserved in some of the clay fragments collected from sites along Russia's Amur River suggest early Siberian hunters used the vessels to process fish, most likely migratory salmon. Tests revealed similar biochemical signatures in clay fragments unearthed on nearby Japanese islands.

According to the study, heat-resistant clay vessels did not originate from a single source. Instead, clay vessel technology was developed independently by different groups -- a parallel process of innovation.

Not all of these ancient hunters were taking advantage of migratory fish. Fats and lipids in the vessel fragments suggest some groups were using the heat-resistant pots to extract grease and ma. "We are starting to understand that very different pottery traditions were emerging around the same time but in different places, and that the pots were being used to process very different sets of resources," said Peter Jordan, an archaeologist at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

Though different groups used different techniques to develop their clay pots, the timing of their arrival in the archaeological record suggest the vessels played a similarly important role in helping groups of hunters survive harsh environs.

The glacial maximum during the last ice age occurred between 26,000 and 20,000 years ago. Around 19,000 years ago, temperatures began to climb and ice began to thaw, opening up previously inhospitable regions of Siberia to habitation.

The dietary adaptability afforded by the use of heat-resistant pots likely helped early groups of nomadic hunters repopulate newly thawed portions of Siberia.

(Source: UPI)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Rohtas Fort

Rohtas Fort, built in the 16th century at a strategic site in the north of Pakistan, province of Punjab, is an exceptional example of early Muslim military architecture in central and south Asia.

The main fortifications of this 70-hectare garrison consist of massive masonry walls more than four kilometers in circumference, lined with 68 bastions and pierced at strategic points by 12 monumental gateways.

A blend of architectural and artistic traditions from elsewhere in the Islamic world, the fort had a profound influence on the development of architectural style in the Mughal Empire.

Sher Sha Suri, founder of the Suri dynasty, commenced construction of Rohtas Fort (also called Qila Rohtas) in 1541. Irregular in plan, this early example of Muslim military architecture follows the contours of its hilltop site.



An interior wall partitions the inner citadel from the remainder of the fort, and an internal water supply in the form of baolis (stepped wells) gave the fort's garrison self-sufficiency in water. A beautiful mosque known as Shahi Masjid is situated near the Kabuli Gate, and the Haveli (Palatial House) Man Singh was constructed later in the Mughal period.

Rohtas Fort represented a new form of fortification, based essentially on Turkish military architecture developed in reaction to the introduction of gunpowder and cannon, but transformed into a distinct style of its own.

The garrison complex was in continuous use until 1707, and then reoccupied under the Durrani and Sikh rulers of the 18th and 19th centuries respectively. A village grew within the walls, and exists day.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran third fastest growing tourism destination in 2019: UNWTO



Foreign travelers take a selfie while visiting the UNESCO-tagged Imam Square in Isfahan, central Iran.

TOURISM DESK TEHRAN – Iran was ranked the third fastest growing tourism destination in the globe in 2019, with 27.9 percent growth year on year, according to the latest statistics released by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Top of the pack was Myanmar, which saw a 40.2 percent increase in visitors, followed by Puerto Rico (31.2 percent) and Iran (27.9 percent), The Independent reported on Monday.

Overseas travels hit 1.5 billion in 2019, up four percent from 2018, the report added.

Iran was named the world's second fastest growing tourist destination in 2018, with 49.9 percent growth in arrivals year on year, surpassing rivals such as Egypt, Nepal, Georgia and South Korea, according to the last year's UNWTO report.

Iran's tourism minister in January issued a statement, inviting all travelers and holidaymakers to visit the ancient land, saying that the country-size guesthouse is wholeheartedly ready to receive tourists from around the world.

Ali-Asghar Mounesan emphasized that the Iranian government is trying its best to host incoming tourists by improving tourism infrastructure, offering attractive and pocket-friendly packages, as well as incentives such as visa waivers or 90-day visas on arrival.

Referring to the advantages of visiting the country, the minister explained, "With a deep and practical faith in this

attitude, the Iranian government is trying its best to pave the way for incoming tourists and this is why there is a significant growth in tourism infrastructure in our country."

In this regard, some incentives such as visa waiver, 90-day visa on arrival, standard residence services, attractive tourism routes and packages, and cheapest and most secure tours to Iran along with the last international tourism standards have enabled us to experience a 53% growth in our inbound tourism, winning the first place in the world in this regard. In addition, when it comes to the prices, Iran has the most competitive prices for tourism in the world and has emerged as a new phenomenon in the world of tourism, attracting the attention of many countries."

"Even if we disregard all that has been said, the unique tourist attractions of Iran are a good reason to have a journey to the land of history, civilization, and nature. With 24 UNESCO World Heritage sites, 34,000 nationally registered heritage sites and 600 active museums, Iran has a huge capacity to receive international tourists. In addition, high security, cheap tours, premium travel facilities, hospitable people, numerous historic and natural treasures, unique ecotourism facilities, diverse tourism packages (historic-cultural tourism, sport tourism, marine tourism, food tourism, medical tourism, etc.), interesting rituals, and diverse handicrafts and traditional arts provide enough reasons to visit Iran."

Pointing to unique and unparalleled beauties of Iran, Mounesan said, "The rich history and civilization of this land, the numerous and spectacular tourist attractions, four-season weather, and high cultural and ethnic diversity have made an invaluable treasure of Iran and put this country in the top 10 tourist destinations in terms of tourism, cultural and natural attractions.

Astonishing mountains, breathtaking glaciers, beautiful volcanos, pristine forests, green foothills, delightful lakes, springs and waterfalls, picturesque beaches and wonderful islands, historical sites and distinct architecture, globally registered cities and villages, diverse and colorful handicrafts, delicious traditional cuisine and organic, healing drinks, etc. are only a small part of the beauties you can visit while staying in Iran."

Some 6.7 million foreign nationals visited the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019), the Foreign Ministry's visa and passport department announced on December 4. Iran welcomed some 7.8 million foreign nationals last year, an increase of 52.5 percent year on year.

The country plans to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million by 2025 thanks to its numerous tourist spots, including 22 ones that have been placed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

A few etiquette tips for getting around Japan

By Allan Richarz

Note, however, that in proudly contrarian Osaka, this practice is reversed.

Heading to Tokyo for the 2020 Summer Olympics? Here are some lesser-known tips on avoiding faux pas and other cultural missteps while there.

Japanese society, known for its polite orderliness, is heavily dependent on unspoken understandings and behavior aimed at maintaining the "wa" — the idea of social harmony. With Tokyo bracing for an influx of tourists for the 2020 Summer Olympics, here are some lesser-known tips for first-timers on avoiding faux pas and other cultural missteps while in Japan.

■ No tipping required

Attending the Summer Olympics in Tokyo will be an expensive undertaking for visitors, so it should be some relief to know that tipping is not customary in Japan's service industry. While not necessarily seen as rude — there is some argument that tipping is a slight against the proprietor — tipping is not standard practice in the country, given that worker salaries come entirely from wages and the value placed on consistent, excellent customer service.

■ Paying with cash? Use the small tray at the register, rather than handing money to the cashier

A common sight in Japanese stores is a small plastic tray next to the cash register. If paying with cash, the common courtesy is to place one's money in the tray, rather than hand it to the cashier directly, with any change to be returned to the customer in the same manner. For shops without a tray, it is acceptable to hand your cash directly to the cashier.

