



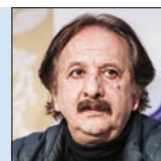
India must confront extremist Hindus **2**



Iran 'a role model for world' in fight against coronavirus: WHO **9**



Iran's Abbasali undergoes successful ACL injury **11**



Majidi warns about higher risk of coronavirus for child laborers **12**

Countdown for U.S. expulsion has begun, says Shamkhani



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Iran designs AVC system for hydroelectric power plants

TEHRAN — Iranian experts and engineers have indigenized the knowledge for manufacturing automatic voltage control (AVC) system, which is high-technology equipment used in hydroelectric power plants, IRNA reported.

"This is the first major power plant equipment that has been completely designed by Iranian specialists and will be

used in hydroelectric power plants after final approval," a deputy with Iran Water and Power Resources Development Company (IWPCO) said.

"Hydroelectric power plants have several major components with high technology and are produced by a limited number of countries, one of which is AVC," Jalaedin Hojati said. **→4**

Terrorist team ringleader killed in southeastern Iran

TEHRAN — The Intelligence Ministry announced on Sunday that a terrorist team affiliated to the outlawed group of Jeish al Adl (the Army of Justice) came under attack as soon as they crossed Pakistan's border into the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, resulting in the killing of the team's leader.

"Following a series of complicated

and vast intelligence operations in the other side of the borders (in Pakistan), a terrorist team which was affiliated to the terrorist group of Jeish al Adl, was detected by the intelligence forces of Sistan-Baluchestan province as soon as they crossed the border and entered the country," the ministry stated. **→3**

MbS top royal rivals arrested in apparent power consolidation

TEHRAN — Saudi state media has yet to announce the arrests Friday of top rivals to Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman — former Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Nayef, his younger brother Prince Nawaf, and King Salman's last surviving full brother, Prince Ahmed Bin Abdel Aziz. U.S. media outlets broke the story Friday, leaving Arab media to guess what prompted the move.

Arab media continues to speculate over

the motives behind the abrupt and unannounced arrest Friday of the Saudi royals.

Two Saudis close to the royal family said Nayef bin Ahmed bin Abdulaziz had been arrested on Saturday, The New York Times reported.

Prince Nayef has held positions in both the Saudi Interior Ministry and the military. A Saudi military website still lists him in his former role as the head of army intelligence. **→10**



ARTICLE

Salman Parviz
Journalist

Reactions on India sectarian riots

The leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei urged India on Thursday to "confront extremist Hindus" and "stop the massacre of Muslims", adding to international fallout over deadly anti-Muslim violence in New Delhi.

"The hearts of Muslims all over the world are grieving over the massacre of Muslims in India," the Leader tweeted in English, just days after New Delhi rebuked Iran's foreign minister for commenting on the same issue.

At least 47 people were killed and hundreds injured in the worst communal riots between supporters of a new citizenship law and those against it in the Indian capital of New Delhi in decades. The riots broke out on February 23, during the same time U.S. President Donald Trump was visiting India.

The violence raged across the northeast of India's capital for four days as Mosques were set alight, Muslims were burned alive in their homes or dragged out into the streets and lynched. Muslim businesses and property were also set alight. The police have been accused of enabling, encouraging or even joining the Hindu mobs.

The Indian government backtracked Saturday after slapping a 48-hour ban on two TV channels for what officials called biased coverage of New Delhi riots, reports AFP.

A blackout of Asianet News and MediaOne was ordered on Friday but lifted after an outcry from opposition groups and protests by the channels to the information and broadcasting ministry.

Citizenship Amendment Act was passed by the Indian parliament in December last year sparking protests and riots across the country. It grants Indian citizenship to all migrants from India's three neighboring countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, except Muslims.

Earlier on Monday Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif tweeted "Iran condemns the wave of organized violence against Indian Muslims." Indian authorities later on Tuesday summoned Iran's Ambassador to India Ali Chegeni to file "strong protest" over Zarif's tweet. **→7**

The coronavirus and a look at the principle of continuity of public services

By Seyed Ehsan Raisossadati
Professor in public law

TEHRAN — One of the basic concepts related to public administration theory is the principles of public service. The principles determines the executive framework and the ways in which public administrative theory enters into force. Because of their importance in social life, "public services" adhere to principles which are the foundation of administrative law, justifying and legitimizing many rules and regulations of administrative law.

These principals are: equality, compatibility, continuity, adaptability, precedence and free public services.

Since public service activities are essential to the development of social interdependence and have a nature that can rarely be fully realized without the intervention of government. In this regard, it is still a fundamental theory of modern public law and remains the spirit of modern administrative law. One of the most important principles of public services is continuity.

Principle of continuity of public services cannot be discontinued due to the necessity of a constant response to public demands. This principle places a burden on public and administrative authorities, whereby the continuity of the public services must be properly

guaranteed. This principle originates from the necessity of community administration and is of great importance in matters such as security, health care, and so on.

Characteristics and implementation of the principle of continuity of public services have been stated that services must be provided continuously and consistently, as these activities are relevant to the general public and the daily needs of the people. Hospitals, for example, cannot refuse to accept patients during certain hours such as at nights because such services must be provided on a continuous basis. Any interruption in public services can cause anxiety and disturb the peace of people's lives. **→7**

Damascus won't let Ankara split any Syrian territory in embattled Idlib: Jaafari

Syria's Ambassador to the United Nations Bashar al-Jaafari says the Damascus government and the Syrian nation will not allow Turkey to split and annex any part of the Arab country's embattled northwestern province of Idlib.

"I can confirm that Syrian leadership besides Syrian people will not allow [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan or anyone else to repeat in Idlib what happened in Alexandretta," Jaafari said in an exclusive interview with the Arabic-language online newspaper Elnashra on Saturday.

In 1939, Turkey annexed the historically Syrian land of Alexandretta to its territory and renamed it as the province of Hatay. The region is located on the coast north of Latakia.

The Syrian envoy said there is no difference between Erdogan and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "as they are both

occupiers and aggressive."

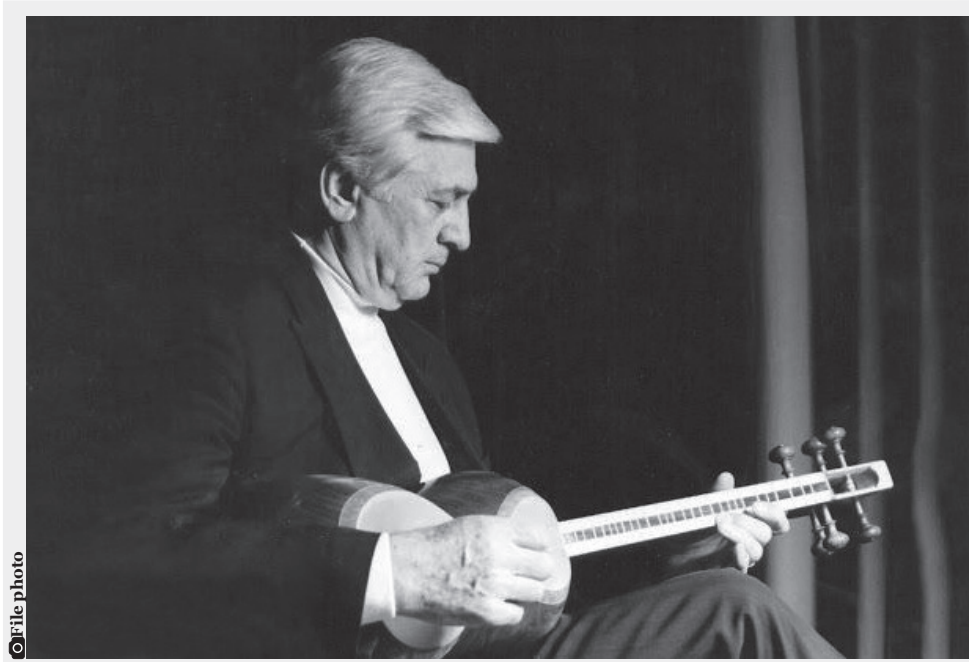
"What we care about in Syria is the elimination of terrorism and the establishment of full control and sovereignty over Syrian soil. If Erdogan listens to the voice of wisdom, puts an end to his support for terrorism, refrains from destructive interference in Syria and stops wasting the blood of forces of his aggressive and occupying army, this will serve peace and stability of all peoples of the region, including the neighboring Turkish nation," he added.

Jaafari warned that if the Turkish president insists on his "aggressive approach, nothing will prevent us from continuing our war against terrorism and all those who support, arm, finance, and use it for political gains."

He went on to say that Turkey has violated the 2018 Sochi agreement, signed between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Erdogan, by con-

verting Turkish observation points in Syria into safe havens to protect militant groups designated as terrorist, noting Ankara did not commit to withdraw terrorist groups to a distance of twenty kilometers (12.42 miles) west of the Abu Dahour road between Aleppo and Idlib.

"On the contrary, the number of terrorists, especially foreigners, increased in Idlib, and instead of withdrawing all tanks, rocket launchers and mortars from the demilitarized zone by October 10, 2018, thousands of soldiers plus heavy military hardware were deployed inside the Syrian territory. We never expected Erdogan to honor his pledges, because this simply means the end of his reckless adventures in Syria, and an end to his political and military interventions in other countries," the Syrian UN ambassador pointed out. **→10**



©File photo

Tar virtuoso Hushang Zarif dies at 81

TEHRAN — Iranian tar virtuoso Hushang Zarif who is most famous for his education for various generations of Iranian musicians died of heart failure on Saturday at his home in Tehran at the age of 81.

He had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease over the past few years, his wife, Pari Salehi, told the Persian media.

There will be no memorial service due to the spread of the new coronavirus, she said.

Earlier in February, the 35th Fajr Music Festival honored Zarif for his lifetime achievements. However, he could not attend the festival due to his illness. **→12**



ARTICLE

Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

With solidarity, Iran will pull through

Some 70,000 Iranians and veterans whose health was damaged by chemical warfare and who are still living with injuries caused by Western chemical agents supplied to Saddam Hussein in the 1980s are reportedly at extreme risk of dying from the Covid 19 virus, and some of these veterans already have been struck down in Iran.

Also, a disgusted Iran native, an academic at Princeton University in New Jersey, points out that an organization called "United Against Nuclear Iran" (UANI) has long been leading efforts to pressure companies to stop doing business with Iran. Lately, pressure by this organization has been directed at major pharmaceutical companies to halt any business they have with Iran under what has been dubbed "humanitarian exemptions" given the fact that Iran has already been hard hit by the spread of Covid 19.

A sane person can't make this stuff up because it goes far beyond ANY sense of a "humanitarian" spirit and, you guessed it, the primary funders of this group are none other than billionaire Jewish Zionists like Sheldon Adelson and Thomas Kaplan. Other names that have been or remain associated with "United Against Nuclear Iran" are individuals (to name just a few) such as former U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman, Dennis Ross, Richard Holbrooke, John Bolton and even Mike Pompeo -- all prominent people and Zionists who have been involved through various postings at one time or another in setting U.S. foreign policies.

Major companies (among others) allegedly urged by UANI to halt whatever business they do with Iran include Bayer, Pfizer, Eli Lilly and Abbott Laboratories at a time when the legal channels for humanitarian exchange are not apparently providing enough medicines and related goods to help Iran alleviate the sufferings of Covid 19 victims and to halt the viral spread inside Iran.

