



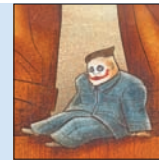
Nation emerges victorious in the great test of elections **2**



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COVID-19 defeat 'before long': minister

Some neighboring countries bury their head in the sand



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Public transport vehicles in Tehran are being disinfected to combat COVID-19.



PERSPECTIVE
Roohullah Ghasemian
Journalist

Fragile security and domestic distrust overshadow the Zionist regime

The 13th international conference of the Zionist Institute for National Security Studies was attended by a number of Israeli and world political and military experts and decision makers. The attendees believed that in the light of the fragile Middle East situation, there were several major threats to Israel:

Difficulties in assessing the consequences of regional developments on the security of the Zionist regime.

Israeli adversaries' access to advanced experiences and sciences through advanced and, of course, inexpensive technologies.

Difficulty in trusting the contradictory realities of the world that undermine the quality of decision-making by Israeli officials.

Powers capable of changing regional calculations.

According to the report, IDF Intelligence Directorate head Major General Tamir Heyman believes that nuclear capabilities is focused in Iran. He stated that there is no substitute for Qassem Soleimani, the chief factor in the region's resistance against the US, who turned Israel to a military entity from an organizational system.

The so called Deal of the Century was proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump under the pretext of resolving Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but actually aimed at removing the issue of Palestine. Announcing the plan escalated tensions and destabilized the current balance between two sides.

In this regard, former U.S. National Security Adviser H. R. McMaster believes that if China continues its economic war and seeks to dominate the global economy, it will also attempt to achieve strategic positions, including ports in the occupied territories.

The former commander of U.S. Central Command General Joseph Votel believes the U.S. is less reliant on its energy resources in the region than in the past, and that its biggest motive in the Middle East is to destroy the axis of resistance. In this regard, the regime, which is Washington's most important ally, will be disturbed if the U.S. decides to withdraw its troops from Iraq and Syria. **→3**

Israeli Army bulldozer dragging Gaza's body after border incident

Israeli forces have shot dead two Palestinians along a fence separating the besieged Gaza Strip from the occupied territories and injured several others who rushed to confront an armored bulldozer.

The Israeli military claimed that the two Palestinians were planting an improvised explosive device along the fence east of the city of Khan Yunis on Sunday morning.

After the killings, an Israeli armored bulldozer was seen crossing the Gaza fence "in a sadist manner," according to Palestine's Wafa news agency.

The International Middle East Media Center (IMEMC) said the bulldozer repeatedly crushed the bodies with its blade, then grabbed the corpse of one of the Palestinians with its blade

and swung the body back and forth in the air.

A group of Palestinians then began pelting the bulldozer with stones as it approached, before a gunshot was heard.

As the Palestinians dispersed, the Israeli bulldozer — guarded by a Merkava tank — lifted up one of the mangled bodies and carried it toward the occupied territories.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement condemned the "brutal crime" and pledged to "not let the occupation deal with us as it does with some Arab states".

"We are placing our hands on the trigger and we will avenge the blood of the martyrs by firing on Tel Aviv," it said.

Last week, Israeli minister of military affairs Naftali Bennett said the regime would

begin to "hoard" Palestinian bodies to use as "bargaining chips" in a bid to pressure the Gaza-based Hamas resistance movement to release two Israeli men and the remains of two soldiers.

Violence has surged in the occupied lands following the release of U.S. President Donald Trump's self-proclaimed "deal of the century," which all Palestinian groups have unanimously rejected.

Trump's Middle East scheme largely meets Israel's demands in the decades-old conflict while creating a Palestinian state with limited control over its own security and borders.

It also enshrines Jerusalem al-Quds as "Israel's undivided capital" and allows the regime to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank and the Jordan Valley. **→10**

Yemen unveils four indigenous missile defense systems

Yemeni armed forces have unveiled four domestically-built long-range, surface-to-air missile defense systems, which could act as game changers and alter the course of battle in the face of the deadly campaign led by Saudi Arabia against Yemen.

The president of Yemen's Supreme Political Council and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Mahdi al-Mashat, who was speaking at a ceremony in the capital Sana'a on Sunday, identified the systems as Fater-1 (Innovator-1), Thaqib-1 (Piercer-1), Thaqib-2 and Thaqib-3.

The systems have entered service following successful tests, the official announced.

Yemeni Minister of Defense Major General

Mohamed al-Atefy, Chairman of the General Staff Major General Mohamed al-Ghamhari and Brigadier General Yahya Saree, the spokesman for the armed forces, were also in attendance during the event.

Mashat praised the efforts by the Yemeni Ministry of Defense as regards the development and modernization of the military systems in order to deter or, if need be, confront the enemy.

"The new defense systems will change the course of the battle against the coalition of aggression, and pave the ground for the introduction of more sophisticated systems in order to engage enemy targets," Mashat stated.

On Saturday, Saree said the country's air

defense units had managed to thwart a Saudi-led airstrike against a strategic district east of the capital Sana'a.

On Tuesday, the spokesman for Yemen's air force, Major General Abdullah al-Jafri, praised the recent interception and targeting of a Tornado multi-role combat aircraft of the Royal Saudi Air Force in the country's northern province of Jawf.

He told Arabic-language Mirat al-Jazeera news website in an exclusive interview that the downing of the Tornado jet confirms beyond any doubt that 2020 will be the year of modern and advanced air defense systems that can track, damage or shoot down enemy aircraft. **→10**

Zarif discusses nuclear deal with Austrian FM

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Austrian counterpart Alexander Schallenberg discussed the latest developments surrounding the 2015 nuclear deal in a meeting in Tehran on Sunday.

The two foreign minister held two rounds of talks.

The meeting took place one day after Zarif discussed regional issues and the nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, with his Dutch counterpart Stef Blok who visited Iran on Friday and Saturday. **→2**



ARTICLE
Alireza Farahmand
Deputy CEO of ejob

Gig economy, a real assist for small businesses

A "gig" economy, otherwise called a freelance economy that has an independent workforce, helps small businesses and independent contractors succeed. Obviously, it is difficult for small businesses to compete against large corporations which have economies of scale, but a gig economy can be a tremendous aid for small businesses and individuals and sharpen their competitive postures. The gig economy also opens up a global marketplace for independent contractors to expand their customer base nationally and internationally. Online outsourcing has proven to be a transformative medium in the global economy.

In gig economies individuals market their skills, whether in unskilled labor markets, such as Uber drivers, or as skilled professionals, such as coders who bid out their services on sites such as Upwork. Thus, companies promoting the gig economy allow freelancers to generate a livelihood from a host of potential activities. Gig economy companies can also provide jobs such as food delivery, passenger transport, and professional and domestic services (such as cleaning) through their platforms. In the gig world outsourcing work is common when consumers and companies find new ways of providing services and when idle capacity can be employed. Here, supply and demand are brought together more efficiently with innovative technologies.

Startups usually must embrace growth initiatives, because they just don't have enough time, money and manpower. This is where the gig economy comes into play which benefits the startups to grow their business and achieve their goals. The advantages of freelance market platforms also offer significant benefits to talented workers. Gig workers are their own boss, they can set their own work hours, and different tasks require skills that might be right up their alley. This can be immensely appealing.

However, the growth of a gig economy should be monitored and managed carefully. It is a general workforce management system, in which independent workers, flexible jobs and short-term engagements are commonplace. **→3**

Nation emerges victorious in the great test of elections: Leader

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday that the Iranian nation passed successfully the great test of elections, noting that the move thwarted the enemies' opportunism.

"To counter the enemy's plot aimed at hitting the country's different pillars, we all must be ready for wise defense and reciprocal attack," the Leader underlined in a religious training class attended by a large number of his theology students.



Touching upon the enemies' hostile propaganda, Ayatollah Khamenei added that the Almighty God "has decided to make this nation victorious".

"The (enemies') propaganda started some months ago and it was intensified in election time. Two days before the election day, their media did not ignore the least opportunity to dissuade people from participating in the elections under the pretext of the coronavirus outbreak," the Leader added.

He added that the enemies' enmity toward our people is not restricted to economy, culture, religious beliefs and revolutionary ideals, adding, "They are even opposing the people's participation in the elections."

The Leader said the hostility of the enemies with the Iranian nation is not limited to economy and culture, nor the people's religious and revolutionary beliefs.

"They are even opposed to the elections of the Iranian nation because they do not want the phenomenon of people's turnout at ballot boxes in the name of religion and service to the revolution to be institutionalized as a reality."

Elections in the Islamic system, Ayatollah Khamenei said, nullify the enemies' claim that religion is opposed to freedom and democracy.

"Elections in the Islamic Republic show that religion is the perfect embodiment of an all-inclusive democracy, and 37 elections held in the span of 41 years reflect the Islamic system's unique commitment to democracy," he added, according to Press TV.

In comments after voting just minutes after beginning the elections on Friday, Ayatollah Khamenei described election day as a "national celebration" and a day to "restore the civil rights of the nation".

The Leader said, "Firstly, election day is a national celebration and I congratulate this celebration to all dear countrymen across the country. Secondly, it is the day of the materialization of the civil rights of the nation.... Thirdly, this is a religious duty."

Police seize narcotic drugs in northeastern Iran

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Anti-drug police forces have seized illicit drugs after disbanding a gang of drug traffickers in the northeastern city of Mashhad, local sources announced on Sunday.

The sources said police forces of Khorasan Razavi province dismantled the drug-trafficking gang that was involved in distributing heroin and crystal in the metropolis of Mashhad.

12 kg of heroin and crystal were seized during the operation, the sources said.

They added that two foreigners and an Iranian national were arrested and handed over to the court.

Also on Saturday, the anti-drug police in the central province of Kerman seized more than 500 kilograms of narcotics.

Second Brigadier General Aboldreza Nazeri, the police chief of the province, said that the big consignment was seized after a series of intelligence operations in the Orzueeyeh region. According to the police chief, 544 kg of opium were confiscated and a vehicle seized during the operation.

The Islamic Republic has been actively fighting drug trafficking over the past three decades, despite high economic and human costs.

The war on drug trade originating from Afghanistan has claimed the lives of nearly 4,000 Iranian police forces over the past four decades. The country has spent more than hundreds of millions of dollars on sealing its borders and preventing the transit of narcotics destined for lucrative European, Arab and Central Asian countries.

Austria says ready to host talks on de-escalation in Mideast region

TEHRAN (MNA) — Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg said that his country is ready to host talks on de-escalating tensions in the Middle East.

Making the remarks on Sat. in an interview with IRNA before departing for Tehran, he said that "in its traditional role as mediator, Vienna will propose the Iranian side that it is ready to host de-escalation talks."

He pointed to the rising tensions in the West Asian region and added, "Austria attaches great importance to spread of peace and stability in the Middle East region but the recent developments in the region are extremely worrying. My mission in visiting Iran will be to help reduce tension in the region through dialogue."

He added, "I will support the diplomatic efforts of the EU foreign policy chief to identify solutions for dialogue between Iran and its neighbors as well as between Iran and the United States."

Emphasizing Europe's commitment to maintaining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and marking the importance of the full implementation of JCPOA will be among the agenda of the upcoming visit to Tehran, he stated.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the level of relations between Iran and Austria and added that the bilateral ties between Iran and Austria date back to many years ago. The two countries of Iran and Austria enjoy rich and longstanding history, he said.

Expert says U.S. assassination of Gen. Soleimani was a 'miscalculation'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Bassam Abu Abdullah, an expert on international relations, has said that assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani was a "miscalculation" by the United States.

"They thought this action will lead to annihilation of the resistance axis, but if we study response to this assassination, we will see that Washington miscalculated," ISNA quoted him as saying on Sunday with an Arab media.

He said, "Iran targeted Ain al-Assad base and the United States kept silence while no country had targeted the United States' military bases since the World War Two."

"At first the United States announced that no one was injured. However, the Pentagon announced later that more than 100 military forces of the United States. Moreover, this action shows precision and power of their [Iran] missiles," he added.

In an interview with the NBC News on February 14, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said U.S. President Donald Trump was misled to believe his country would get away with the assassination of Soleimani.



Trump believed that the assassination would augment U.S. security but it worked the other way around, Zarif said.

On January 3, Trump ordered strikes that martyred General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU). In the early hours of January 8, the IRGC

attacked the Ain al-Assad in Anbar province in western Iraq as part of its promised "tough revenge" for the U.S. terror attack.

"Iran responded in a proportionate way against the base from which the operations against Soleimani were carried out," said Zarif.

He explained that Iran's retaliatory attack

was intended to show to the United States that they cannot bully Iran and that actions against Iran will have repercussions.

The Pentagon announced Friday the total number of U.S. service members who suffered brain injuries in the attack increased to 110.

Wendy Sherman, the former undersecretary of state for political affairs who led the U.S. negotiating team that concluded the Iran nuclear agreement, has said that assassination of Soleimani was an extraordinary risk.

"I think the president took an extraordinary risk and I don't think we've seen the end of that risk yet," WUSF News quoted her as saying in a news conference before the Ringling College Library Association Town Hall lecture series.

She added, "After he [Soleimani] was murdered by the United States government, they [the Iranian people] were in the streets protesting America. That's not in our national security interest."

She said that the assassination of Soleimani and the subsequent retaliation by Iran against U.S troops in Iraq brought the two countries close to war.

'Removal from FATF blacklist is open to Iran'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Kourosh Ahmadi, an expert on international affairs, has said that the way to get removed from the FATF blacklist is open to Iran.

"Removal from the FATF blacklist is open for Iran. It is not necessary to start everything from the beginning. We can just continue the job from where it was stopped. One case is joining the CFT and the Palermo bill," he told IRNA in an interview published on Sunday.

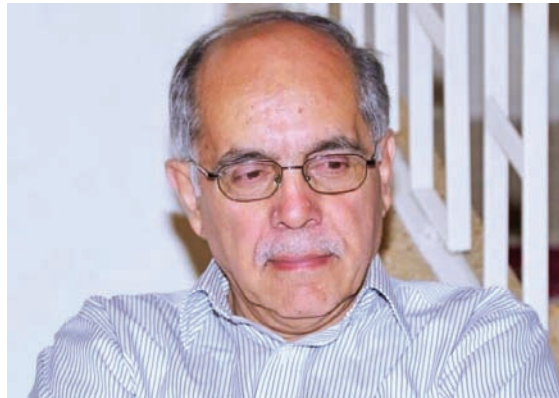
He noted, "The FATF has mentioned six points to remove Iran from blacklist and one of them is joining the CFT and the Palermo bill. Other points includes technical and legal issues with which Iran has no problem."

The FATF (the Financial Action Task Force) on Friday placed Iran on its blacklist after Iran refused to comply with the body's all requirements.

According to Reuters, the FATF appeared to leave the door ajar for Iran saying "countries should also be able to apply countermeasures independently of any call by the FATF to do so."

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Friday that the FATF blacklisting of Iran is "politically motivated".

"Unfortunately, what happened is politically motivated which exists in the international mechanisms by the United States, Saudi Arabia and the Zionist regime of Israel. They have influence on these mechanisms and make efforts to politicize them," he said.



He noted that Iran can never be labeled with money laundering and financing of terrorism.

The U.S., the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia had made great efforts to pressure the international body to blacklist Iran.

Abdolnasser Hemmati, Iran's central bank governor, said the move by the FATF will not affect the Iranian foreign trade and stability in foreign exchange market. "The performance of the central bank over the last year has given this assurance to the people that such

events will not create for Iran's foreign trade and the stability of foreign exchange market," Hemmati wrote on his Instagram page.

Hemmati said such "political and unprofessional" behaviors toward Iran has been continuing against Iran since the summer of 2016.

He said the representatives of the U.S. and its allies at the FATF had been trying to undermine expert reports about the great steps taken by Iran in line with the FATF requirements.

The FATF said in October 2019 that it has given Iran a final deadline of February 2020 to tighten its laws against money laundering in compliance with the global watchdog's financial standards.

"If before February 2020, Iran does not enact the Palermo and Terrorist Financing Conventions in line with the FATF Standards, then the FATF will fully lift the suspension of counter-measures and call on its members and urge all jurisdictions to apply effective counter-measures, in line with recommendation 19," the FATF said in a statement.

In November 2019, Gholamreza Mesbahi-Moghadam, a cleric member of the Expediency Council trained in economy, said, "In a situation in which the country is under the most severe sanctions, joining such conventions is self-inflicted sanctions. In the situation in which the United States seeks to limit the country's financial relations, it is not beneficial to join institutions like FATF."

Zarif discusses nuclear deal with Austrian FM

1 → Iran is unhappy with the European Union for failing to honor its commitments under the JCPOA since Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the agreement and slapped illegal sanctions against Iran. Zarif and Schallenberg also discussed expansion of Tehran-Vienna relations and the pressing regional and international developments.

Prior to his visit to Tehran, Schallenberg had said he will be taking a "European message" to Tehran on Saturday and Sunday.

Schallenberg made the remarks after meeting his German counterpart in Berlin and also meeting the EU foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, AP reported on Wednesday.