■ Avoid eating or drinking while walking

In fast-paced Tokyo, one might expect eating and walking to be a common occurrence. In reality, however, it is something of a faux pas thanks to the concept of "Ikka ichi dousa," or doing one thing at a time.



■ Do not open that taxi door

While it is recommended to make use of Tokyo's extensive public transit network during the Olympics, at times it might be necessary to take a cab. But be aware if you do hail a taxi: The doors are operated by the driver and open automatically for passengers. It is seen a bit gauche to open the door yourself.

Upon arriving to your destination and paying the fare, the driver will again activate the doors for passengers to exit.

■ Talking on trains, especially a crowded one, is generally frowned upon

For trains that frequently run at as much as 200-percent capacity during peak operating times, commuting can nonetheless be an unsettlingly quiet experience.

While texting or gaming is permitted, talking on one's cellphone is a strict no-no, and even conversation among passengers is discouraged. It is also worth noting that, while taking photos through the window is acceptable, it is inadvisable to take photographs of busy train car interiors, especially during times when children or students are present.

■ No eating on trains, unless it is a bullet train

Part of what keeps even the most heavily-trafficked rail cars in immaculate condition is the general aversion to eating while on trains. While drinking is generally acceptable, even on relatively empty cars it is considered poor form to eat aboard trains and snacking is best confined to station platforms.

The exception to this rule is the high-speed bullet trains. Indeed, it is a common sight to see passengers tucking in to a gorgeous eki-ben "train bento" box on longer haul trips.

Taking an escalator in Tokyo? Queue on the left-hand side, and walk on the right

To help ensure a smooth flow of foot traffic, especially in busy train stations, the practice when riding an escalator in Tokyo is to stand on the left, and walk on the right.

Note, however, that in proudly contrarian Osaka, this practice is reversed.

■ Take your trash home, if no garbage cans are available

After a long absence, trash and recycle bins have made a slow return to Japan's train stations, parks and other public spaces in recent years. During high-profile events, however, it is common to see those bins locked shut as a security precaution.

Should one find themselves in an area without waste receptacles, the longstanding practice in the country is to simply take one's trash home or to the hotel for proper sorting and disposal.

(Source: The New York Times)

Flight attendants for Hawaiian want more masks amid coronavirus

A flight attendants union is asking Hawaiian Airlines to allow its crew to go the extra mile when protecting against coronavirus.

The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, which represents flight attendants from Hawaiian and more than a dozen other airlines, is asking the airline to allow flight attendants to wear masks on flights to and from Asia.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises that face masks should

be used for airline crew members when they "are helping sick travelers with respiratory symptoms such as coughing or sneezing." They're also advised for sick travelers and those sitting near sick travelers. The CDC's recommendations related to the new coronavirus reiterate using protective equipment when tending to a sick traveler, including face mask, eye protection, disposable gloves and a gown to cover clothing.

"The CDC only recommends the use

of masks when assisting a passenger who may be showing symptoms of being ill," Hawaiian Airlines spokesperson Alex da Silva said. "We always carry masks and gloves onboard our aircraft as part of our standard medical kits, which are reserved for use when warranted."

But that doesn't go far enough, according to the union, which would like flight attendants to be able to wear masks at any time during Asia flights, beyond just time spent interacting

with someone who may be exhibiting coronavirus symptoms, which include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

"Hawaiian must allow and provide masks and gloves to flight attendants during this outbreak, at the very least on flights to and from Asia," Taylor Garland, spokesperson for AFA-CWA, told USA TODAY. The airline does not fly to mainland China but does have Asia flights.

(Source: MSN)

‘Swiss mechanism not to tackle medicine sanctions problem’

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA) will not remove the impact of unfair U.S. sanctions on the import of medicine by Iran, as it is not capable of carrying money in large scale, deputy health minister for legal affairs has said.

The ministry of health welcomes every mechanism that eases supply of medicine and medical equipment using all the available capacities to patients, especially those with cancer and rare diseases, Karim Hemmati said, IRNA reported on Monday.

However, the financial mechanism launched recently by Switzerland cannot solve the problem of supplying necessary medicines and transferring money to purchase them, he lamented.

Last week, Iran could make three payments through the Geneva-based BCP bank through trial operations, the deals included the supply of different medicines from a Swiss pharmaceutical company, valued at around €2.3 million.



On Sunday, 180,000 packages of medicines needed for organ transplant patients were imported to the country utilizing the SHTA.

Although food and medicine were claimed to be exempted from the U.S. sanctions, financial and banking sanctions have limited

the life-saving medicine trade which harshly targeted the patients suffering from rare diseases.

Moreover, fears of falling afoul of Washington have restricted exports to Iran.

Exemptions for humanitarian trade (such as food, medicine, and medical equipment) have not been effective in protecting Iranian patients from access to imported medicine, such as the bandages used for patients suffering Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB), a rare genetic disease that causes painful blistering of the skin.

With the return of sanctions, over a year (May 2018-May 2019), 15 patients covered by EB Health House lost their lives, including Ava, a two-year-old girl in Ahvaz city, who died of infection and lack of skincare.

Companies exclusively producing medicine for Mucopolysaccharidosis (MPS) patients, such as BioMarin Pharmaceutical Inc. of the U.S. and a South Korean company, have refused to export these drugs to Iran, threatening the lives of 335 patients in Iran.

Rare endangered wild cat killed in car crash

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — A lynx, a rare endangered wild cat, was found dead reportedly in a car crash in Savojbolagh, north-central Alborz province.

The female lynx has been hit by a car in the village of Aghasht in Savojbolagh city, Fardin Hakimi, the provincial department of environment chief said, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

A lynx is any of the four species (Canada lynx, Iberian lynx, Eurasian lynx, bobcat) within the medium-sized wild cat genus lynx. The name lynx originated in Middle English via Latin from a Greek word in reference to the luminescence of its reflective eyes.

Two other cats that are sometimes called lynxes, the caracal (desert lynx) and the jungle cat (jungle lynx), are not members of the genus lynx.

Lynx has a short tail, characteristic tufts of black hair on the tips of their ears, large, padded paws for walking on snow and long whiskers on the face. Under their neck they have a ruff which has black bars resembling



a bow tie, although this is often not visible.

The Eurasian lynx ranges from central and northern Europe across Asia up to Northern Pakistan and India. In Iran, they live in Mount Damavand area. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the Eurasian lynx was considered extinct in the wild in Slovenia and Croatia. A resettlement project, begun in 1973, has successfully reintroduced lynx to the Slovenian Alps and the Croatian regions of Gorski Kotar and Velebit. In both countries, the lynx is listed as an endangered species and protected by law.

Wild grey seal caught ‘clapping’ on camera for the first time

A wild grey seal (Halichoerus grypus) has been caught “clapping” on camera for the first time, making sounds that resemble “shotgun-like cracks”.

The large male was filmed striking its flippers together off the coast of the Farne Islands, near Northumberland, during the breeding season in 2017.

While captive seals can be seen clapping in zoos and aquariums, scientists say this is the first time one of their wild counterparts has been caught on camera performing the action.

While humans clap to applaud or express approval, in the case of wild grey seals, this gesture signifies quite the opposite.

Scientists believe male seals clap to demonstrate their strength, as part of an attempt to ward off competitors and attract potential mates. The action produces a “loud high-frequency noise”, sending out “a clear signal” to other males in the area.