The ultimate absurdity is that UANI claims it cares about the Iranian people. But this and similar claims by the Trump Administration and by others associated with crafting cruel U.S. policies now and in the past towards Iran have been lies and subterfuges aimed largely at encouraging Iran's citizens to foment discord inside the Islamic Republic. **→7**

Leader: India must confront extremist Hindus

‘India must prevent killing of Muslims to avoid isolation in Muslim world’

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Thursday warned the government of India against continued massacre of Muslims, saying that the current pogrom going on against Muslim people in the South Asian country will lead to isolation of New Delhi in the Islamic world.

The Leader made the remarks in a statement tweeted in Urdu, English and Persian on Thursday in condemnation of the brutal killing of more than 40 Muslims during a four-day span of violence that began in New Delhi on February 23, Press TV reported.



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قلب مسلمانان جهان از کشتار مسلمانان در هند چرخه دار است. دولت هند باید در مقابل هتوهای افراطی و احزاب طرفدار آنها بایستد و با توقف کشتار مسلمانان، از انزوی خود در جهان اسلام جلوگیری کند.



“The hearts of Muslims all over the world are grieving over the massacre of Muslims in India,” Ayatollah Khamenei remarked. “The govt. of India should confront extremist Hindus & their parties & stop the massacre of Muslims in order to prevent India’s isolation from the world of Islam,” the tweet went on.

The violence saw the Hindu mobsters setting mosques on fire and burning Muslims alive in their homes or dragging them out into the streets and lynching them.

On Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote a tweet, urging “Indian authorities to ensure the well-being of ALL Indians & not let senseless thuggery prevail,” adding that the “path forward lies in peaceful dialogue and rule of law.”

India summoned the Iranian ambassador to New Delhi afterwards to protest the comments. The Indian Foreign Ministry’s spokesman Raveesh Kumar said a “strong protest was lodged against the unwarranted remarks,” which he called “not acceptable.”

The violence came following protests by India’s Muslim minority against the Indian government’s approval of a controversial law last December.

The law offers a path to Indian citizenship for six religious groups from three neighboring countries, but specifically excludes Muslims. Critics insist the law is discriminatory and comes in the wake of other severe government measures against the country’s Muslim population such as withdrawal of autonomy for Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir province that has intensified discord across India about the future of its 200 million Muslims.

Kumar, however, defended the legislation, saying the government was confident in its legality.

On Tuesday, Iranian people, university students, and seminarists held a protest in front of the Indian embassy in the capital Tehran to denounce the massacre.

The Iranian demonstrators shouted slogans and held up placards bearing statements in support of the Muslims and condemnation of the slaughter.

Some held up pictures showing the harrowing aftermath of the bloodshed.

The protesters urged international and humanitarian organizations to break their silence on the atrocity, decrying censorship attempts aimed at imposing a media blackout on the violence.

The participants called New Delhi to account over the massacre and asked the Islamic Republic’s diplomatic authorities to contribute to efforts that would prevent such atrocities.

The President of Pakistan Arif Alvi thanked Ayatollah Khamenei in a Thursday tweet, stressing that “there must be a unified stance on this dangerous issue.”

He added that if left unchecked, the current turn of events “may lead to Muslim genocide in India.”

The Pakistani president also drew an analogy between the massacre of Muslims in India and the killing of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, likening them to “Nazi extremism” and emphasizing, “Let the world not ignore obvious similarities.”

Rouhani says public trust and transparency important in countering coronavirus

POLITICAL TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has attached great importance to transparency and public trust in fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

During a meeting of the “National Headquarters for Fighting Coronavirus” on Saturday, Rouhani said that “trust and empathy” between the people and the government are very important at such a situation that the virus has spread to all across the country.

“Success in the fight against the coronavirus in shortest period of time is contingent upon the people and also executive bodies’ cooperation with the national headquarters for fighting coronavirus,” he said.

He also asked the people to take care and avoid unnecessary traffic and inter-city travels.

Rouhani also noted, “In fight against the coronavirus, transparency and public trust are very important. Therefore, emphasis must be put on providing transparency and timely distribution of information and reports.”

He also praised the good progress in equipping the laboratories.

However, he said, “According to the statistics and information provided by different provinces, the number of laboratories should be expanded accordingly.”

Iran is currently battling the world’s deadliest outbreak of the coronavirus outside China, where it originated.

Head of Iranian Health Ministry’s Public Relations and Information Center Kianoush Jahanpour confirmed on Sunday 743 new cases of infection, including 49 deaths.

The record-breaking increase in the number of new infections raises the total number of confirmed cases to 6,566 and the overall death toll to 194.

The World Health Organization has hailed Iran’s strategies and priorities to control coronavirus.

“IR Iran strategies/priorities to control #COVID19 are evolving in the right direction & positive work is being done around case management, infection prevention/control, labs, risk comm. & whole of government approach,” WHO said in a tweet on March 5.

According to Press TV, Emergency Director for WHO’s Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Richard Brennan told journalists in Tehran on Saturday that the organization will “provide all the support” to the Iranian government in its fight against the coronavirus.

“We are very optimistic that together we will make excellent progress,” he said.

U.S. sanctions against Iran is ‘medical terrorism’: Zarif

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian

d e s k Foreign Minister

Mohammad Javad Zarif, on his official Twitter on Saturday, lashed out at U.S. President Donald Trump for intensifying unilateral sanctions on Tehran amid COVID-19 outbreak across the country, noting that the move is nothing but “medical terrorism.”

According to the Intercept’s report released on Friday, despite a massive coronavirus-related public health crisis, an anti-Iran pressure group with close ties to the Trump administration is urging major pharmaceutical companies to “end their Iran business,” focusing on companies with special licenses — most often under a broadly defined “humanitarian exemption” — to conduct trade with Iran.

Zarif in his tweet reacted sharply to the move.

“Donald Trump is maliciously tightening U.S. illegal sanctions with aim of draining Iran’s resources needed in the fight against COVID19—while our citizens are dying from it,” Zarif tweeted.

The foreign minister added, “The world can no longer be silent as U.S. Economic Terrorism is supplanted by its Medical Terrorism.”

Following the virus outbreak, the Iranian authorities ordered the closure of schools, universities and cultural events in a bid to contain the disease.

According to the Health Ministry’s offi-



cial data on Saturday showed that a totally 5,823 Iranian nationals have been infected by the virus that 145 have lost their lives.

In early February, First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri said that the United States was lying when it claims that pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and foodstuff were not subject to its sanctions list on Iran.

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

“We have billions of dollars in different countries, including South Korea and Japan, but, the U.S. prevents us from utilizing

our own money to procure medicine and foodstuff for the country,” Jahangiri said on the sidelines of a ceremony in Tehran at the time.

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

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

Trump himself has called sanctions against

Message of condolences over death of newly-elected female MP who had contracted coronavirus

POLITICAL TEHRAN — A number of

d e s k reformist and principlist

figures have expressed sorrow over death of Fatemeh Rahbar, who lost her life on Saturday due to COVID-19 infection.

Rahbar, 56, a conservative female politician, was elected to the parliament in the Feb. 2 parliamentary election from the Tehran constituency.

She is among seven politicians who have died from the coronavirus outbreak since the country reported its first cases in mid-February.

Reformist lawmaker Mohammad Reza Aref; newly-elected MP and former Tehran mayor Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf; senior cleric Gholam Reza Mesbahi Moghadam; the women’s faction in the sitting parliament; and a number of political parties and figures expressed condolences over her death.

Rahbar was among the top principlist candidates in Tehran, who overwhelmingly won the February elections. She had served as lawmaker for three consecutive four-year terms.

Hossein Sheikholeslam, Iran’s former ambassador to Syria, former advisor to current Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and former MP, also died from coronavirus on Thursday.

On March 2, Mohammad Mirmohammadi, a member of the Expediency Council and former parliamentarian, also died due to the same infection.

Iran has been scrambling to contain the rapid spread of the infection.

In a briefing on Sunday, the Health Ministry announced the number of people diagnosed with the novel coronavirus in Iran has increased to 6,566, of whom 194 have

died and 2134 recovered so far.

Deputy Health Minister Kiyanoush Jahanpour said over the past 24 hours, 743 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, adding 49 have died during the mentioned period.

Deputy Health Minister Iraj Harirchi and a number of parliamentarians, including Mahmoud Sadeghi, have also contracted the virus.

In late February, Mohammad Ali Ramezani, who was recently reelected to parliament from Astaneh Ashrafiyeh in northern Gilan province, also died due to respiratory problems caused by coronavirus.

Iran has closed schools and universities, suspended major cultural and sporting events and reduced working hours across the country to slow the contagion, which has spread to all of its provinces.



Iranian authorities also ordered closure of the gyms and sports events by the end of winter.

The coronavirus is spreading in the Middle East, Europe, the U.S. and other parts of the world, while parts of China begin to lower their emergency response level as the number of new cases reported there continues to slow.

Fighting coronavirus requires intl. cooperation, Zarif says

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian

d e s k Foreign Minister Moham-

mad Javad Zarif said on Friday that fighting the coronavirus outbreak requires international cooperation.

In a phone conversation with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah, Zarif said that Iran is prepared to exchange views and experiences in the battle against

the coronavirus.

As of Sunday afternoon (March 8), 194 Iranian citizens have lost their lives because of the coronavirus, known as Kovid-19.

Also, until Sunday, 6,566 have been diagnosed with the virus of which 2,134 have recovered.

Writing on his official Twitter on Saturday, Zarif lashed out at U.S. President Donald

Trump for intensifying unilateral sanctions on Tehran amid COVID-19 outbreak across the country, noting that the move is nothing but “medical terrorism”.

Zarif also held telephone conversation with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on Friday and discussed the latest developments surrounding the coronavirus outbreak. The virus first emerged in China in Decem-

ber last year and is now spreading in North America, Europe and across the Middle East, sparking fears of a global pandemic. The virus is spreading rapidly in the region, with cases recorded in many countries.

Zarif also help separate phone conversations with his Norwegian Swiss, Austrian and Pakistani counterparts on ways to cooperate to contain the deadly virus.

Medical staff’s efforts reminding about sacred defense days: Air Force commander

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran’s Air Force commander

on Saturday hailed the sacrifices by the medical staff in their relentless work to contain the coronavirus outbreak, saying their sacrifices remind about the armed forces’ sacred defense against the invading Saddam Hussein’s army against Iran in the 1980s.

Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh said defending the nation has no border and is not restricted to a special uniform. “We appreciate you and pray for you,” the commander said.

In relevant remarks on Friday, Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani hailed people for cooperation with the Health

Ministry in the fight against the novel coronavirus.

“I express my gratitude to the Iranian people, especially the citizens of Qom, Gilan and Tehran, for their great hope and unity in the battle against coronavirus,” Larijani wrote on his Instagram post.

The parliament speaker appreciated the selfless endeavors of the health officials and personnel to contain the virus outbreak, expressing hope that the situation would improve in the near future.

The death toll from the coronavirus outbreak, officially known as COVID-19, has risen to 194 with 6,566 con-

firmed cases in Iran, according to the Health Ministry’s Sunday data.

He also expressed commiseration with the families of the victims and wished a speedy recovery for those suffering from the disease.

According to the data, over 2,134 infected persons have so far recovered.

Earlier this month, the Army ground force commander expressed satisfaction about the ongoing campaign against coronavirus outbreak across the country, vowing to use the force’s full capacities to counter the epidemic.

‘UK wants a better relationship with Iran in post-Brexit period’

POLITICAL TEHRAN — A source

d e s k close to British Prime

Minister Boris Johnson has said that the United Kingdom wants a better relationship with Iran in the post-Brexit period.

“The UK wants a better relationship with Iran. Our response to the coronavirus outbreak shows that we are committed to working together on issues of shared concern,” the source said in an exclusive interview with the IRNA correspondent.