The Austrian chief diplomat had also said he will travel to Tehran this weekend amid efforts by European countries to keep alive Iran's nuclear agreement with world powers.

Borrell said on February 16 that he will remain committed to keep the JCPOA alive.

"As coordinator I remain committed to listen to all sides and keep the #NuclearDeal alive," he said in a tweet.

Zarif said on February 14 that Iran's decisions to reduce JCPOA commitments are reversible if Europe takes "meaningful" steps in preserving the JCPOA.

Tehran's moves to ramp-up its nuclear program in the past few months are reversible "providing that Europe takes steps that are meaningful," Zarif told reporters on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, according to AP.

Borrell has said that Europe must ensure Iran's benefits from the nuclear deal if it wants the deal to survive.

"If we want the Iran nuclear deal to survive, we need to ensure that Iran benefits if it returns to full compliance," he wrote in an article in the Project Syndicate published on February 8.

Borrell was notified in January by Paris,

London, and Berlin that they had triggered the resolution dispute mechanism.

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

"There is an agreement that more time is needed due to the complexity of the issues involved. The timeline is therefore extended," Borrell said in a statement on January 24.

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.

In his meeting with the Dutch foreign minister on Saturday, President Rouhani said Iran has not closed the path of dialogue with the European Union on the JCPOA and said all must make efforts to preserve the

JCPOA.

"We believe the nuclear deal was beneficial to the region and the world and the United States' action was harmful to all, even the people of the United States. Unfortunately, during the past 21 months since the United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA, the European Union could not take an effective step in line with implementing its commitments," Rouhani complained.

In the meeting with Rouhani, Foreign Minister Blok said it is essential to keep the JCPOA alive as an international agreement and the Netherlands will continue efforts in this respect.

"For this purpose, we should continue dialogue and dialogue can be a solution to problems and differences," the chief diplomat remarked.

He added, "We have told the United States privately and publicly that withdrawal from the JCPOA was not the right thing to do."

Trump administration has no clear strategy toward Iran: professor

"Washington is detached from realities on the ground"

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Edward Wastnidge, political science professor at Open University, believes that the Trump administration has no clear strategy toward Iran and the entire Middle East region.

"21 think this is a clear illustration of the Trump administration's total lack of a coherent strategy on Iran and the wider region," Wastnidge says in an interview the ILNA news agency.

The United States assassinated top Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in a drone strike on January 3 in Baghdad's international airport. The Pentagon announced that the attack took place upon direct order by Donald Trump.

Analysts called the assassination a miscalculation as Iran retaliated by firing dozens of ballistic missiles at a military base in western Iraq housing U.S. service members.

Wastnidge says Trump's behavior "shows how petulant, misguided and incoherent his and his close aides' ideas are when it comes to Iran."

Trump and his lieutenants are "so focused

on seeing Iran as the enemy that they let this cloud every judgment that they make," he notes.

The professor says the assassination of General Soleimani was "a brazen act of international terrorism" ordered by a "reckless and dangerous madman in the White House".

"The assassination of Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian commander was a brazen act of international terrorism carried out by a reckless and dangerous madman in the White House. There is no place for such extra-judicial killings in international affairs."

Wastnidge goes on to say that the assassination showed that U.S. is detached "from the realities on the ground".

"Those in power in the U.S. may like to think that this is a demonstration of its military might and reach, but really it shows just how detached it is from the realities on the ground in the Middle East. To assume that they can carry out such brazen terrorist acts on the soil of a country that they are supposed to count as an ally demonstrates how arrogant they really are," the professor remarks.

The assassination of the Iranian general on the Iraqi territory was a gross violation of the country's sovereignty, the professor asserts.

"This is most definitely a gross violation of Iraqi sovereignty. But the U.S. has been violating the rights of Iraqi citizens since it



became an occupying force there after the fall of Saddam. Although it is an extreme action by the U.S., in a way it isn't that surprising given its history of subjugating other nations.

"It is an act of imperial arrogance but one that may actually mark the end of its oppression. The Iraqi parliament has voted to remove U.S. troops, and Trump now threatens them with sanctions - this confirms their status as an oppressive occupying power. The Iraqi people will re-assert their sovereignty by bravely challenging this imperial mindset."

"The assassination of Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian commander was a brazen act of international terrorism carried out by a reckless and dangerous madman in the White House. There is no place for such extra-judicial killings in international affairs."

Rouhani likens U.S. sanctions to coronavirus

‘Psychological impact of coronavirus and sanctions are worse than their real impact,’ president says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has said the U.S. sanctions are like coronavirus, explaining that the psychological impact of both are worse than their real impact.

“The European Union is expected to stand up to the U.S. illegal measures,” Rouhani said in a meeting with Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg in Tehran on Sunday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations as well as other issues of mutual interest.

Rouhani hailed the friendly Tehran-Vienna relations, saying the two countries have good potential for cooperation, especially in the economic sphere.

He expressed the hope that Austria would try to expand its ties with Iran and would ignore the illegal pressures by the United States.

Heading a delegation, Schallenberg visited Iran late on Saturday to meet with senior Iranian officials.

He held two rounds of talks with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday, discussing bilateral relations as well as the latest developments regarding the Iran nuclear agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In his remarks, Rouhani said the JCPOA can play a role in the establishment of security and peace in the region and the world.

“We still believe that we can save Barjam (JCPOA),” he said.

He denounced the U.S. sanctions that target the import of foodstuff and medicine to Iran, saying, “The imposition of these sanctions is a terrorist measure and we expect the European Union to fulfil its humanitarian duty in this regard.”

The JCPOA was struck between Iran and the five permanent UN Security Council members — the United States, Russia, China, France, and the UK — as well as Germany and the European Union.

Austria and Switzerland were the venues of nearly two years of intensive talks the produced the JCPOA. The historic agreement was



officially signed in Vienna on July 14, 2015.

The accord came under increasing strain ever since U.S. President Donald Trump announced the U.S. withdrawal from it in May 2018 and unleashed the “toughest ever” sanctions against Iran despite worldwide objections.

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

Eventually, in its fifth and final step on January 5, Iran suspended all limits under the JCPOA.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani emphasized that the security of the region must be provided only by regional countries.

“All of our region’s problems have resulted from the illegal interventions of the U.S. in the affairs of this region,” he said.

“We believe the security of this region is important for Europe’s security and also for the security of the energy path of the whole world and Europe,” he added.

He also said his peace initiative, dubbed the Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE), has been welcomed by other countries.

President Rouhani, during his speech at the 74th UN General Assembly, called on regional states to join the Hormuz Peace Endeavor.

“Based upon the historical responsibility of my country in maintaining security, peace, stability, and progress in the Persian Gulf region and Strait of Hormuz, I would like to invite all the countries directly affected by

the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to the ‘Coalition for Hope’, meaning Hormuz Peace Endeavor,” Rouhani said at the summit.

He added, “The Coalition for Hope is based on important principles such as compliance with the goals and principles of the United Nations, mutual respect, equal footing, dialog and understanding, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, inviolability of international borders, the peaceful settlement of all disputes, and more importantly, the two fundamental principles of non-aggression and non-interference in the domestic affairs of each other. The presence of the United Nations is necessary for the creation of an international umbrella in support of the Coalition for Hope.”

Iraq able to defend itself without foreign help: Iranian envoy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iraq is powerful enough to defend itself against any aggression without relying on foreign forces, Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Iraj Masjedi underscored on Saturday.

Masjedi’s remarks came in a ceremony marking martyrdom anniversary of senior cleric Mohammad-Bagher al Hakim and other martyrs of resistance.

Masjedi added that the U.S. military bases in any country are the sources of evil and problems for the host country.

“Iraq is capable of handling its problems and controlling the situation without reliance on other countries, including the U.S.,” the envoy underscored.

He further voiced Tehran’s readiness to assist reconstructing Iraq.

In an interview with the Arabic-language al-Forat news website published on Saturday, Masjedi blamed the U.S. interference and its military deployment in certain countries in the region as the main source of tension and insecurity, noting the U.S. military bases in the region do not benefit any country.

“The U.S. bases do not serve anyone in the region,” Masjedi said.

Masjedi also said Iran is interested in resolving its problems with the Saudis and welcome any mediation, including



by Iraq, in this respect.

Iran’s diplomat in Iraq added that an exit of the U.S. forces in the region will benefit the Americans themselves as well.

Masjedi, meantime, stressed that the Iraqi people should be the only one to decide their own fate, noting that Iran does not dictate its will on others.

Iraq’s parliament last month voted to have the U.S. troops removed from the country, heeding a call from caretaker

Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi to take urgent measures and end the foreign forces’ presence as soon as possible.

On January 5, the Iraqi Parliament passed a resolution to work to end the foreign troop presence in the country in the wake of a U.S. targeted assassination of a top Iranian general and a commander of Iraqi popular forces.

The resolution, which was passed anonymously, instructed the government to cancel a request for military assistance to the U.S.-led coalition, which was issued in response to the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (known as ISIL, ISIS or Daesh) terror group.

“The government commits to revoke its request for assistance from the international coalition fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant due to the end of military operations in Iraq and the achievement of victory,” the resolution read, adding, “The Iraqi government must work to end the presence of any foreign troops on Iraqi soil and prohibit them from using its land, airspace or water for any reason.”

The resolution stated that Iraqi military leadership has to report the number of foreign instructors that are necessary for Iraqi national security. Earlier, Abdul Mahdi had requested that parliament order the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country.

Case of two fallen soldiers to be pursued diplomatically: general

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chief of Iran’s Border Guard Qassem Rezaee has said the case of martyrdom of two border guards in Sistan-Baluchestan Province on Saturday will be pursued through diplomatic channels.

“Pakistan should maintain security at the border and hand over members of the terrorist group to Iran,” Rezaee said, according to Mehr.

“Now the border guards’ martyrdoms will be pursued through diplomatic ways with Pakistan,” he added.

The border guards were killed in clashes with members of a terror outfit in Sistan-Baluchestan.

According to the police, the guards no-

ticed several terrorists who had advanced towards Iran seeking to attack border units on Friday night.

The police said the border guards immediately countered the terrorists’ heavy fire and made them flee to the neighboring country.

The counterattack caused fatalities among members of the terrorist outfit.

Sergeant Major Ahmad Rahmani-Fard and Private Ahmad Tavakoli were killed in the clashes, the police said.

Iran has lost many of its border guards in recent years in clashes with terrorists who attempted to infiltrate the border and carry out attacks. Such clashes are not rare in Sistan-Baluchestan, which borders Afghanistan and Pakistan.



The commander of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force said last week that Saudi Arabia has provided a Pakistan-based terrorist group conducting acts of terror against

the Islamic Republic with at least three plane loads of weapons and equipment.

Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour made the remarks on Tuesday, when he said members of the so-called Jaish ul-Adl terrorist group operating on southeastern borders of Iran are well-armed.

This shows that the terrorists enjoy the “all-out backing of the U.S., Saudi Arabia and their regional allies,” Pakpour said.

The general added that the IRGC Ground Force had dealt a “heavy blow” to the terrorists despite the Saudi support.

The Jaish ul-Adl terrorist group, which is based in Pakistan, has been behind several bomb attacks and kidnappings in the southeast of Iran.

Fragile security and domestic distrust overshadow the Zionist regime

1→ By examining the strategic situation of the Zionist regime, we find that Israel’s position against its neighboring countries, and in particular the states that form the axis of resistance, is challenging and worrying, and the Zionists have had to resort to “the campaign between the wars” strategy. The examination of Israel’s situation in the Middle East and its developments and calculations raises several possibilities and hypotheses.

Assessing the general situation in the region suggests various scenarios regarding increasing risks for the Zionist regime due to the weakness and fragility of the Middle East’s conditions. The first hypothesis is

whether under these conditions the various Israeli coalitions can meet its interests in the Middle East. Definitely not!

On the other hand, a Zionist government-affiliated security polling organization recently stated that public confidence in the Israeli government is less than 30 percent, according to a report by its latest poll of Israeli citizens.

Therefore, the influence of the Zionist regime in the region relies on the United States. If Washington’s influence in the region declines, which seems very close given the shift of calculations in the favor of the axis of resistance, Israel will not be able to change the region’s calculations in its interest.

Gig economy, a real assist for small businesses

1→ It differs from the traditional employment system of full-time workers who rarely change jobs or careers. In the gig economy, the gig (an individual task, job or assignment) is often a small portion of a gig worker’s income. This is a flexible system where small businesses pay when they have work to be done and staff redundancy and costs can be reduced if not eliminated entirely.

With a freelance marketplace, businesses can often maximize flexibility by hiring freelancers who do not need to work during set hours. Frankly, business can-

not easily find the experts who have all the skillsets that are needed to get tasks done. Hiring freelancers through the gig economy platforms positions businesses in a situation where they can have a professional for each and every task. Furthermore, the business can optimize their costs through gig economy when they find a freelancer who is the right fit for the project before they establish a schedule for the task. Additionally, this minimizes the administrative cost and reduces the time needed to hire for some particular job

Over 42% participated in parliamentary polls

1→ Rahmani Fazli also said turnout in Tehran Province was around 25%.

A total of 7,148 candidates, including dozens of religious minorities, ran for parliament.

In capital Tehran, 1,453 candidates competed for 30 seats. Runoff elections will be held on April 17.

In Tehran, all 30 candidates enlisted by the principlist camp won by a large margin.



The list includes former Tehran mayor and former presidential candidate Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf with nearly 1,265,000 votes, followed by Seyed Mostafa Aqa Mirsalim, Morteza Aqa Tehrani, Elyas Naderan, Seyyed Mohsen Dehnavi, Seyed Mohammad Nabavian, Ehsan Khandouzi, Eqbal Shakeri, Abolfazl Amouyee, Bijan Nobaveh Vatan, Mojtaba Tavangar, Fatemeh Rahbar, Mohsen Pirhadi, Rouhollah Izadkhan, Ahmad Naderi, Abdolhossein Rouhol Amini, Seyed Nezameddin Moussavi, Zohreh Elahian, Malek Shariati, Mehdi Sharifian, Seyed Reza Taqavi, Somayyeh Rafiye, Seyed Ali Yazdikhah, Ali Khezrian, Reza Taqipour, Fatemeh Qasempour, Mojtaba Rezakhah, Zohreh Sadat Lajevardi, Gholam Hossein Rezvani and Ezzatollah Akbari Talarposhti.

Earlier on Sunday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei thanked the Iranian nation, who responded positively to the call for participation in the parliamentary elections.

Addressing a session of advanced Islamic Jurisprudence (Kharej-e Fiqh), Ayatollah Khamenei expressed gratitude to the Iranians for their high turnout in the elections, describing it as another great victory for the nation and another failure for the enemies.

Referring to the widespread negative propaganda by the enemies that aimed at disappointing people from taking part in the elections, the Leader said such propaganda had started a few months ago, and the foreign media increased their negative propaganda in the past days under the pretext of the outbreak of a new virus.

Leader added, “The God Almighty has determined to make the Iranian nation victorious despite all those vicious efforts.”

In comments just after voting on Friday, the Leader described the election as a “national celebration” and a day to “restore the civil rights of the nation”.

Ayatollah Yazdi wins at Assembly of Experts polls

TEHRAN (FNA) — Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, the former chairman of Iran’s Assembly of Experts, was reelected as member of the Assembly in its midterm voting on Friday.

Yazdi who was representative of the Central province of Qom’s people for the Assembly of Experts garnered 249,130 votes in the province.

The Assembly of Experts is an 88-member clerical body in Iran tasked with monitoring the Supreme Leader’s affairs. Candidates must have a certificate of Sharia expertise or pass an exam from the Guardian Council on Islamic jurisprudence to run.

The assembly’s election is held every eight years, but a midterm is held every four years.

Tens of millions of Iranians headed to the polls to elect 290 members for the Majlis (the parliament) and 7 members of the Assembly of Experts in its midterm elections on Friday morning.



269 kg of opium seized in Yazd

TEHRAN (MNA) — Iran’s anti-narcotics police forces have busted 269 kilograms of illicit drugs in three separate operations in the central province of Yazd, a provincial police commander announced on Sunday.

Head of the anti-narcotics police of the Yazd province Colonel Ali Afkhami said the police forces have seized 269 kg of opium during the operations, which was destined for Tehran and northern provinces of Iran from southern provinces.



Three smugglers were also captured in this regard and handed to judiciary officials, he added.

According to the police chief, 254 kilograms of crystal have been also confiscated last week in Yazd.

Some 30 tons of illicit drugs have been seized in Yazd Province in the current Iranian year (started March 21).

Iran is at the forefront of the fight against drug trafficking and thousands of Iranian forces have been so far martyred to protect the world from the danger of drugs.