In the video, the male seal can be seen swimming close to a female, with other males lurking nearby, before it starts clapping.



Dr Ben Burville, a researcher at Newcastle University who took the footage, said: “The effect of the clap was instant and the rival males rapidly dispersed.

“The clap was incredibly loud and at first I found it hard to believe what I had seen.”

Burville, who had been trying for many years to capture clapping seals on camera, added: “I’ve heard the distinctive shotgun-like cracks many times over the years and I felt sure this clapping behaviour was the source, but filming the seals in action has eluded me for 17 years.”

(Source: *The Independent*)

Dozens of koalas found dead or injured at Australian tree-logging site

Dozens of koalas have been found dead, starving and seriously injured at a tree-logging site in Australia.

The marsupials were discovered at a blue gum plantation in the state of Victoria, which has only a handful of trees left after they were harvested in December.

About 100 koalas are believed to have been killed by bulldozers, while others were injured or left to starve at the private site near Cape Bridgewater, according to animal protection group Animals Australia.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), which is investigating the incident, said about 30 koalas were initially removed from the land on Friday after being checked over by wildlife carers.

The remaining animals were given food and water to sustain them before 50 more were rescued on Sunday.

A number of koalas unfortunately had to be put down at the site because of injuries or starvation, the department said. It warned the Conservation Regulator would “act swiftly

against those responsible” if the cause of the incident is found to be “deliberate human action”.

The deaths come after tens of thousands of koalas were killed in bushfires across the country.

Local resident Helen Oakley was first to raise the alarm on Wednesday after spotting “too many koalas” in just “one row of trees” at the site.

In a tearful video posted to Facebook, Ms Oakley claimed the logging company had “bulldozed 140 acres down and just killed all of our koalas”.

She added: “There’s koalas lying there dead. Mothers killed and their little babies. Australia should be ashamed of this.”

Friends of the Earth Australia claimed “hundreds of koalas” may have been killed or injured during logging activities in the past week.

It added: “People apparently witnessed the bulldozing of many dead koalas into slash piles.”

Animals Australia said there appeared to have been

“various breaches of legislation, including the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act”, which the group would help the authorities to pursue.

“By law, the companies that own these plantations must provide koala ‘spotters’ to identify koalas in trees before logging commences, so that animals can be safely removed and relocated,” it said.

“There is also a legal responsibility to ensure the welfare of koalas after logging has ceased.”

The Australian Forest Products Association said it would be launching its own investigation.

Chief executive Ross Hampton said: “It is unclear as yet who bulldozed the trees with the koalas apparently still in them, but it is absolutely certain that this was not a plantation or a forestry company.

“We support all those calling for the full force of the law to be applied to the perpetrator.”

(Source: *The Independent*)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◀ ▶ ☞

Health ministry pursuing to provide medicine for SMA patients

The Ministry of Health is trying to provide medicines for patients with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and other rare diseases, IRIB news agency reported on Friday.

Some medicines, especially those needed for SMA patients and certain rare diseases which are only made by American pharmaceutical companies, are not imported to the country, Health Minister Saeed Namaki said.

“I wrote two letters to World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom, over the past few days, and also to some NGOs hoping that we would be able to resolve the issue,” Namaki noted. He added that medicine provision for all patients have been hindered, but it can be said that this year’s medicine shortage is one-third of last year’s.

پیگیری وزارت بهداشت برای تهیه داروی بیماران SMA

وزیر بهداشت، درمان و آموزش پزشکی گفت در تلاش هستیم داروی بیماران مبتلا به SMA و بیماری‌های صعب‌العلاج دیگر را تأمین کنیم.

به گزارش خبرگزاری صدا و سیما، سعید نمکی روز پنج‌شنبه گفت: بعضی داروها همانند بیماران SMA و بیماران خاص که شرکت دارویی صد در صد امریکایی است، اجازه فروش به ما نمی‌دهد. من در این روزها دو نامه برای آقای تدروس دبیر کل سازمان جهانی بهداشت نوشتم و همچنین با برخی سازمان‌های مردم‌نهاد بین‌المللی مکاتبه کردم که امیدوارم بتوانیم راهگشایی کنیم و این مورد را حل کنیم.

وی افزود شرایط تهیه دارو برای همه بیماران به شدت سخت شده است، اما به جرأت می‌توان گفت کمبودهای دارویی امسال یک سوم پارسال است.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“hyp- or hyph- or hypo-”

■ **Meaning:** under, beneath, low

■ **For example:** The sequence shows *hypogeal* germination of peas.

PHRASAL VERB

Pop off

■ **Meaning:** to die suddenly; to say something quickly and without thinking

■ **For example:** You’re all just waiting till I pop off so you can get your hands on my money.

IDIOM

A day late and a dollar short

■ **Explanation:** If something is a day late and a dollar short, it comes too late and is not good enough.

■ **For example:** They offered me an internship when I had already found a job - a day late and a dollar short!

Loss of EU protections could imperil UK hedgehogs, report says

Britain’s hedgehogs could be at greater risk after Brexit because hedges may no longer be protected by agriculture regulations, a report says.

Under EU law, hedgerows cannot be cut during the bird nesting season and two-metre wild “buffer” strips cannot be doused with pesticides or ploughed up. This is designed to protect hedgerow habitats that provide refuge for 80% of woodland birds and 50% of all mammals.

The new agriculture bill reveals gaps in domestic legislation, meaning there is not the same level of protection as under the EU’s common agricultural policy (CAP), according to the report by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), commissioned by the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and WWF.

This could mean a significant loss of habitat for the country’s dwindling hedgehog population, which has already fallen by 97% since the 1950s, according to a 2018 report.

Nests of woodland and farmland birds such as linnets, yellowhammer and turtle doves could also be destroyed. Mammals such as field voles and hazel dormice are also at risk.

“Hedgerows may just be dividers between crops to us, but they are often hidden worlds, teeming with the amazing wildlife that calls our farmland home,” said Tom Lancaster, head of land, seas and climate policy at the RSPB.

Bird nesting season runs from February to August. Under the CAP, farmers are not allowed to trim hedges between 1 March and 1 September. EU law says buffer strips must be two metres wide and must not have fertilisers or pesticides put on them.

These protections are not contained in the new legislation being debated in the House of Commons.

The bill moves away from a system where farmers receive subsidies based on how much land they farm to a process where they receive money for public goods such as providing habitats for wildlife and maintaining healthy soils.

Campaigners are lobbying the government to make sure every farmer meets minimum environmental standards after Britain leaves the EU, not just those that sign up for wildlife subsidies.

“The agriculture bill includes vital new powers to pay farmers to restore nature but is silent on the rules and regulations for farming in the future. With the change that Brexit will bring, this presents real risks to our soils and hedgerows, and the nature that depends upon them,” Lancaster said.

There is already a gap in domestic and EU regulations that means farmers can fill in ponds or leave them to become overgrown. Campaigners want this addressed in the new regulations because ponds support a large proportion of freshwater biodiversity, especially uncommon freshwater species such as damselflies. The report also flags a lack of protection for bare soils.

Debbie Tripley, the director of environmental policy and advocacy at WWF, said: “Unless the government starts plugging the gaps left by leaving EU regulation, our soils, hedgerows and the wildlife that depends on them are at risk. We need firm but fair enforcement and advice that ensure food is produced to high environmental standards across the country.”