Following is the full text of the interview published on Saturday:

■ Following Britain’s exit from the EU, the prime minister has launched a review on the UU foreign policy to re-define the country’s place in the world. How does the PM look at the UK and Iran’s relationship in the post Brexit period?

A: The UK wants a better relationship with Iran. Our response to the coronavirus outbreak shows that we are committed to working together on issues of shared concern.

And we remain committed to working with Iran to preserve the JCPOA nuclear deal. But Iran’s recent decisions to reduce its compliance with the deal are a major concern. Our objective, alongside France and Germany, in

triggering the deal’s dispute mechanism is to preserve it and work with all parties, including Iran, to find a diplomatic way forward.

■ For many, the idea of the UK leaving the EU means that it will get closer to U.S. policies. Does the PM agree with this view?

A: The UK continues to work closely with our partners on foreign policy, including the EU and the U.S.

But we have also been clear that where we disagree with any partner; we will always seek open and frank discussions – and when we think something is wrong, we say it.

■ Does the United Kingdom’s independence from the EU makes the case for any coordinated London-Washington approach towards Iran and in contrary to the EU’s position?

A: The UK’s foreign policy will not be determined by choosing between the U.S., Europe or indeed anyone else, but instead by considered judgements of where our national interests lie.

■ Could you also elaborate on the idea of “Trump’s deal”, and if it means the UK is signaling to withdraw from JCPOA?

A: The JCPOA is the only deal that currently exists to prevent nuclear proliferation, and we are committed to preserving it.

■ When there is a case for Trump’s deal, there will always be a case for U.S. deal after President Trump. This will become a precedent in international norms that the U.S. pulls out of an internationally agreed deal and pushes for another one. Would you agree with this statement?

A: The JCPOA is the only deal that currently exists to prevent nuclear proliferation, and we are committed to preserving it.

It’s no secret that we and the U.S. have different views on the nuclear deal. We have always said we regret U.S. withdrawal and the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions. But as the prime minister has said before, including at the UN General Assembly in September, if in the future we can agree a better deal that has the support of the U.S. as well then that is something we will work towards.

■ It was reported that the U.S. is putting pressure on the UK that if it wants a post-Brexit trade deal with the U.S., it must withdraw from the JCPOA.

If this is true what has been the UK’s response?

A: We remain committed to finding a diplomatic way forward to preserve the JCPOA. ■ The outbreak of Coronavirus in Iran

in worrisome. The country is largely suffering from access to medication due to U.S. sanctions. It was mentioned recently in the briefing that the UK will cooperate with other countries to combat the virus. Does this include cooperation with Iran? If so in what form and scale?

A: We continue to work closely with the WHO and the international community to ensure that we can best work together on our response to this outbreak.

As announced this week, the UK, together with France and Germany, are offering UN agencies in Iran a comprehensive package of material and financial support to combat the rapid spread of the disease there.

■ Will the UK try to persuade the U.S. to practically lift medical sanctions on Iran to combat this global outbreak?

A: As we’ve said before, we do not agree with the policy of maximum economic pressure. We work closely with the U.S. on matters relating to the Middle East, and the U.S. is aware of our position.

We, alongside international partners, are developing INSTEX as a mechanism to overcome some of the blockages in financial channels for trade with Iran.

Countdown for U.S. expulsion from region has begun, says Shamkhani

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), has said countdown has begun for the expulsion of U.S. forces from the region.

Shamkhani made the remarks in a meeting with Chief of Iraq's Intelligence Service (IIS) Mustafa al-Kazemi in Baghdad on Sunday. "Assassinating generals of the Axis of Resistance, Marty Haj Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, was the result of a strategic mistake by Trump and the evil team in the White House. The countdown for the expulsion of America from the region began the early morning of Friday, Jan. 3," Shamkhani said.

Shamkhani's trip to Baghdad comes in the wake of the U.S. assassination of Iran's top anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani and his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis in Baghdad.

General Soleimani was in Baghdad at the invitation of the Iraqi government when he was targeted in Baghdad's international airport on January 3.

The terrorist act led to a crisis in diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Iraq, which demanded that the American troops leave the country.

The Trump administration has been defiant and instead threatened to seize Iraq's oil money being held in a bank account in New York as compensation for its military presence in the Arab country.

Meanwhile, some individuals in Iraq's intelligence agency have been implicated in the assassination. It is not clear if the issue will feature in the Iranian security official's talks in Baghdad. Shamkhani has traveled to Iraq to exchange views with Iraqi officials on security and political issues. He arrived in Baghdad on Saturday night, heading a high-ranking delegation.



Upon arrival, he said he would hold talks with Iraqi President Barham Salih, caretaker Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi, Parliament Speaker Mohamed al-Halbousi and leaders from different political factions.

In a Sunday joint press conference with Iraq's National Security Adviser and the head of the PMU Fali al-Fayadh in Baghdad, Shamkhani hailed the two countries' efforts to drive the U.S. out of the region.

"Measures taken by the Iraqi government, parliament, and nation, who have demanded to oust U.S. forces in their huge rallies, deserve gratitude," Shamkhani said, according to Mehr.

He also referred to the Zionist regime as the enemy of regional peace and security, hoping that Iraq will be able to bring back

stability and security to its territory.

Shamkhani said that in his meeting with al-Fayadh, they have discussed regional and security affairs with a focus on the role of Iraq in such issues.

Calling for expansion of bilateral ties with Iran, al-Fayadh, for his part, said Iraqis will never forget Iran's anti-Daesh measures and efforts.

Iran has maintained brotherly relations with neighboring Iraq since the ouster of former dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003, Press TV quoted him as saying.

In 2014, when Daesh (ISIL) unleashed its campaign of terror in Iraq, Iranian military advisers rushed to the aid of Iraqi armed forces on Baghdad's request, helping them gradually reverse the Takfiri terrorist group's gains and ultimately liberate their entire

homeland some three years later.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Shamkhani referred to the outbreak of a new coronavirus in the region, saying that both facts and rumors were spreading about the epidemic.

The fact is that the Islamic Republic is in possession of abundant resources and will score a victory over the epidemic, he noted.

The virus, known as COVID-19, first emerged in China late last year and is now spreading in Europe and across the Middle East, sparking fears of a global pandemic.

On Sunday, Iran's Health Ministry reported 194 deaths and 6,566 infections. 2,134 have recovered.

The illness, whose symptoms are fever, cough and difficulty breathing, may cause lung lesions and pneumonia.

MP urges Indian govt. to prevent cruelty against Muslims

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh, a member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has urged the Indian government to take action in stopping a continuation of cruelty against the Muslims.

In an interview with ISNA published on Sunday, Falahatpisheh condemned killing of the Indian Muslims and said the extremist Hindus' actions are violation of the United Nations Charter.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has warned the Indian government against continued massacre of Muslims, saying that the current pogrom against Muslim people in the South Asian country will lead to isolation of New Delhi in the Islamic world.

The Leader made the remarks in a statement tweeted in Urdu, English and Persian on Thursday in condemnation of the brutal killing of more than 40 Muslims during a four-day span of violence that began in New Delhi on February 23.

"The hearts of Muslims all over the world are grieving over the massacre of Muslims in India," Ayatollah Khamenei remarked. "The govt. of India should confront extremist Hindus & their parties & stop the massacre of Muslims in order to prevent India's isolation from the world of Islam," the Leader pointed out.

The violence saw the Hindu mobsters setting mosques on



fire and burning Muslims alive in their homes or dragging them out into the streets and lynching them.

According to Press TV, anti-Muslim violence began in India amid widespread protests over a citizenship law that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government introduced in December, offering a path to Indian citizenship for six religious groups from neighboring countries, specifically excluding Muslims.

Critics insist the law is discriminatory, coming in the wake of other severe government measures against the country's Muslim population such as withdrawal of autonomy for Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir province that has

intensified discord across India about the future of its 200 million Muslims.

In a tweet on March 2, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif condemned violence against Indian Muslims.

"For centuries, Iran has been a friend of India. We urge Indian authorities to ensure the wellbeing of ALL Indians and not let senseless thuggery prevail," Zarif said.

"Path forward lies in peaceful dialogue and rule of law," he added.

During a meeting with Indian Foreign Ministry director general for political affairs, Iranian Ambassador to New Delhi Ali Chegeni said India is famous among Iranians as the land of peaceful co-existence and expressed hope that all Indian citizens would enjoy "peace and friendship" through wise decisions by the Indian government and officials.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has supported Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's stance on the wave of organized violence against Indian Muslims.

"Fully share the concerns expressed by my brother Javad Zarif on safety and well-being of Indian Muslims facing naked violence from RSS mobs. India is in throes of grave communal violence. Their sinister and systematic killing of Muslims is inhuman and dangerous for whole region," Qureshi tweeted on March 3.

Advisor slams U.S. for blocking shipment of coronavirus equipment

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, has denounced the United States for not allowing shipment of coronavirus medical equipment to Iran, saying the U.S. is targeting ordinary Iranians.

"The USA has not allowed shipment of #COVID19 medicines/medical equipment to #Iran," Amir Abdollahian said in a tweet on Saturday.

"The American officials are apparently lying; no suspension has yet been ordered on the #sanctions impacting ordinary people," he said. "America is targeting Iranian nation."

On February 27, the United States announced that it has granted a license to allow for certain humanitarian trade transactions, including food, medicine and other critical supplies, with Iran's sanctioned central bank, a move it said was in step with the formalization of the Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA).

"The SHTA will further facilitate the flow of humanitarian goods to the Iranian people," the statement said.

"The SHTA is the first operational channel established under the framework announced by the U.S. Department of State and the Treasury in October 2019 to facilitate humanitarian trade with Iran. Initial transactions were successfully conducted in late January 2020 to demonstrate the viability and effectiveness of the SHTA."

According to the U.S. Treasury, while the United States maintains broad exceptions and authorizations for the conduct of humanitarian trade with Iran, the SHTA presents a voluntary option for facilitating payment for exports of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, and medical devices to Iran in a manner that ensures the upmost transparency.

"Companies within Swiss jurisdiction may reach out to Switzerland's State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) at SHTA@seco.admin.ch for further details on requirements

and instructions for participating in the SHTA. This includes entities that are owned or controlled by U.S. and third-country persons and domiciled in Switzerland. Parties may continue to avail themselves of existing exceptions and authorizations to conduct humanitarian trade with Iran outside of the humanitarian channel."

However, Tehran later denounced Washington's false expression of readiness to assist Iran in the fight against coronavirus outbreak as a "ridiculous" and "hypocritical" move and part of a political and psychological game.

Last week, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi responded to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's claim about helping Iran in the battle with the infectious disease, which has been hugely publicized in the media and has been widely advertised before informing Iran.

"The claim of helping Iran in the fight against coronavirus, made by a country that has exerted massive pressures on the Iranian

people with its economic terrorism and has even blocked the (Iranian) purchase of medicine and medical equipment, is a ridiculous claim and a political-psychological game," Mousavi said.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran is in close contact with many countries in order to satisfy the country's pharmaceutical and health demands and to combat the coronavirus, and so far a considerable part of the country's critical needs, including 100,000 (COVID-19) diagnostic kits, surgery masks, medical ventilators, etc. have been supplied from the friendly countries, and other consignments are also on the way which will be publicized in due time," he noted.

On March 5, China called for the immediate lifting of the sanctions against Iran given the severe outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, saying the unilateral move hinders Iran and the international community in the fight against the virus and will only make the situation worse.

transactions, including food, medicine and other critical supplies, with Iran's sanctioned central bank, a move it said was in step with the formalization of a Swiss humanitarian aid channel.