According to reports, in 2018 alone, Iranian forces carried out 1,557 operations against drug traffickers, seizing approximately 807 tons of different types of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	498904.5
IFX	6462.46

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	45,548 rials
GBP	54,428 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$57.94b
WTI	\$53.38/b
OPEC Basket	\$58.94/b
Gold	\$1,645.50/oz
Silver	\$18.56/oz
Platinum	\$979.15/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Over \$7b of loans paid to SMEs, semi-finished projects in 10 months

➔ According to Hemmati, in the mentioned time span, over 280 trillion rials (nearly \$6.6 billion) worth of bank loans were offered to small and medium-sized enterprises and 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) was offered to create new sustainable job opportunities, IRIB reported.



In early May 2019, the official outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans. CBI's plans take two major approaches, one of which is to secure finance for production activities and also to provide the working capital needed for such activities.

Japan urges G20 members with fiscal scope to boost spending

Japan called on G20 countries with fiscal space to ramp up spending to help the global economy weather risks, including the fallout from the coronavirus outbreak, Finance Minister Taro Aso said on Saturday.

The epidemic has cast a cloud over global recovery prospects, overshadowing a meeting of finance leaders of the world's top 20 economies that began in Riyadh on Saturday.

"I told the G20 ministers that the spread of the coronavirus epidemic ... could have a serious effect on the global economy," Aso told reporters after attending the first day of the G20 meeting that included discussions on the world economy.

"I expressed Japan's hope that countries with fiscal space take bold policy measures," he said, without identifying which countries he was referring to.

Germany has been identified as among countries that could ramp up fiscal stimulus to boost growth, though it had long resisted doing so due to concern of allowing lax spending.



A Japanese finance ministry official later said Aso was not singling out Germany in calling for more fiscal spending, and that there were other countries that had scope to spend more.

The "minister just wanted to say Japan has deployed fiscal spending quite a bit, so wants other countries with fiscal room to do the same," the official told reporters.

Speaking about Japan's economy, Aso said it continued to recovery moderately as a tight job market and rising household income offset some of the weaknesses in exports and output.

"At this stage, I don't think risks to Japan's economy have suddenly heightened sharply," Aso said, when asked whether the virus outbreak could push Japan into recession. He declined to comment when asked about the yen's recent weakness.

Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said earlier on Saturday that the yen's recent declines were largely driven by a strong dollar, shrugging off some market views the epidemic is triggering an outflow of funds from Asia.

(Source: reuters.com)

Weekly value of trades at IME up 19%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) rose 19 percent while the amount of trades increased 33 percent during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported by IME's Public Relations Department, 588,310 tons of commodities valued at \$833 million were traded at this market in the past week.

Last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 155,225 tons of various products worth close to \$324 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 139,997 tons of steel, 9,710 tons of copper, 5,200 tons of aluminum, 160 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 18 tons of precious metal concentrates, 140 tons of zinc ingot as well as 22 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 429,549 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$508 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 109,739 tons of bitumen, 127,450 tons of VB feed stock, 80,451 tons of polymer products, 72,200 tons of lube cut oil, 34,282 tons of chemical products, 1,262



tons of base oil, 1,500 tons of slaps waxes, 1,930 tons of insulation, as well as 735 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, the side market of IME experienced trading of 3,536 tons of various commodities.

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

Iran to set up pavilion in Qatar's intl. agriculture exhibit

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran is planning to set up a pavilion at Qatar's 8th International Agricultural Exhibition (AgriteQ), which will be held from March 17 to 21, Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran published on its website.

The exhibit, which will run at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC), is a forefront in providing a full-fledged platform for local and international agriculture stakeholders to exchange expertise, discover trends and developments, and seize business opportunities in this vital sector.

In January, TPO Head Hamid Zadboum announced that the seventh meeting of Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee was planned to be held in Tehran within the coming three months.



He also said that Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari would attend the meeting.

Tehran hosts National Excellence and Progress Award

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The fourth edition of Iran's National Excellence and Progress Award which celebrates achievements and improvements of the country's economic sectors was held in Tehran on Sunday, IRIB reported.

The award ceremony was attended by senior officials including the Head of the Award's Policy Council Mohammad-Javad Irvani and Director of Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam Mohammad Mokhber.

As reported, 150 companies competed for this year's award and the top competitors were honored in the end.

According to the organizers the award is aimed at activating the country's pro-

duction capacities which will be consequently effective in meeting the country's needs and paving the way for exports.

"There are capacities in the country that enabling them is going to boost exports in addition to meeting domestic needs," Irvani said.

Since the re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, the Iranian Government has been taking various measures to develop the country's non-oil economy and in this regard domestic production has been a top priority in the government's policy-making in the past few years.

In this due, the country's top companies are provided with various facilities and advantages like tax exemptions and export incentives.

TEDPIX approaching 500,000 points

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — On Sunday, TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 17,106 points to 498,904, IRNA reported.

In its recent increasing trend, the index is reaching the all-time record high of 500,000 points.

Over 5.687 billion securities valued at 41,704 trillion rials (about \$992.9 million) were traded at TSE on Sunday.

As reported, the first market's index rose 12,719 points and the second market's index climbed 33,512 points.

Tehran Stock Exchange has been ranked as the second best performer among the members of the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) in terms of the main index growth during the 12-month period of December

2018-December 2019.

According to the TSE's office of public relations, TEDPIX registered a growth of 133 percent in the mentioned time span to become the second-best performer after Jamaica Stock Exchange.

Based on the WFE's report, the TSE was the top performer in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

A total of about \$66 billion worth of stocks were traded in TSE during 2019, registering a growth of more than 300 percent compared to the value of trades in the previous year.

According to the WFE report, the total value of trades at TSE reached \$320 billion at the end of 2019, while the total market value of WFE members amounted to more than \$74 trillion.

IMF downgrades China GDP growth outlook to 5.6%

The finance chiefs of the Group of 20 major economies on Saturday agreed to coordinate efforts as the new coronavirus outbreak in China emerges as a potential risk to the global economy.

It is the first G-20 gathering since the outbreak of the pneumonia-causing virus has brought the Chinese economy nearly to a standstill amid efforts to contain the disease. The epidemic has already claimed the lives of more than 2,000 people and has spread to more than two dozen countries including neighboring Japan.

The "spread of the new coronavirus is a public health crisis that could pose a serious risk to the macro economy through the halt in production activities, interruptions of people's movement and cut-off of supply chains," Aso told reporters after the first day of the talks ended in Riyadh.

China did not send its finance minister or central bank governor to the gathering that will continue through Sunday, as the world's second-largest economy struggles to contain the disease that first emerged in central China's city of Wuhan in December.

During the G-20 meeting, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported the 2020 growth forecast of China to be 5.6%, a decrease by 0.4 percentage point from its earlier estimate in January and the lowest level of growth since 1990.

While noting that the uncertainties are "too great to permit reliable forecasting" and many scenarios can play out depending on how quickly the virus is contained, IMF Chief Kristalina Georgieva said that her institution is currently expecting China's economy to "return to normal" in the April-June quarter.

"As a result, the impact on the world economy would be



relatively minor and short-lived," she said at the meeting, according to a statement by the IMF.

■ **The global growth**

In that scenario, global growth would also be affected downward by about 0.1 point, it said.

Japan, the world's third-largest economy, could be affected by slowing exports to China, supply chain disruptions and a drop in the number of Chinese tourists, Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda told reporters ahead of the meeting.

"We must pay attention to these three channels... we don't know when this coronavirus epidemic will come to an end, so the uncertainty remains high," he said. The BOJ chief, however, said the Japanese economy remains on a path of moderate recovery.

Another key topic during the two-day discussions will be international taxation rules for information technology giants such as Apple Inc. and Google LLC's parent Alphabet

India must push for pro-biz policies to reach \$5T economy: CEA

India must fully implement pro-business policies that allow fair competition to push the country's economy towards the \$5 trillion GDP mark, chief economic advisor Krishnamurthy Subramanian said on Saturday.

Speaking to the media at his alma mater IIT-Kanpur, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy Subramanian described pro-business policies as those which enable fair competition while adding that India should stay away from pro-crony policies which help incumbent market players.

Subramanian said the government has been taking several structural reforms and all measures like rate cuts and reforms work with a lag and we should allow time for their

benefits to accrue.

Taking a leaf out of his authored Economic Survey, he said Arthashastra stresses on ethical ways of creating wealth adding that we need to focus on creating trust in the markets as well.

The CEA called for raising governance in the country in the wake of many NBFC related scams without naming any particular one.

"If governance standards have to be increased in the country, there has to be a greater focus on disclosing related-party transactions, the CEA said.

Frauds like the one at non-bank lender DHFL and IL&FS have hit the core of corporate governance in the country of late.

On the government's push for having more

assembly lines in the country, he said that this should not be taken as a substitute to the 'Make in India' program, rather it should be viewed as a complementary aspect that leads to manufacturing.

He cited automobile major Suzuki's case. The company had entered India in 1980s via assembly of passenger cars which led to manufacturing.

Furthermore, he pointed out that recently Economic Survey talked about creation of over four crore jobs via assembling for the global market in India by 2025.

When asked about the Budget's proposal on imposing tariffs on certain imports, he said that a distinction needs to be made between



duties on finished products from those on raw materials or intermediate goods which hurt exports.

He added that India needs to move towards open trade policies on intermediate goods and raw materials to push exports.

(Source: dajjiworld.com)

(Source: asia.nikkei.com)

Private sector accounts for 60% of Iran's power generation

ENERGY TEHRAN — Head desk of Iran's Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution Management Company, known as Tavanir, says 60 percent of the country's power generation capacity has been created by the private sector funding and more investment is being made in this sector.

The energy ministry has been pursuing the construction of over 3,000 megawatts (MW) capacity of new power plants in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19), Mohammad-Hassan Motevalizadeh told IRNA on Sunday.

In early May 2019, the energy ministry had announced that the government was going to inaugurate 22 new power plant units with a total capacity of 3,933 MW in the current Iranian year along with upgrading and increasing the efficiency of existing power plants to add another 461 MW of new capacity.



Motevalizadeh further underlined the implementation of consumption management programs across the country and said, currently there is no problem

regarding the supply of electricity across the country.

During the summer peak period, of the total 29 million household electricity consumers, 24 million subscribers consumed electricity based on the standards set by the energy ministry and even eight million households consumed less than the set level, the official said.

"This year [in the summer] the electricity consumption fell by 4,000 megawatts," he said, adding that "Management plans will continue for the next summer, since this program yielded very good results this summer."

He noted that this winter, the severe cold weather caused the consumption of natural gas to rise sharply and fuel supplies to power plants were limited, but fortunately the problem was resolved.

According to the energy ministry data, Iran's power generation capacity currently stands at nearly 85,000 MW.

Burning down the crude house

By Syed Rashid Husain

"The House is on Fire!", so said the Saudi oil minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman when asked about the impact of the coronavirus on oil. Bloomberg — quoting people who had heard the comments but wanted to stay anonymous as the event was closed to the press — said the prince equated the current scenario with a burning house.

You can either treat it with a garden hose and risk losing the building or call the fire brigade, Prince MBS reportedly said at the closed-door session. Some would say that calling the fire brigade projects panic and it could damage the furniture but doing so would simply be acting responsibly, and you would save the house, the sources quoted the Saudi royal as adding.

Interestingly, this is in sharp contrast to what the prince had said at the outbreak of the virus. The epidemic would carry "very little impact on oil demand", the prince had said then.

The issue is now getting serious by the day, none can deny. Crude markets are faced with demand destruction. Prices are getting a battering and the impact is not expected to dissipate, anytime soon. With each passing day, it is becoming obvious that the outbreak is going to carry long term effects on the oil markets, especially since some oil producers are not ready to cut output further at the moment, as Saudi Arabia has been advocating in recent weeks.

For the last couple of weeks, Riyadh has been pushing for an emergency meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, especially top producer Russia, so as to further deepen production cuts.

Moscow has so far been cool to the Saudi suggestion of a swift response to the virus, despite the OPEC+ technical committee recommendation for an additional collective cut-back of 600,000 barrels per day — on top of the 2.1 million

already being enforced.

■ The OPEC+ meeting

Gloom is setting in. Riyadh has apparently failed to convince Moscow for an emergency OPEC+ meeting to discuss additional output cuts. In all likelihood, the OPEC+ meeting would now take place in March only, as was originally scheduled. So in all probability no counteraction for now.

The toll on oil consumption from the epidemic has been severe. Chinese refineries are throttling back to cope with weak demand, processing 25 percent less oil than the last year. Unofficial Chinese government sources are now conceding that their crude demand is down by about 20 percent or 3m barrels per day (bpd).

In the meantime, the overall economic outlook continues to worsen. Analysts are trimming the growth forecasts for China's 2020 gross domestic product (GDP) to as low as 4.9pc. There are now growing concerns that this sharp decline in Chinese GDP growth, from the estimated 6.1pc in 2019, could trigger a major global slump.

■ The demand growth for crude

For these reasons, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has again cut its 2020 demand growth forecast for crude, shaving 378,000 bpd off its earlier estimate. The decline this quarter would be the first in more than a decade.

The world's third-largest economy, Japan, has also entered a recessionary phase. Japan's exports in January were down for the 14th straight month, as capital spending tumbled. Earlier reports showed that Japan's economy contracted in the last quarter by the most since 2014.

There are indications now that the fourth-largest global economy, Germany, is also teetering on the brink. A sharp decline in China's economy would cause the demand for products and services from Japan and Germany to plunge further, causing their economic malaise to deepen. That



would further impact the global crude demand, pushing the prices even lower.

Media reports are speculating now that Brent could fall to as low as \$50 per barrel. Goldman Sachs Group Inc. has now slashed its 2020 crude-demand forecast, lowering its first-quarter price estimate by 16pc, down by \$10 to \$53 per barrel. That would cause the North American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) to fall to around \$48 per barrel or even lower, as it trades at a discount to Brent.

The commodity strategist of investment bank Damien Courvalin now believes a sudden downturn in demand from Chinese consumers, coupled with a lack of clarity on production cuts from major oil-producing nations, could lead to a build-up of 18m barrels of crude oil in inventory, four times the team's initial estimate. The hangover would persist, it is now getting evident.

While lower crude oil prices may help crude consumers like Pakistan in the shorter run, a shrinking global market would also hamper the prospects of economic growth of the country, one can't escape underlining here.

(Source: dawn.com)

Asian LNG prices rise as buying interest jumps

Asian spot prices for liquefied natural gas (LNG) rose last week after five weeks of declines, as lower prices sparked cargo purchasing interest from various buyers.

The average LNG price for April delivery into northeast Asia was on Friday estimated at around \$3.00 per million British thermal units (mmBtu), some \$0.30 per mmBtu higher than the front-month price last week, which was assessed for March.

"Many players are trying to buy due to low price levels, there are lots of tenders and bids," an LNG trader said. Fears that the coronavirus outbreak in China would weigh on demand are receding, two industry sources said, which has also supported the prices.

Indian buyers who have been active in the market over the past several weeks on an LNG price drop to record low levels, continued issuing spot and multi-cargo tenders. India is estimated to import about 2.36 million tons of LNG in February, record monthly volumes for the South Asian nation.

Among companies which sought cargoes for delivery to India were Reliance Industries with a five-cargo tender for April to June supply, Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC) with April to November delivery eight-cargo tender and Gail India with a



swap tender for three cargoes in February to March.

There were single cargo tenders from India's Gujarat State Petroleum Corp (GSPC) who sought a March cargo and Indian Oil who was looking to buy an April cargo.

Prices in some of the tenders were ranging from around \$2.50/mmBtu to just below \$3.00/mmBtu, several market sources said. Additionally, Qatargas' Al Hamla LNG tanker is currently on route to India's newly commissioned Mundra LNG Terminal to deliver the first commercial cargo at the facility, Kpler said.

Buying interest also came from Jordan's Nepco who was looking for an April cargo, as well as Turkey's Botas who sought three March cargoes.

(Source: energyinfra.com)

The world's unrelenting drive for coal power

Global carbon dioxide emissions held steady for the first time in three years in 2019. The International Energy Agency (IEA) says that was thanks to a switch from coal power to renewables in advanced economies.

The United Nations estimates that the world needs to reduce coal-fired electricity by two-thirds in the next 10 years, to meet the goals of the Paris climate change agreement.

Despite that our pursuit of coal is unrelenting.

Data from endcoal.org shows more than \$50b is being ploughed into coal-powered projects around the world.

China alone is contributing almost \$40b in financing projects from the United States to Australia.

And rather than scaling back on coal-powered electricity, over the last two years China has added 43 gigawatts of capacity - that is as much power produced by Germany's power generators.

Although Germany has said it would eliminate its coal power stations, it is spending more than \$1bn on projects in Greece and India.

Kai Niebert, president of the German League for Nature, Animal and Environmental Protection, tells Al Jazeera that we are at a very "critical phase" from a climate

perspective.

"We are entering a new era where renewables should be on the rise but we are still subsidizing and financing the fossil sector."

The shipping industry is often referred to as the unseen polluter.

About 90 percent of world trade is transported by sea with an estimated \$4 trillion worth of goods being moved every year.

The European Union believes if the industry goes unchecked, it could contribute to a fifth of emissions by 2050.