Cutting hedgerows during nesting season could be “calamitous” for wild pollinators and birds, says Lynn Dicks, a lecturer in animal ecology from the University of Cambridge, who was not involved in the research.

“Hedgerows are really important for wild pollinators, especially because they provide flower resources in the early spring, often when not much else is in flower.

“If hedgerows are more frequently cut in the spring and early summer, a practice that currently breaches EU regulations, substantial proportions of this spring flower resource in the English countryside could be lost. A third of our wild bee and hoverfly species are already declining. Loss of flowers in the hedgerows can only make this worse.”

(Source: *The Guardian*)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Kenya’s ex-president

(January 13, 2003)

The former Kenyan president, Daniel arap Moi has said that he will continue to play a part in Kenyan life. Two weeks ago, Mr Moi left office after twenty-four years as Kenya’s leader, when the opposition leader, Mwai Kibaki won the election. Ishbel Matheson reports from Nairobi.

On the day of Mr Kibaki’s **inauguration**, there were no fond farewells for the departing leader. Daniel arap Moi **was jeered** and had mud slung at his car. But afterwards, many Kenyans felt this treatment of the former president to be shameful. They thought whatever wrongs had been done under his leadership, he had the right **to retire with dignity**. But it seems Mr Moi doesn’t plan to spend his remaining days **pottering around** on his farm in the Rift Valley. Last week, even as President Kibaki was settling into State House, Mr Moi was back in the capital, settling into his private office. During his leadership, he **was renowned** for his energy, rising early and working late into the night. That pattern, it seems, will continue. Like many other retired heads of state, he wants to **retain** an international profile. Through his new Moi Foundation, the former president will stay engaged in the regional peace **initiatives** in Somalia and Sudan. He may also find time for more relaxing **pursuits**. He’s a keen farmer; the Kenyan armed forces gave him a new plough and tractor as one of his retirement gifts. A committed Christian, he also indicated that he might like to take up **lay preaching**. More **controversial** is his continuing chairmanship of the former ruling party. The opposition leader, Uhuru Kenyatta, has said his goal is to rebuild KANU from the ashes of his **crushing defeat**. It’s not clear how much of a free hand he’ll have to do this, with Mr Moi still **at the helm of** the party.

Words

inauguration: when a new leader takes up his/her position at an official ceremony

was jeered: people shouted rude and unpleasant things at him **to retire with dignity:** to get respect and be well-treated when leaving a job

potter around: to spend time in a relaxed way doing small jobs and other things that are not very important

was renowned for: was well-known/famous for

to retain: to keep

initiatives: actions taken to solve problems

pursuits: an activity of a specified kind, especially a recreational or sporting one

lay preaching: when someone who does not have a religious job gives religious talks

controversial: causes strong feelings, many people do not agree with it

crushing defeat: serious defeat, many votes against **at the helm of:** in the position of leader, (literally, in control of a ship)

(Source: *BBC*)

Erdogan says Turkey will not allow Syrian govt to advance in Idlib

Turkey will not allow the Syrian government to gain territory in the northwestern region of Idlib, President Tayyip Erdogan was quoted as saying Tuesday, a day after eight Turkish personnel were killed in an attack Ankara blamed on Syrian troops.

Earlier, Turkey urged Russia to rein in Syrian government forces in Idlib, after the attack rattled a fragile cooperation between the two countries, which back opposing sides in the war.

Speaking on a flight back from Ukraine, Erdogan said there was no need to be in "serious contradiction" with Russia over developments in Syria for now, adding that Ankara and Moscow will sit down to talk about the issue "without anger". He also said he may call Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday.

(Source: Reuters)

Libya rivals show ‘genuine will’ to start ceasefire talks: UN

The United Nations envoy to Libya has said representatives of the country's rival factions attending talks in Geneva agree in principle to turning a fragile truce into a lasting ceasefire, as he decried ongoing violations of an arms embargo by both sides and their backers.

Addressing reporters in the Swiss city, Ghassan Salame said on Tuesday his office had collected evidence of the ongoing violations and referred the issue to the UN Security Council.

Salame said the meetings of the so-called 5+5 military commission, which started on Monday, were crucial in ending the military escalation.

Known as the "Libya Joint Military Commission," the 10-member body is comprised of five delegates from the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), which is based in Tripoli and led by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj, and five appointed by eastern-based renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar.

In April last year, Haftar's forces launched an offensive to seize the capital from the GNA. Clashes have continued, despite a shaky truce brokered by Turkey and Russia on January 12 and an international gathering in Germany a week later that concluded with world powers signing a 55-point declaration to end foreign interference and work towards a permanent ceasefire.

"Both sides have come to Geneva and we have started talks in an attempt to turn the truce into a more solid one, less often violated by either side," Salame said.

"There is an agreement to convert the truce into a lasting ceasefire, so the principle has been adopted by both sides," he said.

"There is a clear willingness and genuine will to sit together and start negotiating," Salame said, adding that meetings were, for the time being, held in separate rooms.

The envoy said discussions would focus on which conditions would be necessary on the ground to implement the ceasefire and which role the UN or any other international organization would play in this regard.

(Source: al Jazeera)

EU rejects U.S. one-sided ‘Deal of the Century’

→ 1 Riyadh, however, has welcomed the initiative, saying "the Kingdom appreciates the efforts made by President Trump's administration to develop a comprehensive Palestinian-Israeli peace plan".

Saudi government media on Sunday urged the Palestinians not to miss "this opportunity" and to approach the deal with a positive mindset.

State-run newspaper Okaz went on as far as to say that "the Palestinian cause is no longer the Arabs' main cause".

Saudi Arabia meanwhile barred an Iranian delegation from the OIC meeting in Jeddah, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said.

Iran, he said, has filed a complaint with the OIC and chastised Saudi Arabia for misusing its position as the host for the organization's headquarters.

Iranian officials have condemned Trump's plan as a non-starter after it was officially announced last week. The Palestinian leadership has rejected the plan, saying it heavily favors Israel and will deny them a viable independent state.

(Source: agencies)

Israel, Sudan leaders ‘secretly meet, agree on normalization’

→ 1 Burhan, he added, agreed to meet Netanyahu because officials thought it would help "accelerate" the process of being removed from the U.S. terror list.

Reports coming out of Sudan indicate that news of the unannounced meeting has sparked public anger in the Arab country, which has been the scene of popular protests against the power grab by the military-controlled transitional government following the ouster of long-time president, Omar al-Bashir, in April 2019.

Several political factions and activist groups in the Muslim country — where anti-Israel sentiments run high — have also condemned the secret meeting, Iran's IRNA news agency reported.

■ ‘A stab in Palestine’s back’

The meeting infuriated main Palestinian factions in the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, namely Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Hazem Qassem, spokesman for the Hamas resistance movement, denounced the meeting between the Israeli prime minister and Sudan's ruling council chief, saying it is "encouraging the (Israeli) occupation to carry on with its crimes and aggression against the Palestinian people."

Moreover, Saeb Erekat, the PLO secretary general, condemned the Netanyahu-Burhan meeting as a "stab in the back."

"This meeting is a stab in the back of the Palestinian people and a blatant departure from the Arab Peace Initiative at a time when the administration of [U.S.] President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu are trying to liquidate the Palestinian cause," he said in a statement carried by WAFA news agency.