On March 2, the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran lamented that despite its establishment, Swiss Humanitarian Trade Agreement external link (SHTA)- trade agreement supposed to allow companies to send food, medicine and other critical supplies to Iran has not become operational yet.

On March 5, China called for the immediate lifting of the sanctions against Iran given the severe outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, saying the unilateral move hinders Iran and the international community in the fight against the virus and will only make the situation worse.

Tehran hits back at Washington over coronavirus accusations

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Point a finger at Iran and there will be "three fingers" pointing right back "at you", Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi says, responding to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

"Only an administration infected with acute mismanagement, deception & lies could be so hideous to level senseless accusations against #Iranian who're sacrificially struggling to shield humanity against #COVID19 pandemic," Mousavi said via Twitter on Saturday.



"Point a finger & there are 3 more pointing back at you," he said. Mousavi attached footage of a House panel over the U.S. response to the coronavirus, in which Pompeo was grilled over the issue.

COVID-19, the formal name for the illness caused by a new coronavirus, emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December. More than 100,000 cases have been confirmed worldwide and more than 3,500 people have died as a result of the virus, the majority of whom were in China.

Pompeo has claimed that the Islamic Republic did not have a solid healthcare infrastructure and said the United States had offered to help with the coronavirus response in Iran.

"We have made offers to the Islamic Republic of Iran to help. And we've made clear to others around the world and in the region that assistance, humanitarian assistance to push back against the coronavirus in Iran is something that the United States of America fully supports. We will continue to support," Pompeo said last week.

Afterwards, Iran dismissed his claim as "hypocritical", saying such remarks pursue political purposes and aim to distract the world public opinion.

"The claim on helping Iran fight the coronavirus which has been made by a country that led to extensive pressure on the Iranian people through its economic terrorism and even blocked the way to the purchase of medicine and medical equipment is a ridiculous claim and a political and psychological play," Mousavi said last week, according to Press TV.

He added that the Iranian Foreign Ministry had been in close contact with many countries in order to supply pharmaceutical and health needs to contain the outbreak of the disease. Iran, he added, has obtained the means of support to that end through certain friendly countries.

The Iranian spokesman emphasized that the fight against the coronavirus, which has turned into a global epidemic and spread to many countries, requires collective determination and broad international cooperation. Mousavi dismissed some politically-motivated moves that seek to take advantage of the patients' condition.

Head of terrorist team killed in southeaster Iran: Intelligence Ministry

1→ It added, "The forces ambushed the team and killed Elyas Narouei, nicknamed Zobeir, the team's head at the scene."

"Two fire guns, a batch of ammunitions and equipment for building bombs were seized in the operation," the ministry said.



Narouei had staged a number of terrorist attacks in the province, including commanding attack on the IRGC base in Nikshahr, exploding the Khash-Zahedan bus in a suicide, and planting a bomb in front of police center in Zahedan, the capital of Sistan-Baluchestan province.

In the attack on the Khash-Zahedan bus in February 2019, a suicide bomber killed at least 27 members of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. Jeish al Adl claimed responsibility for the attack. The explosion was so powerful that the bus was turned into a twisted pile of metal.

Last month, the commander of the IRGC Ground Force said Saudi Arabia had 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 said members of the so-called Jeish al Adl 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 Jeish al Adl group, based in Pakistan, has been behind several bomb attacks and kidnappings in the southeast of Iran.

On October 15, 2018, the group infiltrated Iran from the Pakistani side of the border and took hostage 14 border guards, local Basij forces, and IRGC members.

Jeish al Adl was founded after its parent group, the al-Qaeda-affiliated Jundullah, was dissolved following the capture of its leader Abdolmalek Rigi in 2010.

50 Swiss companies interested in SHTA: SECO director

TEHRAN (MNA) — Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch, director of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) agency, has informed that 50 Swiss companies are interested in export channel to Iran, known as Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA).

"There are 50 companies that are interested at the moment, and we think there will be more," NY Times quoted Ineichen-Fleisch, director of the SECO agency that oversees the program, as saying.

"Iran has been especially hit by the coronavirus, and while there is no substance that helps against the virus, in general the health situation is difficult," she said in an interview with broadcaster SRF on Saturday.

"If we can provide some support there and ensure exports take place then we are making a good contribution."

The SHTA aims to ensure Swiss-based exporters and trading firms in the medical, pharmaceutical and food sectors have a secure channel with a Swiss bank to guarantee payment for exports to Iran.

The arrangement has been in the works since U.S. President Donald Trump reimposed sanctions in 2018 after walking away from a deal over Iran's nuclear program.

Iranian officials have lamented that despite U.S. officials' claims, sanctions on imports of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment to Iran have not been suspended and the U.S. Treasury does not allow the imports of Iran's purchased medicine and medical equipment for treating coronavirus patients to the country.

On February 27, the United States announced that it has granted a license to allow for certain humanitarian trade

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	549185.1
IFX	7041.00

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,409 rials
GBP	53,667 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$45.27b
WTI	\$41.28/b
OPEC Basket	\$51.74/b
Gold	\$1,677.50/oz
Silver	\$17.46/oz
Platinum	\$909.95/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran designs AVC system for hydroelectric power plants

➔ According to the official, the engineers and experts at the IWPCO have been working on the project in the past six years and managed to achieve this goal in the current year.



Hojati noted that the equipment is planned to be officially put into operation in the first half of the upcoming Iranian calendar year which begins on March 19.

The official put the costs of the production of this equipment at 30 billion rials (about \$714,000) which is significantly lower than the price the country had to pay to buy the equipment.

An automatic voltage control (AVC) system maintains the voltage profile of a power system in an acceptable range and minimizes the operational cost by coordinating the regulation of controllable components.

As a subsidiary of the Energy Ministry, IWPCO was established in 1989. The main responsibility of this company is to actualize a considerable part of the hydro power potentials of the country and develop the facilities of reserving and transferring of water.

BD’s economic growth to continue at 8.0 percent this FY, says Naoki

Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Naoki Ito has expressed the hope that Bangladesh’s economic growth will continue at 8.0 percent this fiscal year (FY) despite negative impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

“Despite negative impact of the coronavirus, Bangladesh economy will continue to grow at 8.0 per cent,” he said. There is a strong indication that the economy of Bangladesh is moving forward.

The Japanese envoy was addressing the 10th Networking Gathering of Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI) at a city hotel on Saturday.

JBCCI President and country representative of Japan External Trade Organization Yuji Ando and JBCCI Director Kabir Ahmed and General Secretary Tareq Rafi Bhuiyan also spoke on the occasion.

Mr. Ito expected that Bangladesh would be a true model of development and said Japan’s continuous support to be behind the efforts of the country as the largest and longest development partner and friendship.

He pointed out all investment and cooperation made by Japan under the comprehensive partnership signed between the two Prime Ministers of Japan and Bangladesh, and said the country’s growth is likely to accelerate further after completion of many of the Japan-funded infrastructure projects by 2024 and 2025.

■ Spread of coronavirus

Expressing concerns over the spread of coronavirus in Japan, he said the situation is expected to be contained by next week.

Despite the increase of virus-affected patients from 156 in February to 284 in March, the Ambassador said it is only 0.02 per cent of the total population.

The Japan government is preparing to host the Tokyo Olympic to be held in July 24 as IOC international committee already issued the statement to continue preparation for the event, he added.

Mr. Ito said Bangladesh is now a new economic frontier for the Japanese companies to invest in the future, and expressed the hope that the Japanese investment from both public and private sectors is likely to set a new era of development in Bangladesh.

Japanese investment flow increased to 160 per cent in the fiscal year 2018-2019 compared to the previous fiscal year, he said, adding that this has made Japan as one of the largest export destination of Bangladesh.

Japan wants to work on export diversification with investment plan in sectors like pharmaceuticals, information technology and engineering, he said.

Ambassador Ito said the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) has already hinted that Bangladesh would be among the top five to 10 countries to receive the bank’s finance and insurance coverage in the development partnership.

(Source: thefinanciallexpress.com.bd)

Commodities worth over \$1b traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Some 735,525 tons of commodities valued at \$1.047 billion were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) during the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

As reported by the Public Relations and International Affairs Department of IME, metal and mineral trading volume experienced a growth of 24 percent at this market over the past week.

On the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 344,525 tons of various products worth \$600 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 329,097 tons of steel, 7,300 tons of copper, 7,240 tons of aluminum, 250 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 18 tons of precious metal concentrates, 620 tons of zinc ingot as well as 24 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of

IME, 391,062 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$463 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 120,378 tons of bitumen, 113,500 tons of VB feed stock, 71,027 tons of polymer products, 44,000 tons of lube cut oil, 35,386 tons of chemical products, 2,240 tons of base oil, 100 tons of argon, 905 tons of insulation, as well as 3,525 tons of sulfur were traded.

As previously reported, over 2.56 million tons of commodities valued at \$3.648 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange during February.

During the last month, the oil and petrochemical trading floor of IME played host to trading of 1,644,350 tons of commodities worth more than \$1,897 million.

On this trading floor, more than 411,309 tons of bitumen, 324,615 tons of polymer products and 131,768 tons of chemical products, 562,475 tons of VB feed stock, 168,200 tons of lube cut oil, 26,110 tons of

Industry ministry authorizes 17 companies to import healthcare products



Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Abbas Qobadi

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade ministry has sent the list of 17 companies authorized for importing healthcare products to the Health Ministry.

According to Shata news, Deputy Industry Minister Abbas Qobadi has sent the list to the head of the Health Ministry’s Medical Equipment Department in order for the Health Ministry to announce their required equipment to the mentioned companies to be imported into the country.

The death fatalities from coronavirus in Iran reached 145 by Saturday afternoon, the Health Ministry announced.

The ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour also said until this date 5823 individuals have contracted the deadly virus.

Iran’s Industry Ministry has been taking serious steps in collaboration with other government bodies and institutions in order to facilitate the supply of necessary healthcare commodities in the face of coronavirus outbreak in the country.

In late February, Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani had held a meeting with the producers of health and hygiene products to discuss the supply of such products amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Coronavirus, known officially known as COVID-19, appeared first in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December and has since spread globally. The World Health Organization has declared it a global health emergency.



sulfur, 5,905 tons of insulation, 8,000 tons of slaps waxes, 5,767 tons of base oil and paraffin waxes, and 200 tons of argon were traded by customers.

The metal and mineral trading floor witnessed trading over 910,549 tons of commodities worth more than \$1,747 million.

On this trading floor 1,845,229 tons of steel, 34,550 tons of copper, 680 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 60 tons of precious metals concentrates, 680 tons of zinc, 27,350 tons of aluminum, 2,000 tons of coke, as well as 42 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The side market of the IME experienced

trading of 300 tons of tomato paste, 50 tons of used locomotive engine oil, 2,153 tons of metal scrap, 250 tons of steel scrap as well as 2,700 tons of phosphate concentrates.

As previously announced by the International Affairs and Public Relations Department of IME, some 2.874 million tons of commodities valued at \$3.397 billion were traded at this exchange market in January.

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).

Honey output at over 112,000 tons in nearly a year



ECONOMY **TEHRAN**- Director of Iranian Agriculture Ministry’s beekeeping development plan said over 112,000 tons of honey was produced in the country during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19), about 22,000 tons more than the figure for the previous year, ILNA reported.

According to Farhad Moshir Qafari, the country’s beekeeping industry is planned to become the leading agricultural sector in the country, the leading honey producer in the region, a strong player in the world markets.

“Benefiting from up-to-date knowledge, technology, the industry is going to provide reliable, high quality products with greater value-added,” the official added.

Over the past five years, Iran’s beekeep-

ing industry shifted its focus from producing only one main product, namely honey, to producing other bee secretions such as royal jelly and bee venom, Qafari said.