Shipping now accounts for about 3 percent of global emissions and, like the aviation industry, it is not part of the Paris accord.

"This pollution is happening pretty much at the time out in the deep sea, away from the prying eyes of the public," Gavin Allwright, secretary of the International Windship Association, explains.

But Allwright says although shipping can be considered an unseen polluter, it moves a majority of world trade and is probably the most efficient of all the modes of transport.

Now there are initiatives under way, where batteries are being used to help power ships and wind power is being considered as an alternative.

(Source: aljazeera.com)



To analyze the growth prospects of the market from the future perspective, market opportunities, competitive landscape, product offerings, market investments and other market matrices

In the report, we have covered two proprietary models, the FPNV Positioning Matrix and Competitive Strategic Window.

The FPNV Positioning Matrix analyses the competitive market place for the players in terms of product satisfaction and business strategy they adopt to sustain in the energy storage market.

The Competitive Strategic Window analyses the competitive landscape in terms of markets, applications, and geographies.

The positioning of the energy storage market vendors in FPNV Positioning Matrix are determined by Business Strategy (Business Growth, Industry Coverage, Financial Viability, and Channel Support) and Product Satisfaction (Value for Money, Ease of Use, Product Features, and Customer Support) and placed into four quadrants (F: Forefront, P: Pathfinders, N: Niche, and V: Vital).

(Source: mathematicexperts.com)

Solar panels to provide energy efficiency, security at humane society, Okazaki says

The road is reduced to one lane near Kwik Trip in Lake Mills while a crew from Forest Construction repairs a forced sanitary line in the area. Avoid the area if possible. The city said in a Facebook post, the "main break resulted in sewage being deposited on the street surface. The spill is contained and repairs to the main will be completed on February 20.

There is no known threat to public drinking water and people should be aware sewage may get on vehicles driving through this area. Pedestrians walking through this area should also be aware to clean footwear before entering their homes."

In recent years, the price of solar panels has come down significantly, Okazaki said, meaning that the initial investment the Humane Society will have to make to install the panels will turn into an economic benefit in a shorter time than previously predicted.

Currently, Okazaki said, the shelter faces energy bills averaging \$1,500 a month, noting that the nonprofit shelter spends around \$20,000 a year on electricity alone to warm the kennels, heat the food and power the work staff and volunteers do with the animals.

"This should generate around 75 percent of our electric power," Okazaki said, estimating the project will generate more than \$240,000 in saved costs over the next 25 years.

The "most incredible benefit we'll see from this project is that all of the savings in utility costs can immediately go back into caring for our animals," he added.

As soon as work can start in the spring, Okazaki said, the Humane Society will begin installation of the 62.1-kilowatt system, which will be comprised of 180 solar panels, all on the roof of the existing shelter.

■ The preliminary infrastructure work

The shelter director said that the society made sure it employed "due diligence" in the lead-up to the project. That having been done, preliminary infrastructure work could begin within the month, with actual installation slated in May.

All of the panels will be located on the roof of the existing building, angled and situated to get the maximum amount of sunlight. They will be facing the back side of the building, so there will be no reflections onto the road or parking area.

Meanwhile, using roof space for the solar panels preserves the grounds of the 6.2-acre property for other uses, including additional dog runs.

The project carries a total budget of \$120,000, which comes to 1.9 cents per watt, Okazaki said.

"If the shelter paid for this project entirely out-of-pocket, it's projected to take a little less than 10 years to make a profit on it," Okazaki said. "However, we'll be well ahead of that, thanks to the support of the Fort Atkinson Community Foundation and other donors."



The Fort Atkinson Community Foundation is the single biggest backer of the project, having pledged a \$60,000 matching grant. That means that the foundation will cover up to half of the project cost, providing that other donations can be secured to cover the other half.

Other organizations and individuals have begun stepping forward with smaller donations toward the effort, and the Humane Society is working on a link which will allow people to donate directly from its web page, located at HSJC-wis.com.

Other major donors that have stepped forward thus far include the Lake Mills Area Community Foundation and the Solar for Good Foundation. Focus on Energy, a consortium of Wisconsin utility companies, also is supporting the project.

"We are looking to raise the rest from small donors," Okazaki said, noting that about \$20,000 still is needed, and excess contributions will go directly to support animal care.

The entire project has come together pretty quickly, he said. How swiftly it proceeds this spring will be dependent, as always, on weather conditions. Meanwhile, the associated fundraising campaign will continue until all of the funds are secured.

■ The solar installation

Supplying the panels will be Speed Solar of Deerfield, while Wes Engineering of Madison will oversee the installation.

While the main goal of the project is to increase the shelter's energy efficiency, the initiative will have side benefits, as well, Okazaki said. One of these will be disaster preparedness.

This solar system will allow the shelter to generate power even if the grid goes down, he said.

It also will provide the opportunity for the shelter to play a greater role in assisting local residents and their pets in the event of a disaster.

"We see this solar project as a major piece of our effort to serve the community in the event of a natural disaster," he said.

"We have approached the Jefferson County Emergency Management Office to offer our building as a sheltering site for families with pets who need to evacuate," Okazaki said.

Another obvious benefit is that the project will help reduce the local shelter's carbon footprint, saving more than 1,700 tons of carbon dioxide emissions. That's equal to about 107,300 miles driven by an average passenger vehicle each year for 40 years.

Breaking down the costs to show how each individual donation makes a difference, Okazaki noted that \$60 covers the cost to install one panel. A donation of \$100 covers the cost of an optimizer for two panels. Meanwhile, \$205 covers the cost of one photovoltaic panel.

For more information on the project, corporate sponsorship, or donation opportunities, people may contact Okazaki at Jeff@HSJC-wis.com or by phone at (920) 674-2048. Checks written to "HSJC" may be sent to W6127 Kiesling Road, Jefferson, WI, 53539.

Serving communities since 1922, the Humane Society of Jefferson County helps save, serve and provide "forever homes" to more than 1,000 animals in need each year.

(Source: hngnews.com)

With CAGR 12.58%, Energy Storage Market is booming worldwide

The latest report on Global Energy Storage Market now available at Report Ocean, enumerates information about the industry in terms of market share, market size, revenue forecasts, and regional outlook of the energy storage market. The report further illustrates competitive insights of key players in the business vertical followed by an overview of their diverse portfolios and growth strategies.

The Global Energy Storage Market is expected to grow from D 71,831.56 Millions in 2018 to D 164,704.67 Millions by the end of 2025 at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.58%.

The energy storage market report is a comprehensive study, focusing on market influencing factors, competitive landscape, data, trends, information, and exclusive vital

statistics of the market.

The market study report was prepared with the major objective of outlining the market sizes that include market segments and sub-segments.

The market research report was compiled considering fix time period that is known as forecast period for the study. The report consists of both qualitative and quantitative methods of study along with descriptive analysis related to various geographies and various market segmentations.

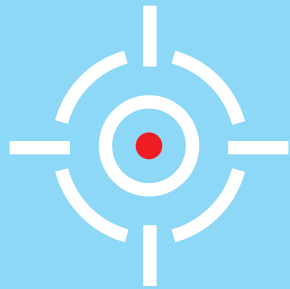
■ Market investments

Also, the market research report includes the detailed study of various elements of the market such as various market growth drivers and market challenges, these elements analyze the market from different angles.

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Second Announcement

Aria Banader Iranian Chabahar
Marine and Port Services Development Company
International Public Re-Tender Notice

Tender Subject: Manufacturing, Shipment, Training and Delivery of Four Units of Ship to Shore Gantry Crane (STS) for Shahid Beheshti Port of Chabahar No. PE/1014/98

It is hereby notified that Aria Banader Iranian Chabahar Marine and Port Services Development Company as the company in charge of procuring equipment for phase 1 of Shahid Beheshti Port of Chabahar development plan is calling for tenders (re-tender) for the international public tender of Manufacturing, Shipment, Training and Delivery of the above mentioned equipment in a two-stage manner, after the quality assessment.

All manufacturers with the experience of manufacturing the above-mentioned equipment are invited to receive the CD containing the quality assessment forms and the tender documents by presenting a written introduction letter and the original bank receipt of 5,000,000 IR Rials deposited to the bank account no. 0203568843007 in the name of Aria Banader Iranian Chabahar Marine and Port Services Development Company with Bank Day, at the latest two weeks after the date of the first announcement at the below address.

The deadline for submitting the documents, evidences and the completed quality assessment forms is at the latest by Wednesday, April 08, 2020; 10:00 A.M. (local time).

- Purchase and delivery address of the tender documents:
No. 40, Kish St., Nelson Mandela Blvd., Tehran, IRAN, Postal Code: 1518814111, Phone: +982188190677-9, FAX: +982188190679, Email Address: m.niapak@abiports.com.

- To keep the date of the documents delivery, any question is allowed until 72 hours before the deadline of the documents delivery.

- All manufacturers are obliged to abide by the Maximum Utilization of Local Capabilities Law.

- The cost of the advertising is undertaken by the tender winner.

- After the quality assessment the qualified companies will be invited to provide the technical and commercial documents.



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

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

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

TEHRAN, Feb. 20 (MNA) -- Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh held a phone

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- Senior Iranian officials cast vote in ballot box
- All countries except 3 terrorist regimes in favor of...
- Islamic Revolution Leader casts his vote in ballot...
- Polls open across Iran
- CAO rejects rumors on continuation of Iran-China flights
- Hatami hails Iran aviation efforts to neutralize sanctions
- Iran's envoy, OPEC secretary-general discuss oil market
- Three more patients tested positive for coronavirus...

Interview

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Foreign students in Qom mark anniversary of Islamic Revolution

By Huda Z

QOM — ‘We have witnessed in the last forty years that the Islamic Revolution has grown from a green sapling into a mighty strong tree which no storm can ever uproot,’ said Sayyid Shahryar Naqvi facing an assembly of international seminary students from more than a dozen countries, including those from the US, UK, Australia and Canada.

On Thursday, 21st February and almost a week after massive rallies were taken out across the country to mark 41 years of the Islamic Revolution, an impressive event was organized in Imam Sadeq Assembly by Students of Qom (SOQ), an umbrella group of non-Iranian Howza students and revolutionary activists living and studying in the holy city of Qom.

Apart from organizing educational and ideological programs to empower the seminarians of Qom, SOQ is also active in the social and welfare fields, both within and outside Iran.

The program started with guests making their grand entry through the main gate of the Imam Sadeq Assembly, passing through the camouflage-patterned pavilion marked with select verses of the Holy Qur'an and short statements in honor of the martyrs of Islam.

They were then received by volunteers who welcomed them and presented them a Keffiyeh and a Qasem Soleimani badge each, before escorting them in. As the guests made their way to the auditorium, they passed by catchy posters of the Baghdad Airport Attack martyrs and call-to-action banners that talked about the on-going media and psychological war inflicted on the Islamic Republic. While the said posters and banners beautifully decorated the internal walls of the Imam Sadeq Assembly, the flags of the US and Israel made perfect floor mats.

The program was held in English language and was open to anyone who spoke and understood the language. There were separate seating arrangements for men and women, as well as a kids' play area where the minor attendees were engaged by the volunteers in educational activities and games with a focus on the Islamic Revolution. It took the efforts of over thirty-five volunteers to make the event a grand success.

The event was emceed by Sayyid Muzzamil Zaidi from the US and began exactly at 1900 hours with beautiful recitations of Holy Qur'an and Ziyarat Ashura, followed by the recitation of a few verses of inspirational poetry by Sayyid Raza Jafri.

‘Never knew that the mystics lead the prayer in the field; that their ink is a weapon and their chests are a shield,’ recited poet Jafri of Texas, US from the podium as stills of martyrs Qasem Soleimani, Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, Emad Moghniyeh and others adorned the screen.

The poetry recital was followed by meaningful speeches by well-known scholars and speakers including Sayyid Shahryar Naqvi from the US and Shaykh Farokh Sekaleshfah, a British-born Shia cleric known for his lectures on ethics and spirituality.

Shaykh Sekaleshfah focused his speech on the spiritual side of being a revolutionary while Sayyid Naqvi talked about the ‘media war’ that has been imposed on the Islamic Republic by the mainstream media outlets and has made Iran the target of their propaganda and lies ever since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The speeches were separated from one another with the presentation of informative and inspirational video clips about the Islamic Revolution, Haj Qasem Soleimani and his comrades and what they stood for. One such clip was an



animated reenactment of the 3rd February Baghdad Airport Terrorist Attack by the US Army and its aftermath, which left the audience in tears. Another one was an anthem that began with the words ‘Hey US! You started, we will end it!’ and fueled the energies of the viewers as it called for the revenge of the killing of Haj Qasem Soleimani and his comrades.

Sayyid Haydar Hasanayn from UK, one of the notable speakers at the event, spoke about the duties of a Muslim in the present era with respect to the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution.

‘Dear brothers and sisters, the situation that we find the world around us [in] affects our takleef (Islamic duty), it changes our takleef... If Allah expects you to be in the battle and you are on your prayer mat, you won't reach Allah; that prayer won't elevate you,’ remarked Hasanayn.

‘The Islamic Revolution forced the world to acknowledge us. Before the Islamic Revolution, what were the followers of Ahlulbayt known for except for cutting themselves with blades and spilling their own blood? But after the Islamic Revolution it is the followers of Ahlulbayt who are known, throughout the world, by all of humanity to be leading the resistance against the Istikbaar (arrogant powers); to be the only ones to stand up against the US and the bullying Zionist regime. Isn't this incredible?’

Sayyid Hasanayn emphasized that although the Islamic Republic and the revolutionaries had to deal with military, economic, media and psychological wars, they still emerged victorious. He said that it was important for Muslims all over the world to recognize their duty to defend the Islamic Revolution and uphold the revolutionary spirit in order to stay victorious over the many different tactics of the enemies of Islam and Muslims.

Shaykh Ali, the director of Islamic Pulse and Pure Stream Media and one of the key speakers at the event, spoke about the Islamic Revolution and the formation of an Islamic civilization. He began his speech by congratulating the audience on the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and calling it the ‘practical implementation of the pure

Mohammedan Islam’ and ‘the manifestation of the system of Wilayat al-Faqih’ which the enemies conspired against ever since its inception.

In his speech of about fifteen minutes, he explored the pristine principles of the Islamic Revolution. He emphasized that it is essential to understand and uphold the principles on which the Islamic Revolution stood; namely the formation of a monotheistic Islamic society, the system of Divine Justice, spirituality and ethics, success in both worlds, and resistance against the arrogant powers.

‘This very principle of resistance against the arrogant powers is the global message of the Islamic Revolution,’ remarked Shaykh Ali.

Muzaffar Abbas Haydar, the star of three popular Islamic Pulse series by the names of Hawza Life, Backfire and BisKit, also had his share of the stage in which he presented a lengthy and elaborate poem on the current affairs of the Muslim Ummah which left the audience admiring the content as well as artistic arrangement of words and phrases.

‘The collective dream, brothers and sisters, of all of us is a better world. It is our life's mission and vision to make it happen; our ambition is to bring the caliphate of the Mahdi (ajtf) into formation,’ he recited.

Among the special guests included the ambassador of Yemen in Tehran and the official representative of Ansarallah – Adnan Qasim Ali Qafalah. Grand Ayatollah Mohsen Araki, a senior cleric and a member of the Assembly of Experts, also attended and stayed in the event as the guest of honor and later distributed awards to social media activists and content creators whom Shaykh Ali rightly called the ‘officers of the media war.’

The program ended with the audience's loud chants of Death to America, Death to Israel and Labbayk Ya Khamenei.

This event, organized by the international community residing in Qom, proved that the Islamic Revolution of 1979 is not limited to Iran or the Iranians; rather it is a stream of purity and a call for Islamic unity that originated in Iran four decades ago and has been taking whole world by the storm.

41st anniversary of Iran’s Islamic Revolution victory commemorated in Algeria

By Hana Saada

ALGERIA — A reception ceremony was held, on Wednesday in Algiers, by Iran's Embassy to Algeria so as to celebrate the 41st victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

With strong patriotic fervor, the anthems of the two countries, namely, Algeria and Iran were performed followed by the applause of the attendees.

Hailing Iran's role in fighting terrorism, the newly-appointed Iranian Ambassador to Algeria, Hossein Mashalchizadeh, said, in his address on this occasion, that his country has played a basic part and a pivotal role in defeating the evil phenomenon and is still adhering its commitment to fight terrorism.

Coinciding with the national Shahid day in Algeria, the Iranian Envoy paid tribute to the late Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), who was martyred with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), in US airstrikes in the Iraqi capital Baghdad early on Friday, January, 3rd, hailing his national resilience against four decades of US pressure and sanctions against Iran.

The Ambassador highlighted that at the height of ISIL's terror campaign, Soleimani's pictures on the ground and the frontlines in both Iraq and Syria were widely spread across social networks and media, illustrating his assistance in different stages of wars.