Additionally on Monday, Netanyahu held talks with Museveni and said in a news conference afterwards that Israel would open an embassy in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, if the African country established one in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds.

(Source: agencies)

Russia warns of potential false-flag chemical attack in Syria’s Idlib

Russia has warned that members of the so-called civil defense group White Helmets together with Takfiri militants are planning to carry out a chemical attack in the de-escalation zone of embattled Idlib Province in northwestern Syria in a bid to incriminate Syrian government forces as a pretext for possible acts of aggression on army troops.

"At 22:15 Moscow time (1915 GMT) on February 3, the Russian reconciliation center's hotline received information from two local residents that White Helmets activists, backed by (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) HTS terrorists, plan to conduct a provocation involving the use of toxic agents," the Russian Reconciliation Center for Syria said in a statement.

It added that some 15 members of the White Helmets arrived in the Ma'arret al-Artik district two days earlier for such an objective.

"The provocation involves approximately 200 people, and is meant to be staged in the district. The participants, including children, are mostly family members of militants, who were previously evacuated from Syria's southern provinces and currently accommodated in the Idlib de-escalation zone. White Helmets have brought in about 400 liters of chemicals to the location from an underground storage facility," the Russian center noted.

It further highlighted that the militants are under the command of an HTS terrorist, identified as Mohiuddin al-Amm, who filmed a fake chemical attack in the Khan Shaykhun town of Idlib province back on April 4, 2017.

The video of the purported chemical attack is expected to be posted on social media networks by the White House, and then



disseminated by Western and Arab media outlets, according to the statement.

The Russian center then called on Turkey "to exert all possible pressure on [its allied] militants in the Idlib de-escalation zone" to prevent the use of poisonous agents in the area.

Moscow's warning comes as the Syrian army is pressing ahead with an offensive to liberate Idlib, the last major militant bastion in the country. Such gas attack claims usually surface when the Damascus government gains the upper hand on the battlefield against foreign-backed militant outfits.

Back on January 27, Syria informed that the United Nations that it had been confirmed the Turkish government was supporting terrorist groups in their bid to stage a fake chemical attack south of Aleppo and another one in the northeast of Idlib to frame the Syrian army.

On April 14, 2018, the United States, Britain and France carried out a string of airstrikes against Syria over a suspected chemical weapons attack on the city of Douma, located about 10 kilometers northeast of the capital Damascus.

Washington and its allies blamed Damascus for the Douma attack, an allegation rejected by the Syrian government.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) launched an inspection into that incident and announced in a report last March that a "toxic chemical" containing chlorine was used in clashes between the Syrian military and anti-government militants Douma on April 7, 2018.

That report, however, turned out to have been largely whitewashed in favor of the anti-Damascus militants. Ian Henderson, a former OPCW inspector in the Douma team, told the UN Security Council last month that the account the watchdog had issued on the matter ran contrary to the findings of its own fact-finding mission.

Syria surrendered its stockpile of chemical weapons in 2014 to a joint mission led by the United States and the OPCW, which oversaw the destruction of the weaponry. It has also consistently denied using chemical weapons.

(Source: Press TV)

Putin says reforms are not intended to extend his powers

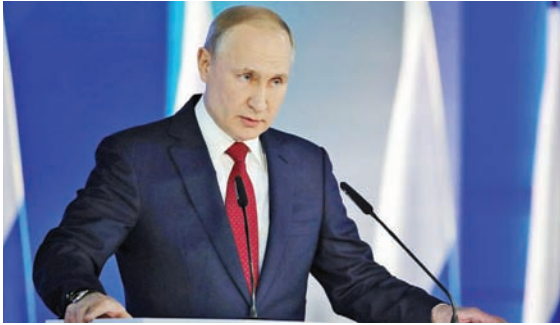
Russia President Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that he proposed amendments to the constitution not to extend his grip on power but to improve Russia's political system.

Putin unleashed a political storm on January 15, proposing an overhaul of the Russian constitution that triggered the resignation of the unpopular prime minister Dmitry Medvedev and his government.

The proposals - that took Russians and most of the establishment by surprise - stirred speculation that Putin, 67, was maneuvering to extend his hold on power after his fourth Kremlin term expires in 2024.

"During my work as president and prime minister it's become obvious to me that some things don't function as they should," Putin said at a college in the city of Cherepovets, north of Moscow.

"Very often there arise issues in health care, (and) education, something that should be done is not happening at the municipal level," he added.



"This is why I have proposed this and not to extend my powers."

The proposals foresee tightening control over local authorities and strengthening the role of an advisory body called the State Council as well as the presidency itself.

EU to overhaul process for admitting new members in bid to lift French veto



The European Commission will propose changes to the system for letting new countries into the EU to give existing members more say, in a bid to mollify France which has vetoed expansion of the bloc to six countries in the Balkans.

In October, President Emmanuel Macron halted the process of admitting Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and North Macedonia. The Commission hopes to persuade France to lift its objections before a Zagreb summit with the Balkan states in May.

Macron has become the most outspoken figure among European politicians who say the last big expansion, when Romania and Bulgaria joined in 2007, was too hasty, and caution is needed in adding more members from a region beset by corruption and crime.

In November, France submitted a proposal for changes that would give leaders of member states more say over enlargement. Paris says it supports accession for the Balkans in the long term.

The changes the Commission is expected to unveil on Wednesday would give existing members the power to pause the process of admitting new countries, or even force countries to restart entry talks in some policy areas from the beginning. More summits would be held in the Balkan region to give politicians more say over the process.

"Macron wants to be seen as the

kingmaker and we can accommodate that, because the EU's credibility is at stake," said a senior EU official involved in the reform. "This is political and its personal, so let's take out the drama."

But the Commission's proposals would stop short of meeting some French demands, including that funds for new members should come out of money set aside for poor countries already in the EU. EU officials say such a move would jeopardize support for expansion among existing poor members.

One EU diplomat said it was still not clear whether France would be satisfied by the new proposals: "With Macron, we have a 60% chance of success." All other EU governments must also agree to the new method.

French officials in Paris told Reuters they had not seen the Commission proposals yet, but had held talks with European Commissioner for enlargement Oliver Varhelyi.

Other countries, including the Netherlands and Denmark, have also been sceptical of expansion, but EU officials say if they can persuade France to lift its objections, those countries would probably not hold out.

"Without Macron, neither the Dutch nor the Danes would alone bloc this; certainly not for North Macedonia, possibly not even for Albania," a senior EU diplomat said.

(Source: Reuters)

‘Technical glitch’ spawns conspiracies & Democrats have only themselves to blame



For the first time in U.S. political history, no clear winner was announced in the critical Iowa caucus amid a storm of chaos. How can the Democrats hope to lead the nation if they can't be trusted to conduct a simple poll?

Democratic party officials in Iowa worked furiously Tuesday to deliver the delayed results of their first-in-the-nation caucus, as frustrated presidential candidates claimed momentum and plowed ahead in their quest for the White House.

In a statement early Tuesday, the Iowa Democratic Party blamed a "coding issue in the reporting system" that it said has since been fixed. The problem kept party officials from releasing results from Monday's caucus, the much-hyped kickoff to the 2020 primary. It was an embarrassing twist after months of promoting the contest as a chance for Democrats to find some clarity in a jumbled field with no clear front-runner.

Instead, caucus day ended with no winner, no official results and many fresh questions about whether Iowa can retain its coveted "first" status.