“Melittin is a very valuable bee venom extract that is currently imported, but the beekeeping industry has the potential to produce this substance inside,” he stressed.

According to Morteza Rezaei, deputy agriculture minister for livestock affairs, each gram of bee venom is exported at around \$80.

In a ceremony on celebrating achievements of the country’s beekeeping industry in January, Agricultural Ministry officials said Iran produces over 80,000 tons of honey every year.

Iran is among the world’s top four honey-producing countries.

Iran’s pavilion to be set up at Syria’s MEDICARE 2020

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— Iran plans to set up a pavilion at Syria’s 17th International Medical Exhibition (MEDICARE 2020), which is going to be held during June 2-5, Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) published on its website.

To be held at Damascus Fairground, the international event consists of four sections, namely Med Tech, Pharma Tech, Lab Tech, Hosp Tech, and Dental.

As previously reported, TPO held the first meeting of its Commodity-Country Desk on trade with Syria in mid-January.

Farzad Piltan, the director general of TPO’s Office of Arabian and African Countries, said that the meeting was participated by the representatives from related governmental and private organizations aiming at investigating the hurdles in the way of exporting constructional materials, plastic products, and minerals to Syria and finding the ways to boost exports to the Syrian market.

The participants explored the latest status of trade be-



tween Iran and Syria, mentioned the extant problems and it was decided that the related organizations take necessary follow-up measures to remove the discussed barriers.

China trade slumps as anti-virus controls close factories

By Joe Mcdonald

China’s exports fell by double digits in January and February as anti-virus controls closed factories, while imports sank by a smaller margin.

Exports tumbled 17.2% from a year earlier to \$292.4 billion, a sharp reverse from December’s 7.8% rise, customs data showed Saturday. Imports declined 4% to \$299.5 billion, down from the previous month’s 16.3% gain.

Trade was poised for a boost after Beijing and Washington removed punitive tariffs on some of each other’s goods in a trade truce signed in January. But that was offset by Chinese anti-virus controls that shut down much of the world’s second-largest economy in late January.

Exports to the U.S. plunged 27.7% in January and February to \$43 billion, worsening from December’s 12.5% decline. Imports of American goods crept up 2.5%

to \$17.6 billion, but China still recorded a \$25.4 billion trade surplus with the United States.

China’s global trade balance fell to a \$7.1 billion deficit for the first two months of the year.

Manufacturers that make the world’s smartphones, toys and other consumer goods are reopening but say the pace will be dictated by how quickly supply chains start functioning again.

Forecasters say industries are unlikely to be back to normal production before at least April.

■ Chinese trade resilient

Until the virus outbreak, Chinese trade had been unexpectedly resilient despite Beijing’s tariff war with President Donald Trump over its technology ambitions and trade surplus. Last year’s exports rose 0.5% over 2018.

Beijing told exporters to pursue other markets in Asia, Europe and Africa after

Trump slapped punitive duties on their goods starting in 2018. China retaliated by raising tariffs on American soybeans and other goods.

Some of those penalties were rolled back after the two sides signed a “Phase 1” agreement in January. Washington canceled additional planned tariff hikes and Beijing promised to buy more American farm exports.

Economists warn the truce fails to address contentious U.S.-Chinese disputes that might take years to resolve.

China’s customs agency began reporting January and February trade figures together this year to screen out the impact of the Lunar New Year holiday, which comes at different times each year during the two-month period.

Factories traditionally usually shut down for two weeks or longer while their employees visit their hometowns.

Imports usually surge after the holiday as factories restock. But this year’s

rebound was postponed after the holiday was extended by at least one week – more in some places – to keep factories and offices closed as authorities tried to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Chinese leaders are trying to limit economic damage by ordering local officials in areas deemed at low disease risk to help factories reopen. But many say they have trouble getting raw materials and employees because controls on travel still are in place in many areas.

The Chinese shutdown sent shockwaves through Asian economies that supply components and raw materials to Chinese factories that assemble the world’s smartphones, toys, home appliances and other consumer goods.

Shopping malls, restaurants and other retail businesses also were closed. Demand for online grocery vendors surged but sales of other goods slumped.

(Source: nwherald.com)

Last offshore platform of South Pars phase 13 installed

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Platform 13C, the fourth and last platform of phase 13 of Iran's South Pars gas field's development project, was installed on its designated offshore spot on Saturday evening, Public Relations Department of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the gas field, announced.

Payam Motamed, the operator of phase 13 of developing South Pars, put the physical progress of the nearly 2,500-ton structure at more than 98 percent, saying that the mentioned platform was designed and built totally by Iranian experts and the major parts and equipment have been supplied by domestic producers.

"The operations for transferring and installation of the platform's side structures, including the flare jacket and bridges, will be carried out soon by the Sea Pad vessel," the official noted,

"After the installation of the equipment,



operations related to the connection of the platform to the well (hook up) would be the

last steps to be taken for the platform to go operational," he added.

The first platform of phase 13 (namely 13B) was installed on its designated offshore spot in early December 2018 and the mentioned platform along with the second one (13D) became operational in late January 2019.

The first two platforms of the phase 13 of South Pars gas field are currently operational and producing 28 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas on a daily basis.

When completed, the phase is going to produce 56 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas, 75,000 barrels of gas condensate and 400 tons of sulfur per day in addition to one million tons of ethane and one million tons of propane and butane per annum.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

Offshore wind to see \$200+ billion expansion by 2025

By Tsvetana Paraskova

Global investments in offshore wind are expected to total \$211 billion between 2020 and 2025, and the offshore wind market will become more attractive to oil and gas companies, Wood Mackenzie said in a new report this month.

Over the next five years, growing investments in offshore wind are set to narrow the gap with offshore oil and gas investments as capital expenditure in offshore upstream is set to stabilize until 2022 and then drop through 2025, said Soren Lassen, senior offshore wind analyst, and Mhairidh Evans, principal upstream supply chain analyst at WoodMac.

In some mature well-established upstream areas offshore Europe, China, and South Asia there could be a "point of convergence in those regions in the 2020s where offshore wind investment will match oil and gas," WoodMac's analysts said.

Offshore oil and gas is now competing with the current trend of shorter-cycle investments in other oil and gas projects, and this trend lowers the visibility and certainty of investment outlooks beyond 2022.

In offshore wind, investments mostly hinge on government incentives. A total of 82 percent of the forecast offshore capacity to 2025 has been awarded a support scheme or is in more advanced stages of development, WoodMac's analysts say, noting that the deployment tied to government incentives provides high certainty and transparency in investment outlooks.



Offshore wind markets

Another point for offshore wind is that the size of the projects is set to jump by 63 percent through 2025, and those large offshore work scope and packages attract Big Oil to the offshore wind market, WoodMac said.

Case in point: Norway's Equinor, which has huge experience offshore Norway and elsewhere in the world, unveiled last month its new strategy to grow profitably within its renewables business and become a global offshore wind major.

Equinor and other majors now face the energy transition risk of stranded oil and gas assets as investors and shareholders demand climate action from Big Oil. Although returns from renewables are still playing catch-up with returns from oil and gas, Wood Mackenzie expects the energy transition theme to make offshore wind an attractive low-risk investment for companies with carbon-intensive portfolios.

However, lower offshore wind returns than oil and gas and lack of policy frameworks to support offshore wind de-

velopment could be a drag on the industry in the 2020s, Rolf Kragelund, Wood Mackenzie Director of Global Offshore Wind, said last month.

Despite these concerns, offshore wind is set for exponential growth this decade.

In the United States, annual investments in the industry could exceed \$15 billion by the middle of the 2020s, likely surpassing investments in U.S. offshore oil and gas over the next five years, Rystad Energy said earlier this year.

In 2019, the U.S. wind power industry recorded its third record-breaking installation year in a row, with new wind capacity hitting 9.14 GW.

"Assuming continued support from the regulators, many more projects will be sanctioned in the coming years and we expect to see yearly investments in the sector exceed \$15 billion by the middle of the decade," said Tim Bjerkelund, Head of Consulting New York at Rystad Energy.

"U.S. suppliers should take note – this new industry could outgrow offshore oil and gas in only a few years' time, providing lots of new opportunities," Bjerkelund added.

Globally, offshore wind power is expected to "expand impressively" over the next two decades, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its outlook on the sector in October 2019.

Declining costs, government incentives, and remarkable technology advances are set to boost the world's offshore wind capacity 15-fold and help it attract around \$1 trillion of cumulative investment by 2040, according to the IEA. (Source: oilprice.com)

Saudis plan crude oil output increase, begin price war, report says

Saudi Arabia plans to increase its crude oil output next month to more than 10 million barrels a day in response to the collapse of its OPEC+ alliance with Russia, Bloomberg News reported on Saturday.

Brent slid to its biggest daily loss in more than 11 years on Friday after Russia balked at OPEC's proposed steep production cuts to stabilize prices hit by economic fallout from the coronavirus, and OPEC responded by removing limits on its own production, Reuters reported.

"Prices plunged because the OPEC confab ended up being an epic fail on the part of all involved. Russia has clearly decided to employ a scorched earth approach to the oil market: every country for itself," John Kilduff, partner at Again Capital in New York, told Reuters.

The world's biggest oil exporter then began a price war on Saturday by slashing the prices it sells crude into foreign markets by the most in at least 20 years, offering unprecedented discounts in Europe, the Far East and the U.S. to

entice refiners to purchase Saudi crude at the expense of other suppliers.

Saudi Arabia kick-started an all-in oil price war on Saturday, slashing the official selling prices for its flagship crude Arab Light by the most in 20 years, in an effort to push as many barrels ...

Could raise production much higher

At the same time, Saudi Arabia has privately told some market participants it could raise production much higher if needed, even going to a record of 12 million barrels a day, according to people familiar with the conversations who asked not to be identified to protect commercial relations, according to Bloomberg.

Brent futures had their its biggest daily percentage fall on Friday since December 2008, down \$4.72, or 9.4 percent, to settle at \$45.27 a barrel. It was Brent's lowest closing price since June 2017.

With demand being ravaged by the coronavirus outbreak, opening the taps may throw oil

market into chaos.

Saudi production is likely to rise above 10 million barrels a day in April, from about 9.7 million a day this month, according to people familiar with Saudi thinking, Bloomberg reported.

"That's the oil market equivalent of a declaration of war," said a commodities hedge fund manager, asking not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the situation.

The shock-and-awe Saudi strategy may be an attempt to impose maximum pain in the quickest possible way to Russia and other producers, in an effort to bring them back to the negotiating table, and then quickly reverse the production surge and start cutting output if a deal is achieved, Bloomberg said.

Russia rejected an ultimatum

The production increase and deep discounts mark a dramatic escalation by the Saudis after Russia rejected an ultimatum on Friday in Vienna at the OPEC+ meeting to join in a collective production cut. After the talks collapsed, Russia

indicated countries were free to pump-at-will from the end of March.

"Saudi Arabia is now really going into a full price war," Iman Nasser, managing director for the Middle East at oil consultant FGE, told Bloomberg.

With jet fuel, gasoline and diesel consumption rapidly decreasing amid the economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak, the energy market now faces a simultaneous supply-and-demand shock.

After the failure in Vienna, Riyadh responded within hours by cutting its so-called official selling prices, offering record discounts for some of the crude it sells worldwide, according to a copy of the prices seen by Bloomberg News.

Aramco has set the prices, but the official communication to clients is likely to come on Monday, a person familiar with the matter said.