‘Soleimani has been praised by both his enemies and foes as a pivotal military tactician and strategist,’ he said, adding that Soleimani's martyrdom will make Iran more decisive to resist America's expansionism and to defend our Islamic values.

Regarding diplomatic ties, the official welcomed both countries long-standing and exceptional relations in all spheres, mentioning the frequent official visits paid by high-ranking officials and parliamentarians from both sides for the sake to give new prospects so as to provide further impetus and substance to both countries ties and cooperation.

In this aspect, the Iranian Envoy highlighted the friendly and brotherly relations between Tehran and Algiers, saying the bonds are based on long-term friendship and close cooperation.

The Diplomat said that both countries are forerunners in tackling terrorism and extremism, calling for exerting more efforts so as to nip these scourges from the bud.

As regards economy, His Excellency highlighted that the level of the economic exchange between both countries has multiplied, expressing his country's readiness to further give a new impetus to economic cooperation with Algeria.

The Iranian ambassador referred to his country's potentials in different fields and also its industrial and technology advancements, mentioning that Iran has achieved self sufficiency in different fields.

In addition, the official stated that Iran, despite the enemies' plots, has been trying to establish cordial relations with all global countries based on mutual respect and non interference in the internal affairs of other states.

About the issues related to the World of Islam, the diplomat said the 'Zionist regime is the number one enemy of the Islamic Ummah, urging Muslims to give the Palestinian cause highest priority.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, an exhibition of handicrafts and paintings of hand-made carpets was held with a view to shed light on Iranian culture and arts.

Dignitaries, including Algerian ministers, namely; the Minister of Higher Education, Chems Eddine Chitour, and Energy Minister Mohamed Arkab, representing the President of the Republic, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, members of parliament, heads of political parties, ambassadors, academic and cultural figures and Algerians residing in Algeria have attended this ceremony held at the International Centre for Conferences.

It is worth recalling that the Islamic Revolution ended Pahlavi rule in 1979 and established the Islamic Republic in the country.

Iran and Algeria hold regular talks on bilateral, regional and international issues. Regular meetings between the two foreign ministries' officials, high-ranked delegations within the framework of relations and regular consultations are taking place. Their brotherly relations are deeply rooted and go back to the 1960s. Soon after Algeria's independence from France in 1962, Iran was among the first countries to recognize it as an independent nation, opening the Iranian embassy in autumn of 1964, in Algiers.

Following the victory of 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, bilateral ties between the two nations developed and the two countries intensified meetings and exchanges culminating in the adoption of similar stances on an array of international issues, particularly the problems faced by the World of Islam like the ones in Palestine and Syria. Algeria is one of countries which have independent positions close to those of Iran on many issues, including in terms of its political literature.

Tehran and Algiers maintain common approaches to regional and international issues. Algeria opposed the Arab League members on giving the Syrian seat in the League to the Syrian opposition, and Algiers resisted taking any kind of military action in Syria, and as for Hezbollah and Hamas, Algeria objected putting their names on the terrorist group list in the Arab League.

Since the very beginning of the nuclear talks and even before the conclusion of the JCPOA, Algeria was positive about Iran's peaceful nuclear activities and constantly and explicitly defended Iran's right in international bodies. Following the implementation of the nuclear deal finalized by Iran and six world powers in July 2015, known as the JCPOA, Algeria considered the deal as an important stage in the process of the settlement of the tension and crisis situations, in a view to preserving international peace and security, and development in the benefit of all the peoples.

Algiers had, in 2015, received the first vice president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Eshaq Jahangiri, just after expressing refusal to join the Saudi coalition. The beginning of a deeper cooperation between the two countries is, therefore, also a clear message sent to Riyadh: Algiers wants to diversify its cooperation with Iran, avoiding getting into a diplomatic game that would be dictated by the Americans. Iran's Hassan Rouhani said the two countries have always backed each other in difficult times and today, whereas the Algerian side stressed that Tehran-Algiers relations would witness further expansion in all domains during the new Algerian administration's tenure.

We should be the voice of child victims of terrorism and spread it around the world

By Mohammad Bahrapoor

TEHRAN - Ms. Manijeh Safiyari, is crippled in a terrorist attack, studied Health management in Tehran University, has national honors and medals in Darts and is representative of Children's International Movement for Children in Iran.

In February of the 1985, a student went with her mom to the Bazar in Tehran. A strong explosion destroyed her childhood joy and ruined her first visit of Bazar. After losing one her foot, the crippled child by devils raised and started sports and gained honors in Darts and tracks & fields. She didn't stop facing with effects of evildoers' on her soul and body and after decades went to international congress victims of terrorism in Nice to be representative for Children's movement for Children in Iran and be voice of the child victims of terrorism and spread their voice to the guests in 8th congress of victims of terrorism in Nice, France.

International affairs section of ADVTNGO had interview with her in the place of congress. Full text of that interview can be read here.

■ Introduce yourself and please tell us about your aim in presenting in this congress?

A: I am Manijeh Safiyari, and I have lost one of my feet in a terrorist incident, and have participated in this international congress with other Iranian victims of terrorism to spread voice of Iranian victims of terrorism to other nations and use others' experience. Wish these sessions be a step toward creating global program to curb and uproot terrorism. Surly it is a hard task but accessible. We urge all friends of children, human rights, peace and security to help us in reaching to these ends in this global village.

■ What is 8th international congress of victims of terrorism?

A: International federation of victims of terrorism was initiated in 16 September 2011 in San Pablo University as an international center of victims of terrorism. It is initiative by Spanish Prince and it is as a hub for victims of terrorism in Europe and other countries. 17 associations are members of this federation and around 40 countries participate in its conferences. Its headquarters are in Spain.



Up to now we have 7 conferences and its 7th conference was in France, 2011.

■ What were the effects of terrorism on your life?

A: I was a student when terrorism entered in my life by a huge explosion in Bazar of Tehran and took one of my foot, injured my beloved mom. It was first time I went to Bazar with my mom and many wishes but an explosion in Naser Khosro Street changed everything. I and my mother had been left unconscious and in blood and smoke. When I woke up I was weak but started searching for my mom. I found her sunk in blood. I couldn't stand and have no idea about what has been happened. My right foot was cut up to the knee and my left foot was full of particles. Now and after three decades from that event it is so painful for me to remember. But what should I do. Our narrative can reduce pains of other victims and stop further terrorist events.

But nothing can describe the depth of terrorist injuries on the society.

Terrorism is not about an event or a person but a narration about a destructive story in an era that has effects on a world and cannot

be forgotten.

It is useful to mention to the story of my two friends, Abouzar and Zahra Saeidi. They are deaf since birth and in 1985, Monafeqin [MKO terrorists] martyred their father in a ambush. Their deafness has been a very big problem for expressing their pains in loss of their father. They were 5 and 6 years when saw bloody body of their father near his dentistry and their grief hindered them from a normal life. Nothing can be a genuine narrative of their pain.

■ How you have defeated your problems?

A: That accident in my childhood and near my mom increased my problems

Injuries on children's souls are without cure. Children are more sensitive and vulnerable than adults. Effects of crimes are with them in their whole life and may be transferred to next generations.

I could synchronize myself by exercising and alleviate my problems. For example, I do exercise for crippled persons. Problems are always present and society should be active to solve them, specially problems in child victims and their families.

■ What do you do in France?

A: Terrorism has created massive and permanent challenges in our region and its evil effects have crippled the life of millions. Some of them are present till to their lives' end. On the other hand, the only way for victims in this situation of non-punishment toward plotters behind the scenes of terrorism, is being active to be heard. my idea of being heard is that world society be convinced about human society problems by being terrorism as a tool.

We want from international organization, to act, around the axis of UN, in confrontation to plotters behind the scenes of this evil phenomenon. This congress is the best opportunity for hearing of the voices of victims of terrorism. This sort of conferences can be useful for sympathy, sharing and solving the problems of victims. I recited a sentence of final statement for this congress that we want from international organizations to create a special committee comprised of victims of terrorism that give them a voice to be heard and so they can offer their proposals in fight against terrorism. I emphasize on this idea of being heard.

Hearing of the voices of victims of terrorism can prevent repeating of catastrophes and can alleviate the bitterness of injuries inflicted on victims of terrorism.

■ Please tell us about Children's Movement for Children?

A: Children's Movement for Children is a proposal by Lucy Smith, a former member of UN's The Committee on the Rights of the Child, and initiated in 2014, as a children association.

The project of lawsuit for child victims of terror is an initiative by this movement for defending rights of children that offered in 2017 and tries support inflicted children by terrorism and with the power of themselves.

■ Any comment at the end ...

A: Grieves of children from extremism and violence transfer inter-generations and have inflicted humanity by a permanent pain.

What increases this pain is using of terrorism as a tool by main plotters and causes of these evils and crimes against children and being unaccountable.

Iran museums, historical sites shut down amid fears of virus outbreak

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran has temporarily closed cultural heritage museums and historical sites in 15 provinces in a preventive measure amid fears of coronavirus outbreak.

“Cultural heritage museums and historical sites will be closed (as of today) until the end of the week (February 28) in 15 provinces, which face the risk of virus outbreak,” ILNA quoted Mohammadreza Kargar, the director of museums and historical properties at the tourism ministry, as saying on Sunday.



The reopening is pending further notice and may be prolonged to next weeks, the official noted.

Tehran, Alborz, East Azarbaijan, Isfahan, Lorestan, Gilan, Markazi, Golestan, Zanjan, Hamedan, Qazvin, Kordestan, Semnan, Kermanshah are amongst provinces so far coronavirus infections has been emerged, the report said.

Iranian government has also closed down schools and religious seminaries in the holy city of Qom, where the virus first killed two elderly patients last week. Schools in Tehran and four other cities were closed as well, starting Sunday for two days.

Some 25 million people toured museums and other heritage sites (which have entry fees and are affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism Handicrafts) during the past year (1397), Kargar announced last May.

Taiwan raises travel alert for South Korea over coronavirus outbreak

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) on Sunday issued a yellow travel alert for South Korea, warning travelers to exercise extra caution and advising potential visitors to reconsider their plans, as the number of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in the neighboring country continued to surge.

The yellow alert is the third-highest level in MOFA's four-tier warning system, which consists of gray, yellow, orange and red, in order of severity.

According to MOFA, South Korea has reported 556 cases of COVID-19 to date, 70 percent of which are confirmed or suspected indigenous cases.

Cluster infections linked to a large church and a hospital near the city of Daegu have contributed to the spike in cases in South Korea, and there have been numerous cases in which the source of infection could not be determined, according to MOFA.

The ministry issued the warning after Taiwan's Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) on Saturday raised its travel alert for South Korea to Level 2, the second-highest in its three-level system.

Travelers are advised to remain vigilant and to take safety precautions while in South Korea, the CECC said.

(Source: Focus Taiwan)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Kinabalu Park

Located in the State of Sabah, Malaysia, on the northern end of the island of Borneo, Kinabalu Park World Heritage property covers 75,370 ha.

Dominated by Mount Kinabalu (4,095m), the highest mountain between the Himalayas and New Guinea, it holds a distinctive position for the biota of Southeast Asia.



Geologically, Kinabalu Park is a granite intrusion formed 15 million years ago and thrust upward one million years ago by tectonic movements and shaped by forces that continue to define its landscape. Despite its geological youth it is exceptionally high in species with living relics of natural vegetation remaining, over 93% of the Park area.

The altitudinal range of the property, 152m – 4,095m, presents a wide array of habitats from rich tropical lowland and hill rainforest (35% of the park) to tropical montane forest (37%), and sub-alpine forest and scrub at the highest elevations.

Ultramafic (serpentine) rocks cover about 16% of the park and have vegetation specific to this substrate. The property has been identified as a Centre of Plant Diversity for Southeast Asia; it contains representatives from at least half of all Borneo's plant species and is exceptionally rich in species with elements from the Himalayas, China, Australia, Malaysia, and pan tropical floras.

With records of half of all Borneo's birds, mammals and amphibian species and two-thirds of all Bornean reptiles the property is both species-rich and an important center for endemism.

(Source: UNESCO)

History of human settlement in Iran's Qumis may go far deeper than thought

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A senior Iranian archaeologist has said that the history of human settlement in Shahr-e Qumis may go far deeper in time from what previously excavations suggested decades ago.

On Sunday, Kourosh Roustaei, who heads a fresh round of survey at the site situated near Damghan, north-central Iran, noted, “According to preliminary observations, this pre-historic settlement dates from the second half of the fifth millennium BC to the first half of the fourth millennium BC, which is in accordance with the cultural sequence known for the northeast region of the Iranian plateau...,” ISNA reported.

“However, since the excavations in all areas of this huge site have not been completed yet, it is likely that evidence for other pre-historic stages to come to light during subsequent rounds of excavations.”

Being conducted under the supervision of Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, the latest survey aims to document archaeological remains of the site by the means of remote sensing and field observations in order to identify the reasons for the formation of the site as a goal of this multi-year project.

Shahr-e Qumis is said to be once one of capitals of the Parthian Empire (247 BC – 224 CE).

“The impact of erosion factors on the site, its ‘water supply system’ and ‘the nature of its settlements during pre-historical times’ will be examined during the following seasons of the study [in Shahr-e Qumis],” Roustaei added.



Today, the plain of Shahr-e Qumis is absolutely deserted, but everywhere, one can see the remains of an old city, which was, according to the Greek author Appian of Alexandria, founded by the Seleucid king Seleucus I Nicator, according to Livius.org; a website on ancient history written and maintained since 1996 by the Dutch

historian Jona Lendering.

Shahr-e Qumis comprises several ancient mounds. Only a few of them have been properly excavated, and the area between them has mostly been ignored. The field of shards at Shahr-e Qumis measures some 7 by 4 kilometers or 28 square kilometers, which suggests that

it must have boasted tens of thousands of inhabitants.

Some say that Alexander the Great stopped here in Shahr-e Qumis in the summer of 330 BC and it became part of the Seleucid Empire after his death. Qumis was destroyed by an earthquake in 856 CE, and it was probably abandoned arward.

Iranian tour guides ‘messengers of peace and friendship’: minister

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran's tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan has honored tour guides as messengers of Iranian peace and friendship to the world, saying they play a very strategic role when it comes to assess quality of the tours and tourist satisfaction.

He made the remarks in a statement issued on Saturday to mark the International Tourist Guide Day, which is globally celebrated of February 21.

“I congratulate this day to the hard-working tour guides and operators who are true ambassadors and messengers of Iranian peace and friendship to the world.”

“Choosing a day for tourism guides on the global calendar determines what a valuable role the profession has in the tourism industry and among the world's most important businesses,” CHTN quoted Mounesan as saying.



“In fact, tour guides play a very strategic and fundamental role in the quality of tours and tourist satisfaction. Yet, their expertise and their deeds determine the

viability and continuity of tourism for a [local] community and also represents the characteristics of a culture to international travelers,” the minister explained.

Answers to travelers’ questions about the coronavirus

■ **I have a trip planned that is not to Asia. Is it safe to go?**

Readers asked about destinations thousands of miles from Wuhan, China, where the coronavirus outbreak started, including Ireland, Argentina and Vancouver (the last city made one traveler nervous because of its close ties to China).

Dr. Eisenman and other doctors said that from a medical standpoint, there isn't any current reason to skip a trip to a country where few or no cases of the coronavirus have been reported.

“You have to evaluate your trip week to week, if not day to day,” said Bernard Camins, medical director for infection prevention at the Mount Sinai Health System. “But if you're looking at a place where there are no cases, there's no question you should continue on your trip.” (Dr. Camins has trips to Europe planned for this spring and is not canceling.)

The question becomes more difficult the closer to the heart of the outbreak you are planning to travel, Dr. Camins said. In places like Singapore and Thailand, there have been cases, but there is no evidence that there is a lot of person-to-person transmission and the virus doesn't seem to be out of control, he said. “The chances of you running into a person with it there is low, unless you're a health care professional and you're going to work in a hospital,” he said.

He added: “The golden rule for travel right now should be this: If you're the one who is sick, stay home, do not travel, wear a mask, even for the flu.”

Steve Kuriga, an independent travel adviser at Cadence, a San Diego agency affiliated with the Virtuoso network said, “It's a personal decision, but unless you're

going through an infected area I don't see any reason to put off your travels.”

Mr. Kuriga added that he has clients who are looking at South America as an alternative to Asia for an upcoming trip because no cases of COVID-19 have been reported there.

■ **I have a trip planned to Vietnam in April, what is the situation in that country?**

There have been 16 confirmed infections, no deaths, 14 recoveries and 1,538 quarantined cases in Vietnam. The country's prime minister officially declared COVID-19 an epidemic in Vietnam on Feb. 1, and authorities closed land borders with China, indefinitely stopped flights to and from China, and instituted a 14-day quarantine for anyone coming from affected areas in China. The government is also encouraging people to avoid public gatherings at the moment.

Although some cities that have registered infections have closed tourist attractions and heritage sites, the majority are still open to the public. Many festivals and events are going on as planned, but others have been postponed. For a detailed list, consult Vietnam's tourism site, which has detailed information about traveling to the country.