State party officials said "our plan is to release results as soon as possible" later Tuesday. It said it had verified the accuracy of the collected data and said the problem was not a result of "a hack or an intrusion."

The statement came after tens of thousands of voters spent hours Monday night sorting through a field of nearly a dozen candidates who had spent much of the previous year fighting to win the open-

ing contest of the 2020 campaign and, ultimately, the opportunity to take on President Donald Trump this fall.

The candidates didn't wait for the party to resolve its issues before claiming, if not victory, progress and moving on to next-up New Hampshire.

"It looks like it's going to be a long night, but we're feeling good," former Vice President Joe Biden said, suggesting the final results would "be close."

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders said he had "a good feeling we're going to be doing very, very well here in Iowa" once results were posted. "Today marks the beginning of the end for Donald Trump," he predicted. "Listen, it's too close to call," Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren said. "The road won't be easy. But we are built for the long haul."

And Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, was most certain.

"So we don't know all the results, but we know by the time it's all said and done, Iowa, you have shocked the nation," he said. "By all indications, we are going on to New Hampshire victorious."

Democrats faced the possibility that whatever numbers they ultimately released would be questioned. And beyond 2020, critics began wondering aloud whether the Iowa caucuses, a complicated set of political meetings staged in a state that is whiter and older than the Democratic Party, are a tradition whose time had passed.

(Source: AP)

Iranian women 3x3 basketball want a place at Tokyo 2020: official

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Head of d e s k Iran basketball federation Ramin Tabatabaei says that the women team will participate in the FIBA 3x3 Universality Olympic Qualifying Tournament (UOQT).

UOQT will take place in Indian city Bengaluru from March 18 and 22.

The Tokyo 2020 qualifying tournament will be also held in Budapest, Hungary on April 24-26.

"The Iranian women team will take part at the qualifying tournament in India and the team can book an Olympic place as top two finishers," Tabatabaei said.

"The Iranian team will also have a chance in Hungary tournament. We hope they can take part in the Olympics for the first time. They have shown good performance in the previous tournaments," he added.

Iran's men's basketball team have also sealed their place at Tokyo 2020.

"We are among the world's top eight teams. Spain basketball federation has invited us to the country for two friendly matches. China and Japan have also invited our team for basketball tournaments," Tabatabaei stated.

Iran will face Saudi Arabia, Syria and Qatar in Group E of the 2021 FIBA Asia Cup qualifiers.

The top two teams in each group will automatically advance into the 2021 FIBA Asia Cup with the next four teams to be determined through a quarterfinal tournament in February 2021 among the third placers in all six groups.

"We will hold our camp for the 2021 FIBA Asia Cup qualifiers from February 13. We will play four warm-up matches ahead of the competition," he concluded.



Esteghlal striker Diabate ruled out for three weeks



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal d e s k forward Cheick Diabate will be out of action for three weeks after he suffered a foot injury during Saturday's 2-1 win over Naft Masjed Soleyman.

The Malian striker was forced to leave the field after 15 minutes.

The injury ruled him out of the Tehran derby against arch rivals Persepolis on Thursday in matchday 19 of Iran Professional League (IPL).

Diabate has been diagnosed with a

hamstring strain, Esteghlal's doctor Kaveh Sotoodeh said.

Diabate's absence will be a major setback for Esteghlal since they have to win the match to keep themselves in a tight IPL title race.

"Diabate needs two to three weeks to heal from injury," Sotoodeh said.

The iconic striker could miss two matches against Iraq's Al Shorta and Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia in the 2020 AFC Champions League.

Paykan name Abdollah Veisi as new head coach



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Abdollah d e s k Veisi has been named the new head coach of Paykan football team.

Veisi has been appointed as Hossein Faraki's successor at Paykan after signing his contract in the management office of the Iranian club in Tehran.

Faraki submitted his resignation last Thursday after Paykan's 3-1 home defeat against Shahin Bushehr at the Iran Professional League (IPL).

Veisi, 48, the former coach of Shahin

Bushehr, Naft Masjed Solyeman, and Esteghlal Khuzestan will lead Paykan in Tabriz against Machine Sazi on Friday and it will be the first match of his second stint at the carmaker club's hotseat.

Veisi is tasked with lifting Paykan team off the foot of the table. The team is in the 14th place of the IPL table with just one point above the relegation zone. Veisi was introduced to the players and staff of Paykan in a ceremony held in the club and then attended in the training session of the team.

Decisions of AFC Emergency Meeting in Kuala Lumpur

Representatives of the six Member Associations taking part in the AFC Champions League East decided to postpone matches involving Chinese clubs from the first three match days at an Emergency meeting convened by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Tuesday.

It was also decided that if matches, scheduled for Chinese teams, can be played as per the schedule then they will go ahead as planned – and so Chiangrai United's match with Beijing will go ahead on Match Day 2 on February 18, 2020 but only as Beijing are currently in camp in Korea Republic and may not need quarantine measures.

Chiangrai United have stressed that they will continue to work closely with the Thai Government and medical officials to monitor the on-going and fast-moving situation.

The AFC will continue to closely evaluate the impact of the outbreak, but it is proposed that the postponed matches involving clubs from China PR will be re-scheduled in April and May 2020. The East Zone Round of 16 matches



are proposed for June 16 and 17 with the return leg on June 23 or 24.

However, the representatives agreed that a deadline to assess the latest situation will be set 21 days before each match and if it is decided the game cannot go-ahead as proposed, the host club will have to nominate a neutral

venue at least 14 days before the match day.

The Emergency meeting was called in response to the impact on the AFC Champions League East of the coronavirus outbreak, which has now been declared as a global health emergency by the World Health Organization.

Earlier, on January 29, 2020, the original match schedule was altered by the AFC so that the Chinese clubs could play away in the first three match days but subsequently some Governments, including Australia, have introduced restrictions which made it impossible for Chinese clubs to travel to play the re-arranged matches.

Dato' Windsor John, the AFC General Secretary, said: "We came together in difficult circumstances to find solutions to allow us to play football while ensuring we protect the safety and security of all players, officials, stakeholders and fans.

"We also accept that this coronavirus is a much bigger issue than just football and we wish all those who have been affected a speedy return to health."

(Source: the-afc)

Mourners left 1,300 basketballs outside the Staples Center in tribute to Kobe

Cleanup of the makeshift Kobe Bryant memorial outside the Staples Center in Los Angeles began Monday at 4 a.m. local time, and the crew was busy. Fans of the late Lakers star had left more than 1,300 basketballs at the memorial in tribute.

Staples Center president Lee Zeidman shared on Twitter an image of some of the 1,353 basketballs -- many of them containing handwritten messages.

Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna and seven other people were killed in a helicopter crash near Los Angeles on January 26.

Fans left thousands of items at the memorial to pay their respects to Bry-

ant and other victims of the crash. The items are being cataloged and will be delivered to the Bryant family at the request of Kobe's widow, Vanessa Bryant, Zeidman said.

"It will have been a week," Zeidman told the LA Times. "We have contractually obligated events that are moving in (to the arena). Vanessa had reached out to us and said, 'Our family would like the items out there.' So we're going to catalog every one of them. By that I mean T-shirts, letters, basketballs, stuffed animals, toys. We're going to put those in specially made containers and we're going to ship them to the family."