The Saudi Energy ministry didn't respond to a request for comment from Bloomberg. (Source: middleeasteye.net)

Putin unveils more plans to boost Northern Sea Route

By Charles Diggles

Cargo shipments passing through the Northern Sea Route, Russia's remote Arctic sea artery, topped 30 million tons during the past year, officials have said, marking a major uptick in fossil fuel deliveries from one of the world's most vulnerable environments.

The shipping upswing, which President Vladimir Putin has made a centerpiece of his economic strategy, comes amid warnings from the president's own ministries that heavy industrialization in the Arctic could make the effects of climate change worse for Russia – which scientists say is already warming 2.5 as fast as fast as any other country in the world.

Yet the shipping surge also goes toward fulfilling one of Putin's biggest demands: An order, issued in 2017, that cargo volumes flowing through the Arctic reach at least 80 million tons a year by 2024.

For now, those who favor an Arctic build out are winning out. On Thursday, Putin signed a massive Arctic master plan that cements national priorities for development in the polar region. Chief among them is a mandate to drill for more fossil fuels in the polar region by offering oil and gas developers enormous tax breaks, the Barents Observer reported.

Russia's state oil and gas

That master plan builds on yet another plan issued in January, which essentially divides the responsibility of developing the Northern Sea Route among Rosneft and Gazprom Russia's state oil and gas monopolies; its state nuclear corporation Rosatom, and Novatek, the private natural gas giant developing on the Yamal Peninsula.



The new shipping figures reflect this emphasis on fossil fuel production. According to the Northern Sea Route Administration, 31.5 million tons of goods were shipped via the passage in 2019.

The vast majority of that tonnage – fully 20.5 million tons – was comprised of natural gas from Novatek's Yamal LNG project, said the Russian news agency Korabel. Next came 7.7 million tons of oil from Gazprom Neft's Novy Port development in the Gulf of Ob. Another 1.5 million tons was accounted for by ores and minerals shipped from Norilsk Nickel's port on the Yenisei River.

Relatively little of the tonnage was made up by goods being shipped along the entire 6,000-kilometer stretch of the route, meaning the Northern Sea Route still isn't competitive with the Suez Canal. Only 37 ships made the entire Europe to Asia voyage during the course of last year. That's fewer than the number of ships passing through the Suez Canal in the course of a single day.

Still, in terms of percentages, cargo volumes on the Northern Sea Route in 2019 increased by 56.7 percent over the previous year.

The surge is at odds

But the surge is at odds with the climate advice offered by any number of Russian government bureaucracies ministries. In particular, the Audit Chamber, which oversees government spending, has warned that the Kremlin's economic plans are serving to make the effects of climate change even worse.

In a report released in January, the Audit Chamber took aim at Putin's \$400 billion National Projects plan – of which Arctic development is a part – and criticized it for making no mention of climate change and its failure to fund any efforts mitigating its impact on the country's economy. Should the Kremlin fail to defend Russia from these impacts, the report said, climate change could knock up to three percent per year off Russia's GDP by 2030.

That's only the latest alarm bell from within the government. A government position on climate change, also published in January, directed Russian agencies to prepare for climate calamities like droughts, floods and fires and to draw up plans for crisis resettlement.

In September, Russia's natural resources and environmental ministry warned that the country was warming two and a half times faster than other nations of the world. Melting permafrost, which accounts for some 65 percent of Russia's landmass, could threaten hundreds of billions of dollars, worth of infrastructure the ministry said.

Ice levels in the Arctic are decreasing at an alarming pace – a decline that will only be accelerated by more maritime traffic. According to NASA data, ice cover around the North Pole has been retreating by more than 12 percent each year since 1979. Because of this the Arctic is absorbing more solar radiation, causing polar temperatures to rise twice as fast as anywhere else on earth.

(Source: maritime-executive.com)

Second Announcement



1398.7632

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9580036

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
45	P/F " SOLAR" GAS TURBINE REF.: SOLAR DIV. INTERNATIONAL	331

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their" Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form No.1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 6,586 EURO or 886,931,082 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

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Second Announcement



1398.7675

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9280019


National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
40	PARTS FOR " RUSTON" GAS TURBINE TYPE TA 1750	1370Nos

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their" Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form No.1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 1,805 EURO or 237,430,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.


Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative to Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI IRAN, PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

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N.I.O.C
1398.7673

First Announcement
Call for public tender (First/Second publish)
One -Stages (semi compressed) tender
Subject of Tender: P/F: "HYDRIL" ANNULAR B.O.P



National Iranian Drilling Company

Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3/231/603	Tender No.: FP/04-98/170 Indent No.: 08-22-9845026	83,990,000,000 Rial

Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	
	R Based on minimum scoring (50 Points) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.

Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	Distribution Place	Hall No.113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN 061-3414856-06134148615 Room No. 431, 4 th floor, Oil central building No.8, Yaghma alley, Jomhori Islami st., Tehran - Iran
	Submitting Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 190,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Income Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
Documents Receiving Method	Closing date	14 Days after the last time of Purchasing. (April 19, 2020)
	Address	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

Tender Guarantee

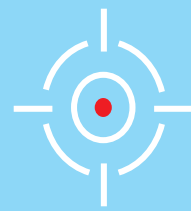
Value of guarantee	
3,648,000,000 Rial / 30,729 Euro	
Type of guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee & quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

(Name of department)
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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 Thursday regarding the cooperation of the two countries within the framework of OPEC Plus.

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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

Iran's enemies more scared of 'the nation'...

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Reactions on India sectarian riots

Leader issues statement urging India to stop attacks on Muslims

1 → During a meeting with Indian Foreign Ministry director general for political affairs Chegeni expressed hope that all Indian citizens would enjoy “peace and friendship” through wise decisions by the Indian government and officials.

Iran officials react

Iran’s Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani also expressed concern about the plight of Muslims and urged Indian government to prevent sectarian violence in the country. Larijani said that the new citizenship law was a contravention of Muslim rights.

A member of the Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, Abulfazl Hassan Beigi stated last Wednesday that the committee has condemned brutal killings of a large number of Muslims in India, claiming that CIA has always been behind such atrocities.

He said, “Unfortunately, India is among the places where the policies of the U.S. and CIA are effective”, and expressed hope that the Indian government would find out that the Muslims are pro-peace based on holy Quran’s tips.

In an interview with the pro-reform Etemad newspaper published on Tuesday, Mir-Mahmoud Mousavi, Iran’s former ambassador to New Delhi, expressed disgust over violence against Indian Muslims saying that “we should not close our eyes to the realities of the Islamic world.”

In another official reaction Abolfazl Zohrevand, Tehran’s former ambassador to Italy and Afghanistan, said: “Unfortunately, we are not seeing any stance toward the Indian issue by the Islamic world, and if that continues, we will see more violation of Muslims’ rights in India.”

Meanwhile, in a rare move the United Nation’s High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachalet has filed an Intervention Application in the Indian Supreme Court against CAA. The government of India officially acknowledged Bachelet’s submission of the plea on March 3, followed by rebuttals: “internal matter”, “sovereignty right of the Indian Parliament to make laws”, and “no foreign party has locus standi on issues pertaining to India’s sovereignty”.

Media reactions

Farsi language Shahrvand headline read on March 5: ‘Pakistani foreign minister shares anxieties of his brother Zarif on problems of Indian Muslims’. Shah Mahmood Qureshi was addressing his Iranian counter-part and emphasized about security of Muslims in India who are the target of the inhumane behavior of Rashtriya Swayaseva Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist, paramilitary organization. The newspaper described RSS as a dangerous organization for the whole region.

Writing in his official Twitter account on Monday, Zarif condemned the recent wave of “organized violence” against Indian Muslims, calling on New Delhi to “ensure the well-be-



Relatives mourn Mohammad Mudasir, 31, who was killed in rioting in Delhi. (Photo: Manish Swarup/AP)

ing of all Indians”.

“We urge Indian authorities to ensure the well-being of all Indians and not let senseless thuggery prevail,” Zarif said.

In an op-ed, Japan Times went with ‘Modi’s project to make a Hindu India’ emphasizing that India “represents the most successful example in history of managing the challenge of unity in diversity” stating that India’s success lies in three core features of the country’s constitution: democracy, federalism and secularism.

The writer Ramesh Thakur, a former UN assistant secretary-general, points out that “Muslims constitute a 180-million strong minority. If they become disaffected through state-sponsored policies of exclusion, the country would descend into a bloodshed and break apart.”

The New Delhi based online publication The Print’s March 5 headline read “Modi government wants to give Pakistani Hindu citizenship, but not visa for last rites”. For years, Hindus living in Pakistan have wanted to “immerse the ashes of their loves ones in the Ganga. But their visa applications

keep getting rejected.”

According to Pakistan Hindu Council, Hindu population in Pakistan is estimated to be eight million, comprising four percent of the population, with majority based in Karachi, Sindh province.

Kashmir internet restored

Meanwhile, New Delhi revoked ban on social media sites and restores full but slow-speed internet access for two weeks in Kashmir on March 4.

It has been seven months since New Delhi stripped the Muslim-majority region of its statehood and semi-autonomy and enforced a total communications blackout last August. The restoration of the internet will remain in effect until March 17. The blackout was also imposed on cellphones, landlines and cable TV.

The internet lockdown – the longest ever in a democracy – inflicted heavy losses for the region’s economy, according to the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which said at least 150,000 jobs were lost.

The coronavirus and a look at the principle of continuity of public services

1 → The effects of implementing principle of continuity of public services can be expressed as follows:

Violation of this principle is binding in administrative law, and failure to provide public services by the relevant institution is an infringement and it can be sued for acts of omission and not fulfilling its legal obligations.

Service providers’ employees are subject to specific obligations and constraints in terms of services and the time that they should be present at work. For example, not all staff in an institution can go on leave at the same time because the institution would be closed. In addition, the resignation and dismissal of employees of such institutions are subject to certain procedures and should not result in disorder of the institution.

For example, the right to strike (recognized in some countries), which is one the principles of administrative law, is constrained by the principle of continuity of public services. The principle is not explicitly stated in the constitution, but it can be perceived from the concept of Articles 63, 68, 119, 130, 131, 132 and

135. Under these articles, officials are obliged to continuously perform their duties with certain formalities, so it is not possible to resign and leave office without the formalities required by the constitution.

According to Article 63 of the constitution, “the term of the Islamic Consultative Assembly is four years ... [and the country should] not be without a parliament at any time”. This article represents the continuity of the legislation, stating the parliament as a legislative body should always be in place. Therefore, in accordance with Article 68, if the elections cannot be held due to war and military occupation, even if the term of office of the former parliament expires, it has to keep carrying out its duties and not to be discontinued. Thus, “in the event of war and military occupation [...] and if a new parliament is not formed, the former parliament will continue to function”.

In case of a presidential election, Article 119 states “... during the time between the election of the new president and the termination of the former presidency, the former president shall

perform the presidential duties”. The article is in line with the continuation of duties and responsibilities, which will lead to consistency or continuity of public services. Therefore, until the president’s resignation is not accepted by the Leader, he is obliged to perform his duties (Article 130). The ministers shall remain in office until they are dismissed, or have not gained the votes of the parliament during their impeachment and request for vote of confidence or their resignation has not accepted by the president (Article 135).

Regarding the situation caused by the coronavirus, regardless of its severity and given the need to prevent its outbreak by the beneficiaries, the state bodies cannot be discontinued. Therefore, closing offices, courts, administrative and quasi-judicial bodies, banks, registry offices and the like does not make sense. As mentioned, measures such as determining different shifts for activities and reducing working hours of staffs can be expected, but shutting down administrative and public services would be precisely against national and public interests.