■ **What about Cambodia?**

Until recently, Cambodia said it had only one case of the coronavirus and Prime Minister Hun Sen made a point of not wearing a surgical mask in public. But then a passenger on the Westerdam, a Holland America Line boat that had been blocked from docking in five countries over fear of the virus, was diagnosed with COVID-19 disease after disembarking from the ship in Sihanoukville, throwing into question how well the virus was being contained.

Dr. Eisenman and other doctors said that from a medical standpoint, there isn't any current reason to skip a trip to a country where few or no cases of the coronavirus have been reported.

The U.S. State Department has a Level 1 warning about traveling to Cambodia, which means that in its assessment there is currently no danger in traveling to the country. You can keep up-to-date with the department's advisories at its website.

■ **Can I go to Japan?**

Japan has reported more than 700 cases of coronavirus, with 621 of them coming from the Diamond Princess cruise ship, which has been quarantined in Yokohama; two passengers on the ship have died. Japanese authorities allowed a number of people from the ship to leave, a decision that some health experts have questioned.

The C.D.C. has a Level 1 watch for coronavirus in Japan, which advises travelers to “practice usual precautions.”

Since Feb. 13, non-Japanese nationals who have visited Hubei and Zhejiang provinces in China within 14 days of arrival in Japan, or who have a Chinese passport issued in those provinces, are not allowed to land in Japan except under special circumstances.

Japan's National Tourism Organization is advising travelers that medical expenses may be high in the event that you become sick or injured and need to go to the hospital in Japan. “Please do not forget to take out the necessary travel insurance,” the tourist board said in a statement on its website. It is also encouraging tourists to take the same precautions people take during flu season when traveling.

■ **What's happening in South Korea?**

South Korea has 104 infections, 53 of which were added on Thursday, nearly doubling the number from the day before. The mayor of the city of Daegu asked residents to stay indoors after several people associated with a church contracted COVID-19. On Thursday, authorities announced the first death in the country, and the United States Army Garrison Daegu restricted access to its base, according to a statement.

Currently, the C.D.C. has no advisory for South Korea, according to its site.

(Source: The New York Times)

COVID-19 defeat ‘before long’

Some neighboring countries bury their head in the sand

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iranian Health Minister Saeed Namaki has said effective measures have been taken and comprehensive plans are underway to get rid of the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, in the country.

The country has put in place a set of contingency plans, including the temporary shutdown of schools, universities and cultural centers, in an effort to curb a coronavirus outbreak that has already claimed eight lives in the country.

“With regard to the past experience, I say that we will defeat the coronavirus before long,” the minister stressed.

“As a veteran soldier in the Iranian health front, I have taken the responsibility of removing measles, tetanus, and polio which astonished the World Health Organization as the country is grappling with sanctions with no international support. So, I [definitely] say that we will defeat the coronavirus.”

He went on to say that the nation has been mobilized against the virus and “we will announce its defeat soon.”

Concealing reality

That is while some certain neighboring countries, particularly the United Arab Emirates and Turkey, have so far avoided



to present any statistics about the number of people infected and died as a result of the disease, while trying to show that the

situation in Iran is more exacerbated than what officials explain.

For example, credible sources have informed

the Tehran Times that COVID-19 has infected some 50 people and claimed lives of 18 people in the UAE. But, officials have not announced any statistics so far in this regard.

Measures taken

The Iranian Health Ministry on Sunday raised the death toll from the virus to eight and the number of people who had tested positive for coronavirus to 43.

As a preventive measure, Iranian authorities have ordered a week-long closure of educational and cultural institutions across 14 provinces as of Sunday, Press TV reported.

Spokesman for Tehran’s Department of Education, Masoud Saghafi, said the decision was made to “prepare schools” which have to be disinfected and sanitized.

Tehran’s Mayor Pirouz Hanachi said Sunday that all the city’s public places, including the metro trains and buses, are being disinfected every night as part of attempts to contain the spread of the virus.

Head of Food and Drug Administration Mohammad Reza Shanehsaz also said that pharmacies will no longer be allowed to sell protective masks and that masks will be distributed among the population via government-run centers free of charge, with the priority given to virus-hit provinces.

Iran achieves early detection of bladder cancer for first time in the world

SOCIETY TEHRAN — A team of researchers at Iran University of Medical Sciences for the first time in the world has managed to detect bladder cancer up to 10 years before clinical diagnosis and early tumor formation in asymptomatic healthy individuals.

Led by Dr. Reza Malekzadeh, the team has been able to detect the disease early in urine samples by examining a somatic genetic mutation, IRNA reported.

The research, called Urinary TERT promoter mutations are detectable up to 10 years prior to clinical diagnosis of bladder cancer: evidence from the Golestan Cohort Study, has been published in the internationally acclaimed journal EBioMedicine.

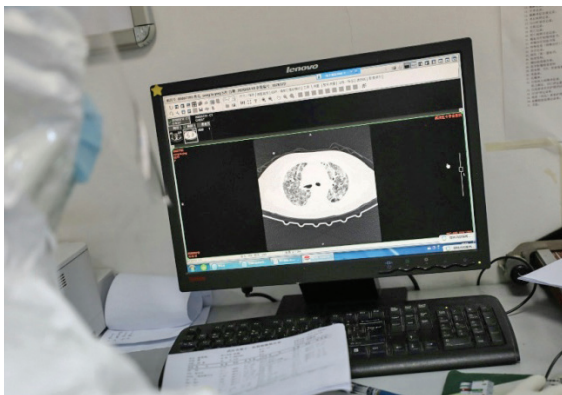
According to WHO, to assess the test’s ability to detect the mutations in urine samples before any clinical symptoms of bladder cancer occur, World Health Organization, International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) researchers collaborated with the Tehran University of Medical Sciences in Iran and the United States National Cancer Institute to design a unique pilot study within the Golestan Cohort Study.

Their evaluation of the performance of TERT promoter mutations as early detection biomarkers for bladder cancer in urine samples revealed detection in 46.7 per cent of the asymptomatic individuals who later developed

bladder cancer. And this was up to 10 years before being clinically diagnosed.

“Our results provide the first evidence from a prospective population-based cohort study of the potential of urinary TERT promoter mutations as promising non-invasive biomarkers for the early detection of bladder cancer,” the study’s co-first author Ismail Hosen said.

IARC scientists are now collaborating with other large



prospective cohort studies to confirm these findings.

“If the findings are validated, large trials conducted in individuals at high risk of developing bladder cancer should be designed to address the health and cost benefits of screening for TERT promoter mutations for the global bladder cancer burden,” says Mahdi Sheikh, a postdoctoral scientist at IARC and the co-first author of the study.

“A simple urine test has recently been developed, and these new results are another exciting step towards the validation of a non-invasive early detection tool,” maintained Florence Le Calvez-Kelm, IARC scientist and principal investigator of the study.

“This test could significantly improve and simplify the way in which bladder cancer is detected.”

Bladder cancer is one of the ten most prevalent cancers in both men and women worldwide, with the number of cases reached 550,000, and 200,000 deaths, in 2018.

According to Malekzadeh, bladder cancer is also very common among Iranian men, so it ranks fifth among the most common cancers in Iranian men after gastric, skin, prostate and colon cancers.

Bladder cancer usually affects older adults, though it can happen at any age. Bladder cancer most often begins in the cells (urothelial cells) that line the inside of bladder.

Desert Locust to infest southeastern Iran, FAO warns

SOCIETY TEHRAN — According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan will be infested by desert locust, director of the agriculture organization of the province has said.

Amanollah Touqi called on the governors to be prepared and stay on duty in case of any infestation, and get the vehicles ready for spraying the agricultural lands.

He emphasized that the most important measure is monitoring, so that as soon as the pest accumulates in the region, the operation will be carried out with the help of farmers.

Last year, over 212,300 hectares have fought against the pest in the province.

On February 20, immature swarms from the Arabian Peninsula reached the shores

of the Persian Gulf in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the southwest coast of Iran. More swarms are likely during periods of southerly winds, FAO reported.

FAO explains that desert locust infestations are normally present in southeast Iran during the spring. Local breeding coincides with seasonal rains that often occur from about February or March until April or May. In warmer years, rains that occur during the winter can lead to late winter and early spring breeding.

By June, vegetation is usual dry again and any adults that were produced during the spring move east towards the Indo-Pakistan summer breeding areas. Most of the spring breeding occurs along a 450 km stretch of coastal plains on the Arabian Sea from Jask (Hormozgan) and the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman in the west to

Chabahar and Gwatar (Sistan-Baluchistan) near the Pakistan border in the east.

The most important area along the coast is the Vashnum Plains near Chabahar. If rains fall and temperatures are warm, breeding may also occur in the interior, namely the Jaz Murian Basin from Kahnuj to Iranshar, and in the Zabolli, Suran and Saravan valleys that lead to Panjgur, Pakistan. Desert Locust adults rarely cross the mountains to the north of these areas.

Last year’s outbreak

Last year, desert locusts penetrated into the provinces of Bushehr, Fars, Hormozgan, Kerman, Khuzestan, and Sistan-Baluchestan, which resulted in major losses on over 500,000 hectares of farmlands and gardens.

The Iranian parliament, known as

Majlis, allocated a total budget of 100 billion rials (nearly \$2.3 million) to fight desert locusts.

Desert locusts are short-horned grasshoppers that can form large swarms and pose a major threat to agricultural production, livelihoods, food security, and the environment and economic development.

FAO explains that adult locust swarms can fly up to 150 km a day with the wind. Female locusts can lay 300 eggs within their lifetime while an adult insect can consume roughly its own weight in fresh food per day - about two grams every day. A very small swarm eats the same amount of food in one day as about 35,000 people and the devastating impact locusts can have on crops poses a major threat to food security, especially in already vulnerable areas.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

International environment exhibition to be held in Tehran

The 19th International Exhibition on the Environment will be held in Tehran on March 4-7, IRNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

At this year’s exhibition, various industrial, business and service units will be presenting their environmental achievements, as well as environmental science centers and universities specializing in the environment.

The exhibition will be held under the theme of “environment, social responsibility of 80 million rangers”.

نمایشگاه بین‌المللی محیط‌زیست در تهران برگزار می‌شود

نوزدهمین نمایشگاه بین‌المللی محیط‌زیست از ۱۴ تا ۱۷ اسفندماه

در محل دائمی نمایشگاه‌های بین‌المللی تهران برگزار می‌شود.

به گزارش ایرنا، در نمایشگاه امسال واحدهای مختلف صنعتی، تجاری و خدماتی دستاوردهای زیست محیطی خود را ارائه می‌دهند و از سوی دیگر مراکز دانش بنیان و دانشگاه‌هایی که در زمینه محیط زیست به صورت تخصصی فعالیت می‌کنند نیز در این نمایشگاه حضور خواهند داشت.

شعار امسال این نمایشگاه، «محیط زیست، مسوولیت اجتماعی ۸۰ میلیون محیط بان» تعیین شده است.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“hol- or holo-”

■ **Meaning:** complete, whole

■ **For example:** we were interested in updating information on an uncommon migratory seabird with a **Holarctic** distribution

PHRASAL VERB

Play something up

■ **Meaning:** to emphasize something, sometimes making it seem more important than it really is.

■ **For example:** Play up your strongest arguments in the opening paragraph.

IDIOM

Day in the sun

■ **Explanation:** to get long-awaited attention or some form of well-deserved appreciation

■ **For example:** Dave finally got his day in the sun when an article was published about his research.

Magnitude 5.7 quake hits northwestern Iran, 75 injured

SOCIETY TEHRAN — An earthquake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale shook Qatour district in Khoy city, West Azarbaijan province.



The earthquake occurred at 9:22 a.m. local time on Sunday at a depth of 6 kilometers and injured 75 people, but no fatalities have been reported so far.

The earthquake has damaged mobile and fixed telephone, water, electricity, and gas network infrastructures, IRNA reported.

Unprecedented number of critically endangered blue whales recorded

Scientists have recorded an “unprecedented” number of blue whales around the coastal waters of the sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia.

Just two individuals of the critically endangered species, and largest animal ever to have lived on our planet, were recorded in the area during a survey in 2018. But this year, during a more extensive survey, an extraordinary 36 separate sightings meant a total of 55 blue whales were spotted by the scientists.

The research team, led by the British Antarctic Survey, said: “For such a rare species, this is an unprecedented number of sightings and suggests that South Georgia waters remain an important summer feeding ground for this rare and poorly known species.”

The blue whale population was decimated through the 19th and early 20th centuries, reducing their population by as much as 97 per cent, according to some estimates.

The British Antarctic Survey said when the Norwegian explorer and whaler Carl Larsen first visited the island of South Georgia, he was so impressed by the number of whales there he said “I see them in hundreds and thousands”, and immediately applied for a licence to open a whaling station there.

South Georgia became a key whaling station, with numerous species hunted to the brink of extinction, including blue, humpback and fin whales. But the resulting collapse of whale populations meant the South Georgia whaling industry became unprofitable by the early 20th century.

According to the South Georgia Heritage Trust, the largest whale ever recorded was processed at the Grytviken whaling station on the island. It was a blue whale caught in 1912, with a length of 33.58m (110ft). Since the whalers left and tighter international regulations on whaling have been agreed, populations have begun to bounce back, with researchers saying the seas still have the capacity to support large numbers of whales.

Project leader Dr Jennifer Jackson, a whale ecologist at the British Antarctic Survey, told The Independent the survey broke new ground, enabling scientists to better understand whale populations’ recovery from centuries of hunting.

She said the “researchers were thrilled... It suggests blue whales are returning to their old feeding grounds at South Georgia which suggests it’s still an area with abundant food for them to eat.

“Relative to many other oceans on the planet, the Southern Ocean is still relatively pristine, so it still has capacity to support large numbers of whales.”

She said during the trips, which were the first whale surveys conducted on the south side of the island, the team were fortunate to have aboard Antarctic blue whale expert Paula Olson, who holds the largest photo-identification catalogue of Antarctic blue whales and is currently conducting a new analysis of the animal’s abundance.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Dirty bombs

(March 12, 2003)

At a United Nations conference in Vienna about the threat from terrorists of the so-called dirty bomb, the United States has promised more aid to help countries find lost or stolen radioactive material. This report from Bethany Bell:

The US Secretary of Energy, Spencer Abraham, said countries around the world had to work together to make sure that radioactive material is **properly secured**. He said radioactive substances used in medicine, industry and agriculture **existed throughout the planet**.

Up to now, he said, the fight against **nuclear proliferation** has focused mainly on nuclear weapons. He said it was now time to highlight the danger of the possibility of smaller radioactive sources **falling into the hands of** terrorists who could create **dirty bombs**. Those might not be as **lethal** as nuclear weapons, he said, but they could still **create a major impact**. He said the US was giving three million dollars next year to help poorer countries secure **potentially dangerous** radioactive sources.

The Russian minister for Atomic Energy, Alexander Rumyantsev, said the need to **address the threat formed part of** the larger fight against global terrorism.

Words

properly secured: stored safely; if you secure something, you make it safe from harm or attack

existed throughout the planet: were in many parts of the world

nuclear proliferation: the spread of nuclear substances; if things proliferate, they quickly increase in number

falling into the hands of: coming into the possession or control of

dirty bombs: bombs which use conventional explosives to spread radioactive material

lethal: dangerous, deadly

create a major impact: cause a lot of damage

potentially dangerous: that might be dangerous

address: deal with

formed part of: was part of

(Source: BBC)

South Korea to raise disease alert level to highest as coronavirus cases climb

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in said on Sunday that the government will raise the country's disease alert by one notch to the highest level in a bid to contain a surge in new coronavirus cases. New coronavirus cases in the country jumped by 123 to 556 on Sunday and the death toll rose to five, according to the Korea Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention.

(Source: Reuters)

At least 16 Turkish servicemen die in clashes in Libya

Sixteen members of the Turkish armed forces and more than 100 Syrian mercenaries have died fighting in the Libyan capital of Tripoli, the Sky News Arabia TV channel reported on Sunday, citing sources in the Libyan National Army (LNA).

According to the channel's Twitter, 16 Turkish military men and over 100 Syrian mercenaries have died in Tripoli clashes.

Earlier in the week, the LNA commander, Khalifa Haftar, said that the rival Government of National Accord (GNA) used the current ceasefire to deploy Syrian mercenaries to Libya. Meanwhile, the Turkish forces arrived in Libya earlier this year under an agreement between the GNA and Ankara.

In January, the international conference on Libya took place in the German capital, counting Russia, the United States, the European Union, Turkey and Egypt among its participants. The sides agreed on a ceasefire and non-involvement of third parties in the conflict.

After the ouster and assassination of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, the country was plunged into a brutal civil war. Today, Libya is divided between two centres of power the LNA and the GNA. On 12 December, Haftar announced the beginning of a decisive battle in his campaign to capture Tripoli, which has been underway since last April and has resulted in vicious fighting in the city's outskirts.