Fans left some 25,000 candles, 5,000 signs or letters, 500 stuffed animals, 350 pairs of shoes and 14 banners, Zeidman said on Twitter.

The cleanup crew also filled a 40-yard trash bin with flowers, which will be used as mulch and spread throughout the landscaping around the arena, according to Zeidman.

Zeidman told the LA Times he got the idea to compost the flowers from England's Manchester Arena, which composted flowers and perishables left in the days after a terrorist attack at an Ariana Grande concert in 2017. (Source: CNN)



Iran beach soccer unchanged in world ranking

TASNIM — The Iranian national beach soccer team remained in fifth place in the world ranking.

Team Melli are the top team in Asia with 2489 points.

Iran defended their title at the Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup in November.



Brazil stayed atop of the ranking with 4507 points.

Portugal are second in the rankings with 4287 points.

Italy and Russia are third and fourth with 3961 and 3923 points, respectively.

Female cyclist wins bronze in Asian mountain biking c'ships

MNA — Female cyclist Faranak Partoazar won a bronze medal in the 26th edition of Asian Mountain Bike Continental Championships in Thailand.

She won the first medal of the Iranian team in the event on Tuesday in the cross-country class.

In male's cross-country, Iran's Faraz Shokri and Farzad Khodiyari will hit the mountains today.

Thailand's Chiang Rai is hosting the 26th Asian Mountain Bike Championships and also 12th Asian Junior Mountain Bike Championships from Feb. 1. The points gained in the event, which will wrap up tomorrow, will affect the cyclist ranking for qualification into 2020 Olympics.

Bozidar Radosevic extends Persepolis contract

TASNIM — Persepolis goalkeeper Bozidar Radosevic has penned a three-year extension that will keep him in the club until 2024.

The 30-year-old goalie joined Persepolis in 2016 and helped the Reds win the Iran Professional League three times.

He was part of the team who qualified for the AFC Champions League in 2018.

Radosevic will be the first goalkeeper next season since Alireza Beiranvand will leave Persepolis to join Antwerp.

Mahram reach agreement with American basketballer

IRNA — Iranian top-flight basketball club Mahram have reached an agreement with American guard Maalik Benjamin Wayns.

Wayns, 29, is an American-born naturalized Belarusian professional basketball player who plays for the Tsmoki-Minsk of VTB United League.

He played high school basketball for Roman Catholic High School in Philadelphia, where he was a Parade All-American as well as a McDonald's All-American before playing college basketball for Villanova University under coach Jay Wright.

Wayns started his playing career with Philadelphia 76ers and has also played for Los Angeles Clippers, Joventut Badalona and Levallois Metropolitans.

Mahram compete in the Iranian Basketball Super League and are considered as one of the giants of Iranian basketball and won the Asian championships twice in 2009 and 2010.

Mahram have won the Iranian Basketball Super League championship a total of six times.

Iran female taekwondo fighters grab two gold, five bronze in Turkey

IRNA — Iranian female taekwondo fighters received two gold and five bronze medals in Turkish Open 2020 which is underway in Istanbul.

In – 49 kg weight category, Ghazal Soltani defeated Russia, Turkey and Kazakhstan.

After hitting Uzbek rival, she snatched a gold medal.

Nahid Kiani in – 53 kg weight category overpowered Turkish rival and received a gold medal.

In- 57 kg, - 62 kg and – 67kg Iranian athletes grabbed bronze medals.

Wrestlers bag seven medals in Turkish champs

IRNA — Iranian wrestlers received two gold, one silver and four bronze medals and stood on the third place in the championships held in Kahramanmaraş, Turkey.

The event was held in the attendance of representatives from 23 countries.

Turkey with 175 points stood on the first place and Russia with 120 points ranked second.

Iran's Rahman Rahimpour and Akbar Sobhani in the weight categories of 65kg and 90 kg bagged gold medals.

Reza Moghtader in the 70kg weight category received a silver medal.

Hamid Elahian, Omid Khemati in 75kg and Alireza Keshavarz and Hadi Ghadimi in 80kg category snatched bronze medals.

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.eshtarak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
» Printed at: Jame Jam Barta Borna - 44197737



Tehrantimes79



Tehrantimesdaily

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



GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

I have recognized God in the dissolution of steadfast wills, the unravelling of coarse knots, and the breach of firm ambitions.

Imam Ali (AS)

IIDCYA attends Clermont-Ferrand market with 4 animations

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Short Film Market of the 42nd Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival in France is featuring four animated movies from Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA).



This combination photo shows posters for the four animations offered at the Short Film Market of the 42nd Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival. (IIDCYA)

The movies include "The 11 Steps" by Maryam Kashkulinia, "Autumn Leaves, Spring Leaves and Two Doves" by Sadeq Javadi, "Crab" by Shiva Sadeq-Asadi and "What With" by Mahin Javaherian, the IIDCYA announced in a press release on Tuesday.

The market, which opened on February 2, will come to an end Friday.

In addition, Iranian director Azadeh Musavi's "The Visit" is competing in the festival, which will run until February 8.

"The Visit" is about a young girl and her mother on their way to visit the father in jail.

The market takes place in Clermont-Ferrand every year during the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival, a key event in the world of short films.

Poems by Latvian writer Imants Ziedonis translated into Persian

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Imants Ziedonis Foundation director Zaneta Jaunzeme-Grende has said that a collection of poems by Latvian writer Imants Ziedonis has been translated into Persian.

Jaunzeme-Grende, who served as the Latvian culture minister from 2011 to 2013, made the remarks in a seminar on Ziedonis and the impression of Persian poet Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi's poetry on Latvian poets in Riga last week, Iran's Book City Institute has announced in a press release published on Tuesday.

She said that Iranian scholar Hushag Rahnama has translated the collection into Persian and Hermes, a major Iranian publisher based in Tehran, is scheduled to publish the book.

A Latvian delegation is scheduled to attend the unveiling ceremony of the book in Tehran, she added.

She next talked about Rumi's influence on Ziedonis and Ziedonis's interest in mysticism.

She said that Ziedonis was familiar with Rumi's Masnavi-ye Manavi through a Russian translation of the book and was highly influenced by his poetry, having been Ziedonis' source of inspiration.

She added that Ziedonis later learned that Rumi's poetry has been translated into many languages but a Latvian translation was lacking.

She also noted that a selection of Rumi's poems and Persian poet Sohrab Sepehri's blank verse will also be translated into Latvian.

She expressed her hope that a seminar on Ziedonis and Sepehri will be held in Tehran and Riga next year in collaboration with the Book City Institute.

The one-day seminar was organized by Iran's Book City Institute and the Imants Ziedonis Foundation.

Book City Institute deputy director Ali-Asghar Moham-madkhani visited Riga in August 2018 by invitation of Jaunzeme-Grende to discuss ways to expand cultural relations between the two organizations.

Action film "Day Zero" brings Jundallah founder Rigi back to life

A R T **TEHRAN** — Saeid Malekan, producer and makeup artist, has brought Abdul-Malik Rigi, the founder and leader of the Jundallah terrorist group in southeastern Iran, back to life in his directorial debut "Day Zero".

The film, which premiered during the 38th Fajr Film Festival at Tehran's Mellat Cineplex on Monday, portrays the intelligence and police operations Iran carried out to arrest Rigi.

"It is based on a true story," Malekan said during a press conference after the premiere of his film and added, "I wanted to make a film about those who are struggling to provide security for us."