First Announcement



1398.7699

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 08-21-9640003

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	TUBING, API GRADE L-80, SEAMLESS “VAM”, “N.VAM”, “SECR OR APPROVED THREAD RANGE 3(MAX LEN: 40.5 FT) AS PER API 5CT/ISO11960, PSL: 2 MARKING : COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH API SCT SIZE(OD), WIGHT(PPF), AS SPECIFIED NOTE: LEVEL OF INSPECTION:1(L.O.I: 1) “QCP/MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM” “ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION” 4/1/2 IN. , 13.5 PPF DRIFT:3.795 IN.	9000 LE

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their” Intention To Participate” letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form No.2, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 73,471 EURO or 10,148,000,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative to Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC’S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI IRAN, PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC’S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

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Second Announcement



1398.7680

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-20-9350104

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
07	PARTS FOR DRESSER FRANCE” TURBINE (POWER TURBINE) TYPE DJ-125, CT NO-DF-7096 SER. NOS .36035-1345 .TAG NOS. C-702A CD & E, AND TYPE DJ - 160 R.CT NO. SP-7101 SER. NOS. 36036-2& 36034-4 5.TAG NOS. C 101 A B D E, TYPE DJ – 160R CT NO. DF -7102 .SER. NOS – 36034-1 2 3 TAG NOS. C401A B& C.REF. DRESSER CLARK- FRANCE.	22NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their” Intention To Participate” letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form No.2, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 25,752 EURO or 3,516,237,600 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative to Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

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Second Announcement



1398.7683

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9280012

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
26	PARTS FOR " RUSTON" GAS TURBINE TYPE TA 1750, TA 1750,TB5000	4371Nos

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their” Intention To Participate” letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form No.1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 1,273 EURO or 167,427,924 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

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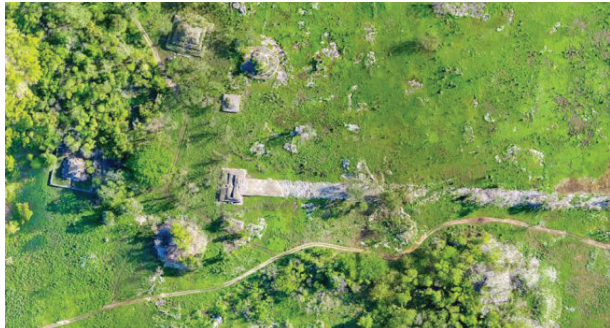
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Maya warrior queen may have built the longest 'white road' in the Yucatan

A ruthless Maya warrior queen may have ordered the building of an elaborate road more than 1,000 years ago to invade a distant city and to counter the rising power of another, archaeologists say.

They think the queen of the Maya city of Coba, Lady K'awiil Ajaw, may have ordered the road's construction around 680 CE so her armies could travel along it to conquer and take control of the city of Yaxuna, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) to the west, in what is now Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula.

Lady K'awiil Ajaw was one of the most powerful and warlike rulers of ancient Coba, and carved stone monuments show her standing over captives, says archaeologist Travis Stanton of the University of California, Riverside.



The 1,300-year-old road between the cities of Coba and Yaxuna on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula is the longest ever built by the Maya.

"Given the bellicose nature of her monuments," she may have been the ruler who extended the road to control Yaxuna, Stanton said.

The road was raised above the surrounding countryside and paved with a plaster made from limestone, resulting in the name "sacbe" — "white road" in Mayan. The Maya built many such roads, but the sacbe between Coba and Yaxuna is the longest of these, and it would have been a big investment in time and resources, said Traci Ardren, an archaeologist at the University of Miami.

"We tend to interpret them as activities which sort of proclaim the power of one polity, or at least, the alliance of some nature between the two polities," Ardren said.

In the 1930s, archaeologists from the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington, D.C., traveled the length of the road and reported that it formed a straight line between Coba and Yaxuna, Ardren told Live Science.

But the recent lidar surveys show the ancient road is not absolutely straight; in some places, it bends to pass through what would have been smaller settlements, she said. "The motivation for the road was not just to reach Yaxuna and control Yaxuna, but also to include and probably control these intervening settlements," she said.

Ardren and Stanton have led expeditions to excavate several households of Maya families in Coba and Yaxuna, and they plan to return this year to excavate family households at a smaller settlement near the center of the road.

They hope their archaeological research will reveal how life there may have changed after the road was built, she said.

Coba's invasion may have been caused by the growing power of yet another Maya city — that of Chichén Itzá, about 15 miles (23 km) north of Yaxuna, Ardren explained.

Archaeological evidence suggests that Coba began to decline in power after the reign of Lady K'awiil Ajaw, but Chichén Itzá became more powerful in the centuries that followed, she said.

The invasion of Yaxuna may have been an attempt by Coba to counteract the growing power of Chichén Itzá, by establishing a stronghold in the center of the Yucatán Peninsula, she said.

"Coba represents a very traditional classic Mayan city in the form of a dynastic family, which holds all the power and is centered on one place," she said.

(Source: Live Science)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Luis Barragan House and Studio

Built in 1947-1948, the Luis Barragan House and Studio located in a working class suburb of Mexico City represents an outstanding example of the architect's creative work in the post-Second World War period.

Barragan created a regional adaptation of the International Modern Movement in architectural design. The concrete building, totaling 1,161 square meters, consists of a ground floor and two upper storeys, as well as a small private garden.



The architect's integration of modern design with traditional Mexican vernacular elements has been greatly influential, especially in the contemporary design of gardens. For example, his use of water and fountains reflects Mediterranean and Islamic traditions, in particular Moroccan.

The house and studio of Luis Barragan owes its singularity to being a personal and therefore unique reflection of its designer.

This autobiographical background did not prevent this artist manifesto from going well beyond its time and its cultural milieu and becoming a distinguished reference in 20th century fine art and architecture.

Of particular note is the profound dialogue between light and constructed space and the way in which colour is substantial to form and materials.

It is a house which appeals to all the senses and re-evaluates the ways in which architecture can be perceived and enjoyed by its inhabitants.

Many of its materials were found in traditional architecture and, distant as they are from industrial production, they reveal the aging of the house with a patina which the architect acknowledged as the poetic value of his architecture.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran limits intercity travel to prevent coronavirus spread

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran has limited travel between its major cities in an effort to halt the spread of the coronavirus.

A ban on traffic on some of the country's roads, particularly [roads to] touristic provinces, was approved and put into practice as of Thursday evening to fight the coronavirus outbreak, IRNA reported on Friday.

The government has also took the extraordinary step of locking down much of the country's north, restricting movement for non-locals through various checkpoint in regions that serve as the country's popular destinations for domestic holidaymakers.

The number of coronavirus cases in the country has risen to 6566, with 2134 recovered and 194 dead so far (Sunday morning local time)

Iran's National Coronavirus Combat on Friday urged the nation not to travel to northern provinces of the country due to the closure of schools and universities in the country to prevent the spread of coronavirus, the report added.

Authorities also warned on Friday that they may use "force" to limit travel throughout the country if needed.

Last week, tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan asked people to postpone or reschedule tours so as to help the tourism industry over the virus outbreak.

"My suggestion to my dear people is that they do not cancel their hotel reservations and domestic tours as far as possible in order to help the tourism industry and prevent it from bankruptcy by making their reservations in time after virus is controlled," Mounesan said on Wednesday.

Domestic travel in Iran traditionally reaches its climax from mid-March to early April, a



time corresponding to the Persian New Year (Noruz) holidays. Iranians made 74 million overnight stays in their domestic trips during the Noruz holidays last year, which showed a 20 percent increase year on year.

As of Feb 23, Iran temporarily closed cultural heritage museums and historical sites in 15 provinces in a preventive measure

amid fears of coronavirus outbreak.

The U.S.-based Global Business Travel Association has predicted that the coronavirus could scythe \$560 billion from spending on corporate global travel this year, a 37 percent drop from its 2020 global expenditure forecast, as meetings and events are cancelled and companies limit travel to protect employees.

The growing death toll has sparked worldwide travel ramifications, forcing the cancellation of major conferences like Berlin's ITB—the largest travel and tourism event in the world—closures of tourist sites such as the Louvre museum in Paris, airlines cancelling flights and companies cancelling business travel at alarming rates.

Qasr-e Khorshid: once temporary home to the 'Napoleon of Iran'

TOURISM TEHRAN — Qasr-e Khorshid (literally 'the Sun Palace'), an 18th-century iconic monument in northeast Iran, was once a royal resident for Nader Shah of Persia (1688–1747), often called the "Napoleon of Iran," who created an empire that stretched from northern India to the Caucasus Mountains.

Currently used as a museum of anthropology in Kalat county, Khorasan Razavi province, the 20-meter-high monument is also well-known as Kalat-e Naderi, named after the famed Afsharid ruler.

The structure embraces a scenic fluted-shaped circular exterior, a vast ground floor level, a cellar and a cylindrical tower which is supported by 66 columns.

With 12 rooms decorated with paintings and ornamental works such as plaster moldings, it was once a temporary home to king and his family. The surrounding garden contains 8 pools with connecting streams and fountains.

Narratives say the 'palace' is named after Khorshid who was one of Nader's wives. However, it was never completed due to an ambiguous state of affairs that poured in following Nader Shah's sudden death.

Some believe that foreign artisans were



A view of Qasr-e Khorshid in northeast Iran

engaged in construction of the monument as its exterior panels bear pineapple and pear motifs, which is deemed to be unknown in the then Khorasan region.

Evidence suggests the building was used as a residential headquarters during the early Qajar era (1785 to 1925).

Nader Shah is widely considered as one of the most powerful rulers in history of the nation. He assumed power when a period of chaos overwhelmed Iran.

Nader managed to reunite the Persian realm while repelled invaders. He is sometimes referred to as the Napoleon of Persia

(Iran) or the Second Alexander, according to Encyclopedia Britannica.

Born Nader Qoli Beg, Nader had an obscure beginning in the Turkish Afshar tribe, which was loyal to the Safavid shahs of Iran. After serving under a local chieftain, Nader formed and led a band of robbers, showing marked powers of leadership. In 1726, as head of this group of bandits, he led 5,000 followers in support of the Safavid shah Tahmasp II, who was seeking to regain the throne his father had lost four years earlier to the Ghilzay Afghan usurper Mahmud.

Nader reformed Iran's military forces and utterly defeated the Ghilzay Afghans in a series of brilliant victories, after which he restored Tahmasp to the Iranian throne.

In 1736 Nader deposed the youthful Abbas III (as Tahmasp II's son was styled) and ascended the Iranian throne himself, taking the title of Nader Shah.

Although brilliantly successful as a soldier and general, Nader Shah had little talent for statesmanship or administration, and Iran became utterly exhausted during the later years of his reign. Tens of thousands of people perished in his ceaseless military campaigns, and the exactions of his tax gatherers ruined the country's economy.

Malayer, a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Late January this year, Iran's Malayer was named a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture by the World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR).

Located in west-central Hamedan province, the ancient city is home to over 4,000 furniture workshops in which more than 8,000 wood masters and some 25,000 crafters are engaged.

Although the art had been practiced in Malayer from a long time ago, it is about a half century that it has gained prosperity in the region.

In some cases, the whole family are occupied with traditional furniture making and although they didn't make much money this way, their love for handicrafts and the increasing perseverance of woodcarving artists of Malayer shows today a new face of this art-craft to the world.

Artists and crafter of this region use the wood of beech, walnut and plane trees to



World Crafts Council-Asia Pacific Region Director Ghada Hijavi (2nd R) visits a woodcarving workshop in Iran's Malayer in December 2019.

make different products such as traditional, classic, steel and sofa furniture. Their other

products are dining table, desk, all kinds of chair, bed and decorative pieces.