(Source: Sputnik)

Italy becomes Europe's largest coronavirus hot spot

The number of confirmed Covid-19 coronavirus cases has soared to at least 79 in Italy, forcing authorities to introduce increasingly strict containment and quarantine measures in the northern regions of Lombardy and Veneto.

A 78-year-old man died near Padua in the Veneto region on Friday night, becoming the second victim of the virus in Italy, after a 76-year-old woman was found dead on Thursday 50km south of Milan.

At least 17 people have been confirmed infected in Veneto so far, including the latest victim's wife and daughter, as authorities are still mulling whether the Carnival of Venice events should be cancelled. In neighboring Lombardy, there are 54 cases, including one in Milan — a city with a population of 1.4 million, where Women's Fashion Week is currently taking place.

There are also two cases in northern Emilia Romagna and two in central Lazio, as well as in Piedmont, according to the head of Civil Protection, Angelo Borrelli. At least 18 of the patients are in serious condition in intensive care.

The outbreak is believed to have originated in a town southeast of Milan, where 50,000 residents of Codogno and nearby towns were advised to stay indoors and avoid public gatherings, which are now being cancelled en masse.

The quarantine measures affected not only schools and universities, but also football matches. It is unclear when the cancelled Sunday clashes between Inter Milan and Sampdoria, Atalanta against Sassuolo, and Hellas Verona against Cagliari will be rescheduled.

(Source: RT)

Pope slams Trump's Mideast plan as 'prelude to new crises'

Pope Francis has hit out at U.S. President Donald Trump's so-called deal of the century on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, saying that 'unfair and inequitable solutions' would only be a prelude to new crises in the region.

"Nor can we overlook the still unresolved conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, with the danger of inequitable solutions and, hence, a prelude to new crises," Francis said.

The leader of the Catholic Church made remarks on Sunday in the southern Italian port city of Bari, where he traveled to attend a meeting of bishops from all countries in the Mediterranean basin.

Francis also lamented the many areas of war and conflict, including in the Middle East and Northern Africa.

"The Mediterranean region is currently threatened by outbreaks of instability and conflict, both in the Middle East and different countries of North Africa, as well as between various ethnic, religious or confessional groups," he added.

Among the prelates gathered for his speech in Bari's Pontifical Basilica of St. Nicholas were churchmen from the Balkans, Jerusalem al-Quds and Algeria.

It was the first time the pope has spoken in public about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since Trump announced the plan on January 28. The pope expressed concern in 2018 when the United States announced the relocation of its embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds, saying the city's "status quo" should be respected.

Francis called for all to honor UN resolutions on the city. Defying international outcry, Trump announced the general provisions of the plan he calls "the deal of century" at the White House with the Israeli premier at his side.

Within just hours after the announcement, Trump's proposed deal aroused a storm of indignation and opposition among people and politicians as well as international organizations.

The plan totally ignores the rights and demands of up to 15 million Palestinians around the world, leaving them out of a process that is expected to decide their fate and their future.

Opponents argue that the highly pro-Israel scheme offers no prescription for peace because it blatantly violates international law.

It strips Palestinians of their basic rights on a number of sensitive issues, including the state of Jerusalem al-Quds, the future borders of a sovereign Palestinian state, the return of Palestinian refugees driven from their homeland, security responsibility, as well as Israeli settlements built on occupied land.

(Source: agencies)

Syria: U.S. dismayed over Aleppo liberation

➔ 1 Over the past few days, Syrian army troops have assumed control over most of Aleppo, liberating about 30 villages in just a single day.

They have further managed to completely secure Aleppo city from militant shelling.

For first time since 2012, Syrian troops recaptured the strategic M5 highway that connects the capital, Damascus, to the major cities of Hama, Homs and Aleppo.

A Syrian passenger jet also landed in Aleppo airport from Damascus as domestic flights resumed between the country's two largest cities.

In an televised address on Monday, President Bashar al-Assad congratulated the Syrian nation and armed forces over major territorial gains in Aleppo, saying the city will «return stronger than ever.»

The fight to liberate all of Aleppo along with neighboring terrorist-controlled Idlib province will continue, he noted, stressing that the Syrian army will not give up until it achieves total victory «sooner or later.»

U.S. State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortigas reacted angrily to what he called «shameless» announcements on advances by Syrian forces against Takfiri elements, claiming, «This is no dream of the Syrian people.»



ments on advances by Syrian forces against Takfiri elements, claiming, «This is no dream of the Syrian people.»

The Syrian Foreign Ministry source said recent U.S. statements show that the administration of President Donald Trump is «unbalanced and lacks the

most basic forms of communication etiquette.»

«The dismay of the U.S. over the failure of its project in Syria is motivation for Syrians to continue confronting terrorists and their supporters until every inch of Syrian soil is free of terrorism and

illegitimate foreign presence,» he said.

The U.S. administration's «audacity» and «hypocrisy» is characterized by its policies of «attacking others, interfering in their affairs, and employing terrorists to serve its agendas at the expense of people's lives and suffering, all while claiming to champion human rights,» the source added.

■ Turkey says lost soldier

On Saturday, the Turkish Defense Ministry said one of its soldiers, who was a tank mechanic, was killed in Idlib in a bomb attack by Syrian forces..

Turkish forces, it claimed, retaliated and destroyed 21 targets belonging to the Syrian government.

It was reported to be Turkey's 16th military death in Idlib in the past month.

Latest Syrian gains in Idlib have coincided with a massive deployment of troops and military equipment by Turkey which is evidently upset by changing conditions on the ground.

Ankara has threatened to use military power to drive back the Syrian forces unless they withdraw by the end of February.

9Source: Press TV)

UK is the '51st state'? Uproar as Britain's secret deal to buy nuclear warheads from U.S. without Parliament's consent is revealed

Furious Brits have accused their government of being a lapdog for Washington, after it was inadvertently revealed that the UK had quietly inked a nuclear weapons deal with the U.S., forgoing public debate.

The Pentagon recently disclosed that Britain has agreed to purchase new U.S. nuclear warheads to replace Trident, its own homegrown nuclear program. However, the deal came as a surprise to British lawmakers, who were reportedly kept in the dark about the nuclear weapons.

The agreement, which involves the U.S. sharing the technology used in its W93 sea-launched warhead, is expected to cost billions of pounds.

A spokesperson for the ministry of defense declined to go into detail about the deal, stating only that Britain has a "strong defense relationship with the U.S." and remains committed to having nuclear capabilities compatible with U.S. technology.

While some hailed the secretive deal as necessary to ensure NATO's nuclear deterrence capabilities, the move was blasted by opposition parties. Ed Davey, acting leader



of the Liberal Democrats, said it was outrageous that the pricey tech transfer was being carried out with "zero consultation and zero scrutiny."

He blasted the Tory government, arguing that "Johnson increasingly looks like putty in Trump's hands."

MP Stewart McDonald, who serves as the Scottish National Party's spokesperson for defense, said that Defense

Minister Ben Wallace should face Parliament and answer for the secrecy behind the deal. Fellow SNP member Douglas Chapman cautioned the U.S. and UK against "spending too much time" on the deal, claiming Scotland would soon gain its independence.

A Green Party official expressed similar disillusionment, describing the incident as an example of "how it feels to live in a failed democracy."

Similar views were aired on social media. "We really are the 51st state of America," lamented one Twitter user.

Another comment argued that, in the eyes of the U.S. military, the UK is little more than a "static aircraft carrier" to be used for its own purposes.

Others jokingly suggested that the secretive program was nothing out of the ordinary.

"That's the price of [a] 'special relationship'!", read one reply, referring to the fabled close bilateral ties between Washington and London.

(Source: RT)

Sanders cements frontrunner status after Nevada victory

Bernie Sanders claimed a decisive victory in the Democratic presidential caucuses in Nevada on Saturday, while Joe Biden appeared headed to a second-place finish that would give his struggling campaign new hope.

Sanders, a senator from Vermont, rode a wave of backing from a diverse coalition of young and middle-aged voters, Latinos, union members and white college-educated women to a win in Nevada, showing signs of expanding support for his front-running campaign beyond his longstanding core.

"We won the popular vote in Iowa, we won the New Hampshire primary, and according to three networks and the AP, we have now won the Nevada caucus," the

78-year-old told cheering supporters in San Antonio, Texas.

"We have put together a multi-generational, multiracial coalition that is going to not only win in Nevada, it's going to sweep the country."

Biden, the former vice president, had been in desperate need of a strong showing after poor finishes in the first two contests in Iowa and New Hampshire for the party's nomination to face Republican President Donald Trump in the November election.

He was a distant second to Sanders with 19 percent of the vote with 10 percent of the precincts reported but ahead of former Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana, in third with 16 percent.

"The press is ready to declare people dead quickly, but we're alive and we're coming back and we're gonna win," Biden told supporters in Las Vegas.

Buttigieg congratulated Sanders, but then told his supporters in Las Vegas that Democrats should stop and reconsider nominating Sanders, a self-identified democratic socialist that he portrayed as an ideologue.

"We can prioritise either ideological purity or inclusive victory. We can either call people names online or we can call them into our movement. We can either tighten a narrow and hardcore base or open the tent to a new, broad, big-hearted American coalition," Buttigieg said.



New York billionaire Mike Bloomberg, who dominated the political conversation this week after a poor debate-stage debut, was not on the ballot. He is betting everything on a series of delegate-rich states that begin voting next month.

(Source: al Jazeera)

Top security aide: Seen no intel of Moscow helping Trump

President Donald Trump's national security adviser said he's seen no intelligence indicating that Russia is doing anything to try to help get the president re-elected.

Robert O'Brien's comments were released Saturday in a transcript of an interview with ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" set to air Sunday.

"The national security adviser gets pretty good access to our intelligence," O'Brien said. "I haven't seen any intelligence that Russia is doing anything to attempt to get President Trump re-elected."

O'Brien's comment came after he was asked about media reports that an intelligence professional told members of the House intelligence committee that it was Russia's aim to favor Trump in the election.

Some officials familiar with the classified briefing said lawmakers were told that Russia was taking steps that would help Trump. And Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders acknowledged Friday that he was briefed

last month by U.S. officials about Russian efforts to boost his candidacy.

A senior intelligence official with knowledge about the briefing, however, told The Associated Press Friday that the handful of U.S. election security briefers did not tell House intelligence committee members that Russia was "aiding the re-election of President Trump." The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the classified briefing, said some of the lawmakers reached conclusions that had not been made by the briefers.

O'Brien said he had not seen any intelligence or analyses indicating that Russia was aiding Trump and neither had top leaders in the intelligence agencies.

"All I know is that the Republicans on the side of the House hearing were unhappy with the hearing and said that there was no intelligence to back up what was being said," O'Brien said. "But here's the deal: I don't even know if what's been reported as being said (by the briefers) is

true. You know those are leaks coming out of that hearing."

O'Brien also denied reports that Trump became angry when he was told about the briefing and that he confronted former acting national intelligence director Joseph Maguire and subsequently replaced him with current U.S. ambassador to Germany, Richard Grenell.

O'Brien said Trump was not angry with Maguire and would have liked Maguire to stay in government in a different role. He said Maguire's time as acting director of national intelligence was up in early March and the White House needed an individual - someone who had already been confirmed by the Senate - to temporarily replace him.

"Ambassador Grenell is there for a temporary period of time," O'Brien said, adding that Trump was expected to announce a nominee to be quickly confirmed by the Senate as full-time director. The president has said he is considering three or four candidates.

(Source: AP)

Israeli Army bulldozer dragging Gazan's body after border incident

➔ 1 On Thursday, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that 3,000 settler units would be built in East al-Quds' Givat HaMatos area in addition to another 2,200 in the nearby Har Homa neighborhood.

■ Top EU diplomat slams Israeli settlement construction plan

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Saturday the fresh Israeli settlement construction project would be «deeply detrimental» to the so-called two-state solution, calling on Tel Aviv to reconsider its plan.

«Settlements are illegal under international law. The EU will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties,» he said.

In recent years, Israel has stepped up its settlement construction activities in the occupied territories in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334, which pronounced settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds «a flagrant violation under international law.»

(Source: agencies)

Yemen unveils four indigenous missile defense systems

➔ 1 Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing back to power the government of former President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi and crushing the Ansarullah movement.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a non-profit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 100,000 lives over the past nearly five years.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have purchased billions of dol-

lars' worth of weapons from the United States, France and the United Kingdom in the war on Yemen.

The Saudi-led coalition has been widely criticized for the high civilian death toll from its bombing campaign. The alliance has carried out nearly 20,500 air raids in Yemen, according to the data collected by the Yemen Data Project.

The UN says over 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including 10 million suffering from extreme levels of hunger.

(Source: agencies)

Sports events suspended in Iran due to coronavirus

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Authorities **d e s k** in Iran have suspended all sports competitions except four football matches in the next 10 days due to the coronavirus outbreak in the country.

The alarm of growing coronavirus cases in Iran has seen sports matches called off for 10 days from Monday, although football matches are not included.

Iran Sports Medicine Federation formed an emergency committee to deal with coronavirus in sports following a special order by Ministry of Sport and Youth Masoud Soltanifar.

The committee had already announced on Saturday that all sports events in Iran had been called off but on Sunday it changed the decision and announced that football matches would be held during this period.

Then the Iran Football League Organization released a statement announcing that all the football and futsal matches will be held without spectators.

Iranian officials Saturday reported a sixth death from the new virus that emerged in China. The governor of Markazi Province told the IRNA that tests of a patient who recently died in the central city of Arak were positive for the virus.

The decision of holding football matches without spectators prompted objections from some Iran Professional League (IPL) teams, namely Sepahan and Shahr Khodro who host Persepolis and Naft Masjed Soleyman respectively on Sunday. They believe that the decision made by the Iran Football League Organization would deny their hosting rights



in these decisive weeks of IPL. Elsewhere in the world, Italian Prime

Minister Giuseppe Conte has postponed three Serie A matches including Inter

Milan vs Sampdoria following a deadly coronavirus outbreak.

Iran too strong for Qatar at FIBA Asia Cup qualifier



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran **d e s k** overpowered Qatar 95-52 here at the 2021 International Basketball Federation (FIBA) Asia Cup qualification on Sunday.

In the match held in empty Azadi Hall amid fears of a coronavirus outbreak, Qatar center Emir Mujic scored match-high of 14 points and Iran captain Hamed Haddadi scored 13 points.

Reza Amiri Salehi, head of Iran's national Olympic Committee, attended the match.

Iran had defeated Syria 94-48 in their first match in Group E on Thursday.

Saudi Arabia are also in the group.

A total of 24 countries will take part in the qualifiers – divided into six groups. According to FIBA, the top two teams of each group will secure places at the 2021 Asia Cup. Meanwhile, the third-placed team in each group will battle over the four remaining slots in the tournament.

The qualifiers will run until February next year, as teams play both home and away matches – giving local supporters the opportunity to cheer on their national squads directly during the matches.

The second window of the qualifiers will be held in November, while the last is scheduled for February 2021.

Iran freestyle wrestling crowned Asian champions



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran finished **d e s k** in first place at the 2020 Asian Wrestling Championships on Sunday.

The Iranian freestylers won eight medals in 10 weight categories in the two-day competition held in New Delhi, India.

On Sunday, 92kg Mohammadjavad Mohammadebrahim clinched a gold medal with a 11-0 win over Japanese Takuma Otsu.

Ahmad Yousef Bazrighaleh suffered a close loss to Japanese Shutaro Yamada in the 86kg final bout.

Mostafa Mohabbali Hosseinkhani beat Sumiyabazar Zandanbud from Mongolia 5 - 0 in the 74kg. And Parviz Hadi won a bronze defeating Tajikistan's Farkhod Anakulov 10-0 in the 125kg.

On Saturday, the Iranian wrestlers had won four medals in five weight classes.

Mojtaba Goleij took a gold beating Salywart Kadian from India 10-0 in the 97kg. Amirhossein Hosseini lost to Uzbekistan's Ilyas Bekbulatov 10-6 in the 70kg final match.

Amirhossein Maghsoudi seized a bronze at the 65kg after a 2-0 win over Abbas Rakhmonov from Uzbekistan.

And Ali Savadkouhi defeated Kazakhstan's Galymzhan Ussebayev 5-0 in the 79kg bronze medal match.

Iran topped the standings with 168 points. India became runners-up with 159 points and Kazakhstan came third with 146 points.

‘Armless Archer’ Stutzman: ‘What’s your excuse?’

Matt Stutzman has stern archery advice for his son – don't shoot with your feet. While strange by any measure, this advice is even stranger coming from an athlete who won a Paralympic medal and risen to international fame by drawing the bow with his feet.

“I won't let him shoot with his feet and he gets mad because he thinks the only way to be the best in the world is with your feet. How cool is that?” Stutzman said. “I'm like, ‘you have arms, use them!’ He's like, ‘no, I don't want to. I want to use my feet like you because that's how you win.’”