"I also wanted to say that those people should not feel people are indebted to them, because they have consciously selected their job," he noted.

Malekan praised actor Saeid Soheili for his portrayal of Rigi in the movie and said, "He was the best option for the character and he did it best."

Soheili has made a strong comeback with "Day Zero" two years after his powerful performance in "Lottery", director Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian's drama about the mafia trafficking Iranian women to the United Arab Emirates.

"One of the factors that caused me to agree to play the role was its difference with other roles I've already taken in other films," Soheili said at the press conference.

"I was very curious about the character and somehow, I deem myself a defender of it; it was very important for me to know what causes an ordinary street peddler to



Members of cast and crew attend the Iranian premiere of Saeid Malekan's directorial debut "Day Zero" the 38th Fajr Film Festival at Tehran's Mellat Cineplex on February 3, 2020. (ISNA/Hadi Zand)

change into an awful character," he added.

Malekan has previously collaborated as a producer in many acclaimed movies such as Saeid Rusitai's "Life+1 Day" on drug addiction and poverty in the slums of

Tehran and Bahram Tavakkoli's acclaimed war drama "The Lost Strait".

This is the second time Rigi has been chosen as a subject for film by an Iranian filmmaker. The first was Narges Abyar's

"When the Moon Was Full", which was highly acclaimed at the previous edition of the Fajr Film Festival with awards in several categories, including best film and best director.

Over 80 Iranian ensembles to perform at Fajr Music Festival



Iran's Music Office director Mohammad Allahyari attends a press conference at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on February 4, 2020 to brief the media about the 35th Fajr Music Festival. (ANA/Ali Ahmadvand)

A R T **TEHRAN** — Over 80 Iranian traditional, pop and classical ensembles will be giving performances during the 35th Fajr Music Festival in Tehran, which will open on February 13, Iran's Music Office director, Mohammad Allahyari, said in a press conference on Tuesday.

The performances will be held at Tehran's Vahdat Hall, Rudaki Hall, Niavaran Cultural Center and several other halls.

Musicians from 25 provinces will attend the festival, which is also scheduled to be held in Bushehr, Khuzestan, Fars, Golestan, Zanjan, East Azarbaijan, North Khorasan, Sistan-Baluchestan and the Arvand Free Zone.

The organizers also plan to honor maestro Nader Mashayekhi, pianist Ofe-lia Parto and Ashiq Hassan Eskandari,

and tar virtuoso Hushang Zarif will be honored with the lifetime achievement awards during the closing ceremony of the festival on February 19.

He also noted that the Tehran Symphony Orchestra will be performing pieces by composer Behzad Abdi in memory of the victims of the Ukrainian aircraft, which was unintentionally targeted by Iran.

Iran's National Orchestra will also commemorate Quds Force commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani during a performance.

Celebrated musicians from seven countries will be performing at the festival.

Tunisian singer Dhafer Youssef, Belgian pianist Florian Noack and Italian jazz trumpeter Luca Aquino are among the musicians.



A scene from "Malakout" by Iranian director Farnush Abedi.

Iranian animation "Malakout" honored at Dublin Silk Road festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Farnush Abedi's short animated movie "Malakout" received an honorable mention at the Silk Road International Film Festival in Dublin, Ireland, the organizers announced last week.

The horror film is about a pianist, who has lost one of his hands and can't play the piano anymore. Doctors decide to

transplant a dead criminal's hand to his body. The pianist with his new hand starts killing people.

The award for best film went to the Chinese movie "The Swing Maker", which also brought Yu Daxiong the award for best director.

"The Stand Up Doll" by Evelynne Tollman Werzowa from South Africa was named best documentary.

Director calls "Abadan 11, 60" depiction of Iranians' resistance during war



Director Mehrdad Khoshbakht (L) and cast member Alireza Kamali attend a press conference during the 38th Fajr Film Festival at Tehran's Mellat Cineplex on February 3, 2020. (Mehr/Hamid Vakili)

A R T **TEHRAN** — Mehrdad Khoshbakht, the director of "Abadan 11, 60", has said that his films represent Iranians' resistance during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Speaking during a press conference on Monday after the premiere of the movie at the 38th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran, he said, "My main resource for writing the screenplay was 'Frequency 11, 60', a book by Fazlollah Saberi, which is about radio, the only medium accessible for most people during the war."

The film relates the people's fight against Iraqi forces in the southwestern Iranian city of Abadan during the early months of the Iran-Iraq war. It also narrates the key role played by the

radio in mobilizing civilians for the battle against the Iraqis.

"When we talk about war, we always think that only the soldiers on the front fought against the enemies, but there were lots of ordinary people who were fighting barehanded behind the fronts," producer Hassan Kamali said at the press conference.

Critic Keivan Amjadian also noted that "Abadan 11, 60" is about the media's key role during wartime.

Starring Alireza Kamali, Hamidreza Mohammadi, Vida Javan, Shabnam Gudarzi and Hassan Majuni, the film was produced at the Owj Arts and Media Organization, the Tehran-based institution that produces revolutionary works in art and cinema.

#OscarsSoWhite (and male) looks headed for a sequel

(NEW YORK Reuters) — For some it's the "white male rage" Oscars. Others have dubbed it the year of "Big Men, Little Women." Despite four years of efforts to address the #OscarsSoWhite furor, the winners' podium at Sunday's Academy Awards is expected to be made up entirely of white actors and no female directors.

Of the nine best picture nominees at this year's Oscars, just one - "Little Women" - is a story about and made by women, while just one of the 20 acting nominees is a person of color: "Harriet" star Cynthia Erivo. Neither is expected to take home the biggest honors in the movie industry.

"The whole Hollywood system can sometimes feel like a bit of a boys' club," said Taika Waititi, director of Oscar-nominated

Nazi satire "Jojo Rabbit."

It's been 10 years since Kathryn Bigelow became the first and so far only woman to win a best director Academy Award, for her war film "The Hurt Locker". This year, "Little Women's" Greta Gerwig was the biggest omission in the director race.

Despite a banner 2019 in which women made up 21 percent of all directors, writers, producers and cinematographers on the top 250 grossing films, including "Captain Marvel" and "Frozen II", those gains largely failed to translate into honors at awards season.

"As a culture, we still value stories about men more than we value stories about women, and if there is a healthy dose of violence in those movies, even better," said Martha

Lauren, founder of the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University.

"On the one hand, of course these awards are frivolous and seem silly at times, but the fact is they translate into visibility, and visibility translates into opportunities and higher salaries," she said.

Since 2016, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, whose members choose the Oscar winners, has doubled the number of women and people of color in its invitation-only ranks. Yet, by 2019 just 32% of its approximately 8,000 members were women, and 16% were people of color.

Lauren, who has been chronicling the presence of women on screen and behind the camera for 22 years, has one suggestion

that could improve matters more quickly than waiting for the academy to catch up.

"Expanding the best director category to include more spaces strikes me as an elegant, simple and transparent way to make room for others," Lauren said.

There are currently just five slots in the best director field but up to 10 movies can be nominated for the top prize of best picture.

"The academy could do a lot to help," said Olivia Wilde, director of high school comedy "Booksmart," which was snubbed.

"When they nominate a movie for best picture but not the director, it begs the question 'Are they discounting the amount of effort and dedication and thought that went into that?,'" she said.