Stutzman's son is not the only one captivated by his abilities. Ever since the London 2012 Paralympic Games, the USA archer's unique style has attracted attention from around the world and praise from able-bodied and Para athletes alike.

“I am hearing people say, ‘you're awesome, you are very inspirational’ and stuff like that. It's still weird for me because this is just my life,” Stutzman said of his fame as the ‘Armless Archer’.

“I am wrapping my head around the fact that some people can watch what I do and it motivates them. I have to be understanding of that because this is just me and I don't think I am special or different from anyone else but they obviously see it differently.”

Now headed to his third Paralympic Games, the father of three is hoping to move one step up from the silver result he got in the men's individual compound at London 2012 and motivate even more people to get off the couch.

■ Rise, fall, try again

Stutzman is the only archer at the top level who uses his feet to draw the bow and release the arrows. With the exception of his custom-made release, he uses the same equipment as the others.

“My form is not really any different than anybody else's with hands so I actually will pretend I have hands and my shoulders are my hands,” Stutzman said.

“It makes it easier for people coaching me to translate



because I can look at their hand and then translate that change into my shoulder. It's a different way of looking at things but it works for me.”

As the competition results would suggest, Stutzman's method is working. In addition to his Paralympic medal, the archer won silver at the 2015 Para Pan American Games and bronze at the 2019 World Archery Para Championships, among other honors.

His only loss at London 2012 came against Finland's Jere Forsberg in the gold medal match.

“During the final I felt really calm actually, excluding the last end,” Forsberg said about facing Stutzman.

“The first thought after my last arrow hit the 10 was relief, that now it's over. I didn't want the final to go to one arrow shoot off. After that, the realisation that I had won Paralympic gold in my first Paralympics hit me and that was one of the best feelings I have ever had.”

After taking silver in London, Stutzman's aim for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games was set even higher. He stumbled in the round of 16, however, and was a surprise drop out from the medal hunt. Disappointed with the result, Stutzman then took time off from the sport to re-evaluate his priorities and spend time with his family.

“I had a little bit of a rough 2016, 2017,” Stutzman said. “I put too much pressure on myself. But [my sons] don't care if I win or lose. I'm still just their dad so now I am just getting back to having a good time like I did before.”

Eager to set a good example for his sons, Stutzman soon returned to training and even switched to shooting with USA's able-bodied team to get stronger for Tokyo 2020.

“This is why I am here,” he said. “I am still trying to set examples for my boys to show that even if you can be good at something or you do get a little bit of fame, you can still be just a humble, nice person. I want them to grow up to be men and I feel that by example is the best way to teach them that.”

■ On target

Stutzman returned to medal form again in 2019, taking bronze at the world championships in 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands in June. While his wife and children were not on location, Stutzman made sure they stayed up to date with all the results.

In addition to what he teaches his sons, Stutzman also spreads his gospel wider as a motivational speaker. His messages are many.

“One of them is, what's your excuse?”, Stutzman said. “If I can take archery and compete in a sport that you would think you need hands for, then what's their excuse about not getting off the couch?”

Much as in 2012, the positive response at his archery and motivational speeches continues to overwhelm the 37-year-old who first picked up the bow two decades ago. For Stutzman, the fame has meant much more than photos with fans and media interviews.

“Now I can support my kids and that's a great feeling as a father. That's what everybody in the sport wants to do. They just want to take care of their family. Archery has given me that chance,” he said.

“I went from disability, no job, to now I can buy them shoes and buy them food and get shirts and clothes and put a roof over their heads. That's the biggest thing ever.”

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Esteghlal edge Zob Ahan in empty stadium: IPL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Esteghlal football team **d e s k** defeated Zob Ahan 2-1 in an empty stadium in Iran Professional League on Sunday.

Mohammad Daneshgar gave the hosts the lead in the 29th minute and Zob Ahan Serbian forward Darko Bjedov equalized the match in the 49th minute.

Two minutes later, Ali Dashti was brought down in Zob Ahan penalty area and the referee showed the penalty spot. Vouria Ghafouri converted the penalty to give Esteghlal an important 2-1 win.

In Mashhad, Shahr Khodro came behind from a 1-0 loss to beat Naft Majed Soleyman 2-1.

This week's matches were held behind the closed doors amid fears of a coronavirus outbreak.

Earlier on the day, Sepahan was supposed to host Persepolis in Isfahan but the match was canceled after Sepahan showed up to the Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium.

Persepolis remain top of the table with 41 points with one game in hands. Tractor and Esteghlal are second and third with 37 and 36 points respectively.

Real Madrid's Hazard to miss City, Barcelona clashes

Eden Hazard will miss Real Madrid's Champions League game with Manchester City and their El Clasico clash with Barcelona next weekend after suffering a fibula fracture.

The forward limped off injured after he suffered a fracture in his right fibula in the 67th minute of Madrid's 1-0 defeat to Levante in La Liga on Saturday -- a result that left them two points behind Barca ahead of their meeting on March 1.



“Following the tests carried out today on our player, Eden Hazard, he has been diagnosed with a fracture to his right distal fibula,” a club statement said. “His recovery will continue to be assessed.”

Club sources have told ESPN that the Belgium international -- signed for €100 million from Chelsea last summer -- is expected to be out for around two months.

Hazard, 29, had just returned from an almost three-month-long injury layoff after suffering a microfracture in his ankle in November.

He has made just nine starts in La Liga this season, scoring one goal.

(Source: ESPN)

Ronaldo equals Serie A goal record in 1,000th career appearance in Juventus

Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo equaled a Serie A record of scoring in 11 consecutive matches against SPAL -- a game which is being recognized as his 1,000th career appearance.

Ronaldo put Juve 1-0 ahead against SPAL as he equaled the record set by Gabriel Batistuta with Fiorentina in the 1994-95 season and matched by Fabio Quagliarella with Sampdoria in the last campaign.

However, it is worth noting that only Batistuta played and scored in 11 consecutive matches, with Ronaldo having missed the 2-0 victory over Brescia last weekend. His last league match without a goal was the 1-0 victory over AC Milan on Nov. 10.

Only one other active player -- Juventus teammate Gianluigi Buffon, with 1,088 matches -- has notched 1,000 career appearances. Ronaldo's total, however, includes two games with Sporting CP's B team in 2002 and 2003, leading to a dispute about their inclusion.

Ronaldo, 35, started his career at Sporting CP, who he appeared for 31 times for the first team, with his debut having come before the first of those two B-team games.

He joined Manchester United in 2003 and made 292 appearances before moving to Real Madrid in 2009, for whom he turned out for 438 times.

The five-time Ballon d'Or-winner has been at Juventus since 2018 and this is his 73rd match. He has 164 caps for Portugal.

Ronaldo has won the Champions League on five occasions -- once with United and four times with Madrid. At international level, he captained Portugal to success at Euro 2016.

(Source: ESPN)

Iranian fencer among world's 10 best

IRNA — The captain of the Iranian national sabre fencing team was placed 10th in the most recent update in the ranking presented by the International Fencing Federation (FIE).

Mojtaba Abedini, 35, could reach the 10th place with 118 points.

Ali Pakdaman, Mohammad Rahbari, and Mohammad Fotuhi, other Iranian athletes, were placed at 27th, 38th, and 40th, respectively.

Sabre fencers of Iran are to fight Poland in the world games.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Joy and pleasure which are followed by hell-fire
are not joy and misery and discomfort which are
followed by heaven are not misery.

Imam Ali (AS)

“Cinema Donkey”, “Diapason” to compete in Indian festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Iranian movies “Cinema Donkey” and “Diapason” will be competing in the Bengaluru International Film Festival, which will take place in the Indian state from February 26 to March 4.



A scene from “Cinema Donkey” by Shahed Ahmadlu.

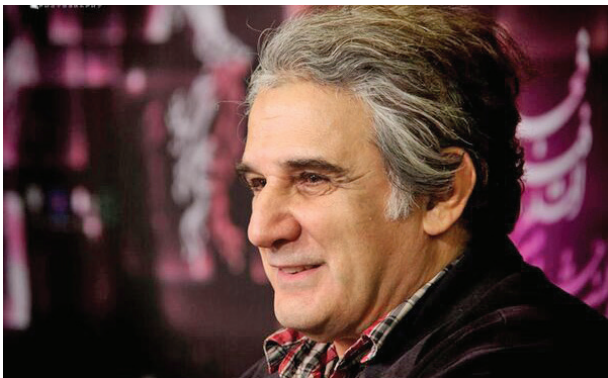
The two films will be screened in the Asian Cinema competition section along with films from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Philippines, Bangladesh and Kazakhstan, the organizers have announced. Directed by Shahed Ahmadlu “Cinema Donkey” satirizes professional misconduct in Iranian cinema.

“Diapason” by Hamed Tehrani focuses on a single mother facing the tragic death of her young daughter and the problems she faces from Iran’s laws and customs.

Iran-Afghanistan production to spotlight immigrants’ issues

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iran and Afghanistan will produce “Benazir”, a movie on Afghan immigrants’ issues in Iran.

Seyyed Masud Nurzadeh is the director of the film, which is about Benazir, a wealthy girl who has a very good life in Afghanistan, but her family is forced to flee their war-torn country.



Iranian actor Mehdi Hashemi in an undated photo.

Starring prominent Iranian actors Mehdi Hashemi, Fatemeh Gudarzi and Sirus Hemmati, the shooting will start in Tehran on March 10.

Iran houses about 3 million Afghan refugees, who have been warmly received, at least by the cultural community, in the country.

NEWS IN BRIEF



U.S. film festival picks Iran’s “Happy”

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Ahmadreza Musavi’s short film “Happy” will go on screen at the 58th edition of the Ann Arbor Film Festival in the U.S. state of Michigan, the director announced in a press release on Sunday.

The film tells the story of a man, who is looking for his identity, but the more he searches, the more he finds himself in a vicious circle.

The Ann Arbor Film Festival will be held from March 24 to 29.

China presence at Tehran book fair suspended over coronavirus fears

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — The 33rd Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) announced on Saturday that it has suspended China’s presence following the new coronavirus epidemic.

“At present, due to the security and health measures to control the spread of the coronavirus, it has been arranged that Chinese writers and publishers will not attend the fair,” TIBF deputy director Qader Ashena told the Persian service of IRNA.

China was the guest of honor at the fair last year with the motto of “Getting to Know China”.

Ashena denied some reports about the organizer’s decision to postpone the book fair and said that they are making all necessary preparations to organize the event at the time planned.

Turkey is TIBF guest of honor this year. Ashena said that a Turkish cultural delegation was scheduled to arrive in Tehran on Sunday.

However, the director of the public relations team for the fair, Seyyed Mohammad Tabatabai, announced on Sunday the organizers are mulling over the postponement of the event.

Last Wednesday, Iranian authorities confirmed the first cases of the new coronavirus, known as COVID-19, in the country.

The number of people diagnosed with the new coronavirus in Iran has increased to 43, of whom eight have so far lost their lives.



People visit the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla on April 28, 2019. (Mehr/Majid Asgaripur)

Italian film program in Iran postponed over coronavirus

A R T **TEHRAN** — “Spotlight on Italian Cinema”, a weeklong Italian film program, which opened at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on Thursday, has been postponed indefinitely in an attempt to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, the organizers announced on Sunday.

A lineup of seven Italian movies was scheduled to go on screen during the program, which was to run until February 26 in the three Iranian cities of Tehran, Shiraz and Kish Island.

Italian filmmaker Vincenzo Marra and producer Sergio Toffetti were also scheduled to hold review sessions and filmmaking workshops on the sidelines of the event.

The program was organized by Iran’s Art and Experience Cinema and the Italian Embassy in Tehran.



A poster for the Italian film program “Spotlight on Italian Cinema”.



Iran cancels cultural events in attempt to stem coronavirus’ spread

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has canceled all the art, cultural and cinematic events across the country until Friday in an attempt to stem coronavirus’ spread.

In a press release published by the ministry on Saturday, the ministry said, “Following strict health advice in the current situation to protect society’s health condition, all art and film events are canceled nationwide until Friday.”

“It is obvious that the cancellation will be extended in case the condition continues,” the statement added.

The cancellation includes all theater performances and film screenings, as well as concerts and public events.

The organizers of the 17th edition of the Image of the

Satrykon-Legnica honors Iranian cartoonist Alireza Pakdel’s “Family”

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian cartoonist Alireza Pakdel has received an honorable mention at the Satrykon-Legnica 2020 International Exhibition held in the Polish city on February 22.

Pakdel was competing in the Loneliness section of the event with his cartoon named “Family”, the organizers have announced.

The Grand Prix was given to Norbert Sarnecki from Poland for his cartoon “Climate Anomalies”.

First prize in the Loneliness section was given to Polish cartoonist Karolina Gmiterek for “Czuwanie”.

Second prize was given to Andrei Popov from Russia for “Penguin” and third prize was received by Vladimir Kazanovsky from Ukraine.

Joke and satire was the other section of the contest.



“Family” by Alireza Pakdel won an honorable mention at the Satrykon-Legnica 2020 International Exhibition in Poland.

Trump not a “Parasite” fan, praises “Gone with the Wind”

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is apparently not a fan of Oscar winner “Parasite”, his biggest complaint being that the movie was made in South Korea.

Trump started talking about the Academy Awards during a campaign rally in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on Thursday night. “Parasite” was named best picture, the first non-English-language film to get the top honor.

“What the hell was that all about?” Trump said. “We’ve got enough problems with South Korea with trade. On top of that, they give them best movie of the year. Was it good? I don’t know.”

Neon, the U.S. distributor for the subtitled film, shot back on Twitter: “Understandable. He can’t read.”

Meanwhile, Trump praised decades-old

Hollywood movies, one of which was set during the time of slavery in the U.S. The audience booed when Trump mentioned the Academy Awards and then cheered when he said: “Can we get like ‘Gone with the Wind’ back please? ‘Sunset Boulevard,’ so many great movies.”

Trump would not let it go on Friday when he addressed another crowd of supporters at a rally in Las Vegas.

“Look, I get along great with South Korea, but you know I never saw that one before,” Trump said.

“Parasite” tells the story of how a family of four poor, unemployed people living in a slum basement apartment comically infiltrates a wealthy family residing at a luxurious mansion before things unravel violently and tragically.

The movie made history Feb. 9, the first

South Korean film to win in the international film category, and the first foreign language film to win best picture. The wins put a diverse film front-and-center during a ceremony that had been criticized for its lack of diversity in several categories, with only one actor of color nominated and no women recognized in the directing category.

Those omissions came amid efforts by both the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which hosts the Oscars, and the broader industry to have more diversity in its films and filmmakers. Known for liberal leanings, Hollywood is a regular target of Trump’s conservative base.

Many have seen the best picture win as a sign that the film industry will become more global, a shift that’s already playing out in box-office receipts. Before the coronavirus outbreak, it was expected

that China would become the world’s No. 1 film market, surpassing North America.

Trump has a record of criticizing Asian leaders, particularly South Korea’s, going so far as to mock them with a fake Asian accent.

Meanwhile, “Gone with the Wind” shot to No. 1 among topics trending on Twitter Thursday night. The 1939 antebellum epic, based on Margaret Mitchell’s novel, follows belle Scarlett O’Hara at her Georgia plantation home as the South braces for the Civil War. The movie went on to become a hit and snagged eight Academy Awards, including best picture.

But in the last few decades, the movie has been criticized for its romanticized portrayal of slavery, with its main characters oblivious to the horrors experienced by those kept in bondage.

Baby Yoda toys from Disney “The Mandalorian” to hit store shelves next month

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Baby Yoda toys from Walt Disney Co.’s streaming TV hit “The Mandalorian” will reach store shelves next month, the company said on Thursday, after missing the 2019 holiday shopping season.

The character, officially called The Child, but which has been dubbed Baby Yoda by fans, is the breakout star of the “Star Wars”-themed show on the Disney+ subscription streaming service.

Fans have clamored for toys and merchandise since the service’s debut in November. But Baby Yoda toys were not available before the premier season of “The Mandalorian” because the creators wanted to maintain the show’s secrecy, executive producer Dave Filoni said

in an interview in New York.

Toys from other shows including “Star Wars: The Clone Wars” will also go on sale next month.

Disney partnered with toy makers Hasbro Inc, Funko Inc and Mattel Inc to make board games, figures and costumes. Pre-sales of some of the products began last year and customers are expected to receive their orders starting next month.

Paul Southern, senior vice president of franchise for the “Star Wars” consumer products division for Lucasfilm, said during a panel that he and his product development team were on a tighter deadline to create products, despite missing the holiday shopping season, which caused much

controversy with fans.

“We had to re-engineer the way that we go to market,” Southern said.

Southern said that Disney+ has completely changed how the company releases products.

“Disney+ is a different paradigm,” Southern said. “People are going to see products on shelves on a 365-day basis.”

Southern said that having content and shows constantly available to consumers keeps viewers interested in products year-round.

The second season of “The Mandalorian” is set for release in October and the final season of “Star Wars: The Clone Wars” premieres on Feb. 21.