Currently more than 60 percent of the furniture and woodcarving products in Iran is reportedly produced in Malayer and they are sent to various Iranian cities or being exported to Central Asian countries, Persian Gulf littoral states, Turkey and Iraq amongst some others.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations, and there's a scattering of historical curiosities.

Ecbatana was the capital of Media and was subsequently the summer residence of the Achaemenian kings and one of the residences of the Parthian kings. According to ancient Greek writers, the city was founded in about 678 BC by the semilegendary Deioces, who was the first king of the Medes. The Greek historian Herodotus described the city in the 5th century BC as being surrounded by seven concentric walls.

The spectacular and long-lost ancient Greek city of Thouria

The ancient Greek city of Thouria, located in the southern Peloponnese, is among the cities which managed to thrive and become important centers all by themselves in the wider region, despite being under the shadow of nearby super-powers (in this case Sparta).

Located on the outskirts of the modern-day city of Kalamata in the county of Messenia, Thouria was at its peak of development during the classical period of ancient Greece.

Incredibly, however, the existence of its ancient ruins was not even known until the first decade of the 21st century.

An archaeological dig in 2007 led experts to the discovery of an entire city, which appeared to have been an important hub during ancient times.

Archaeologists originally unearthed a temple and an Asclepeion, a type of temple devoted to healing found all across the ancient Greek world.

Approximately three years ago, archaeologists unearthed a large part of the ancient theater of the city of Thouria, adding much more information to what we already knew about this polis.

The theater, which dates back to the 4th century BC, came to light during these excavations, which took place in the summer of 2016.

More discoveries were on tap for the archaeological dig season of 2017, when archaeologists uncovered the perimeter of the theater's orchestra and several rows of stone seats. The orchestra's perimeter, which is 16.3 meters (53 feet) long, has three parallel grooves around it, which suggest that its stage was movable.

(Source: Greek Reporter)

Iran ‘a role model for world’ in fight against coronavirus: WHO

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Richard Brennan, the Regional Emergency Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Eastern Mediterranean Region, has said countries in the region and all over the world should use Iran's experience as a role model in fight against the novel coronavirus.

“Iran benefits from one of the strongest healthcare systems in the region. Iran has made notable achievements in the field of battling coronavirus,” the WHO official said in a press conference in Tehran on Saturday, IRNA reported.

Fake news are one of the adversaries of fighting the coronavirus, he said, noting that information dissemination about the coronavirus should be accurately carried out.

“Over the past couple of day, experts from the World Health Organization, The Robert Koch Institute, and China's CBC Group have held meetings with Iranian officials. They exchanged many experiences and we have learned many lessons from the Iranian healthcare system.”



“Researches are underway for producing vaccine and medicine [for the disease], but it will take nine to twelve months to develop a vaccine,” he explained.

On March 2, WHO sent an aircraft car-

rying tons of medical supplies and test kits along with a medical team to Iran in order to help combat the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19.

The supplies, worth of over \$300,000,

consisted of gloves, surgical masks, and respirators.

The Plan and Budget Organization has allocated 5.5 trillion rials (nearly \$170 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) more to the Ministry of Health in order to counter COVID-19.

This allocation is in line with the order of the President Hassan Rouhani to enhance services of medical staff, nurses and health workers fighting coronavirus, IRIB reported.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki has announced that effective measures have been taken and comprehensive plans are underway to get rid of the virus 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.

The number of coronavirus cases in the country has risen to 6566, with 2134 recovered and 194 dead so far.

Tropical forests losing their ability to absorb carbon, study finds

Tropical forests are taking up less carbon dioxide from the air, reducing their ability to act as “carbon sinks” and bringing closer the prospect of accelerating climate breakdown.

The Amazon could turn into a source of carbon in the atmosphere, instead of one of the biggest absorbers of the gas, as soon as the next decade, owing to the damage caused by loggers and farming interests and the impacts of the climate crisis, new research has found.

If that happens, climate breakdown is likely to become much more severe in its impacts, and the world will have to cut down much faster on carbon-producing activities to counteract the loss of the carbon sinks.

“We’ve found that one of the most worrying impacts of climate change has already begun,” said Simon Lewis, professor in the school of geography at Leeds University, one of the senior authors of the research. “This is decades ahead of even the most pessimistic climate models.”

For the last three decades, the amount of carbon absorbed by the world's intact tropical forests has fallen, according to the study from nearly 100 scientific institutions. They are now taking up a third less carbon than they did in the 1990s, owing to the impacts of higher temperatures, droughts and deforestation. That downward trend is likely to continue, as forests come under increasing threat from climate change and exploitation. The typical tropical forest may become a carbon source by the 2060s, according to Lewis.

“Humans have been lucky so far, as tropical forests are mopping up lots of our pollution, but they can't keep doing that indefinitely,” he told the Guardian. “We need to curb fossil fuel emissions before the global carbon cycle starts working against

us. The time for action is now.”

At this year's UN climate talks, known as Cop26 and to be held in Glasgow in November, many countries are expected to come forward with plans to reach net zero emissions by mid-century. But some rich countries and many companies plan to reduce their emissions via offsetting, often by preserving, replanting or growing new forest.

This research shows that relying on tropical forests is unlikely to be enough to offset large-scale emissions. “There is a lot of talk about offsetting, but the reality is that every country and every sector needs to reach zero emissions, with any small amount of residual emissions needing to be removed from the atmosphere,” said Lewis. “The use of forests as an offset is largely a marketing tool for companies to try to continue with business as usual.”

The uptake of carbon from the atmosphere by tropical forests peaked in the 1990s when about 46bn tonnes were removed from the air, equivalent to about 17% of carbon dioxide emissions from human activities. By the last decade, that amount had sunk to about 25bn tonnes, or just 6% of global emissions.

The difference is about the same as a decade of fossil fuel emissions from the UK, Germany, France and Canada put together.

Climate scientists have long feared the existence of “tipping points” in the climate system, which when passed will condemn the world to runaway global heating. There are many known feedback mechanisms: for instance, the melting of Arctic ice leaves more of the sea uncovered, and, as it is darker than the reflective ice, it absorbs more heat, thus leading to more melting. (Source: The Guardian)

Why don't we panic about climate change like we do coronavirus?

Because “outbreak” and “pandemic” and any of a dozen high-stakes words accompany dispatches about the deadly novel coronavirus, it's not surprising — nor even ill-advised — that the news media and financial markets respond with alarm to COVID-19.

Still, the critical response leaves scientists, environmental advocates and long-view money managers imploring: Where's the outrage on any given day for pollution- and temperature-linked deaths (already adding up and projected to increase) from accelerating man-made climate change?

Where's the impetus for moving on policy change and market-driven fixes (solutions to store carbon, for instance) to limit a future environmental health crisis — one on par with or even greater than a coronavirus?

For one thing, the public may only be able to respond to what's in front of them.

“Americans are seeing coverage of the virus across multiple media platforms in a consistent manner, which is bringing awareness and driving public concern,” write Monica Medina and Miro Korenha of Our Daily Planet. “On the other hand, you've probably seen very little coverage that [the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] predicts this year's flooding in the Midwest could rival last year's catastrophic floods that claimed lives and also helped spread disease to livestock and people.”

According to a recent study by the organization Media Matters, news shows on the major networks aired only 238 minutes of climate crisis coverage in 2019, which was actually up from 2018 significantly, but as a whole still made up only 0.7% of overall broadcasts nightly and the Sunday morning news shows.

It is true that climate change and its response appear in specialized media and



occasionally crack the line-up of mainstream coverage. Investing giant BlackRock's admission in recent months that climate change and sustainability would drive investment decision-making dominated financial outlets and cable television programming. Just this week, via the Associated Press, any interested reader could have learned that the “EU unveils a new climate law — Greta Thunberg calls it ‘surrender’”

“The nature of a risk matters greatly in how we react to it. Coronavirus can be considered a present threat over which there is a great deal of uncertainty about its scale and impact, [yet] there is a significant possibility that its long-term impact is negligible,” writes Joe Wiggins, a researcher in portfolio and fund management, who's behind the Behavioural Investment blog.

But Wiggins stresses: “Contrastingly, climate change is (predominantly) a future threat, but there is a high level of confidence that its long-term impact (without intervention) will be catastrophic for humanity.”

According to the American Lung Association, about four in 10 Americans live in counties that have monitored unhealthy ozone and/or particle pollution. And respiratory ailments, including asthma, are only part of the rising risks that led at least one major medical journal to declare climate change the health issue of the century. (Source: Market Watch)

Some 35% of COVID-19 patients in Iran recovered so far

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Some 35 percent of people infected with the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, in Iran have so far recovered.



The number of people diagnosed with COVID-19 in the country has increased to 6566, of whom 2134 have so far regained health, Deputy Health Minister Kiyanoush Jahanpour said, ISNA reported on Sunday..

Over the past 24 hours, 743 new cases of people having the virus have been identified, of whom 194 have died, he added.

The highest number of cases were reported from the provinces of Tehran, Qom, and Mazandaran with 1805, 685, and 620 cases, respectively.

Air pollution shortens life expectancy by nearly three years: study

Air pollution kills more people than smoking cigarettes, a study at the University Medical Centre Mainz in Germany has found.

The researchers estimated that globally, air pollution caused an extra 8.8 million premature deaths in 2015, equating to an average shortening of life expectancy by nearly three years.

In comparison, 7.2 million deaths were caused by tobacco smoking, shortening life expectancy by an average of 2.2 years, while 1 million deaths were caused by HIV/AIDS (0.7 years).

Diseases carried by parasites or insects — such as malaria — were responsible for 600,000 deaths (0.6 years), and all forms of violence — including war — accounted for 530,000 deaths (0.3 years).

Professor Jos Leliveld, one of the co-leads on the research, explains, “air pollution causes damage to the blood vessels through increased oxidised stress, which then leads to increases in blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, heart attacks and heart failure.”

The study, published in Cardiovascular Research, is the first to assess the effects of air pollution as a factor of age, type of disease and countries/regions.

It found that air pollution is a crucial risk factor in cardiovascular diseases especially (heart disease and cerebrovascular disease combined) and that people over the age of 60 were most at risk.

The study also highlighted large differences between regions, with the highest loss of life expectancy from East Asia, where three of the four years of lost life expectancy could be prevented by the removal of human-made emissions.

In Europe, there is an average of 2.2 years of lost life expectancy, 1.7 of which could be prevented.

Professor Thomas Münzel of the University Medical Center of Mainz warns, “since the impact of air pollution on public health overall is much larger than expected, and is a world-wide phenomenon, we believe our results show there is an ‘air pollution pandemic’.”

The paper makes the important distinction between avoidable, human-made pollution, and unavoidable pollution from natural sources, such as desert dust and wildfire emissions.

Researchers attribute two-thirds of premature deaths to human-made air pollution, mainly from the use of fossil fuels, increasing to 80 per cent in high-income countries. They note, however, that there is a degree of uncertainty surrounding the estimates and that more research is needed. (Source: BBC Focus Magazine)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Iraq humanitarian crisis

(April 16, 2003)

The commander of British forces in Iraq has denied reports of a developing humanitarian crisis in areas under British control. This report from Rupert Wingfield-Hayes:

General Brims was **adamant**. There is no **humanitarian crisis** in Basra, he said. People have enough to eat and water and electricity is being restored to more parts of the city by the day. If there is a crisis, he said, it is of a society **deeply traumatized** by twenty years of abuse **at the hands of Saddam Hussein's** regime, and that, **thanks to** the British troops, he said, has been stopped.

He did agree that there are some **black spots**, in particular with providing clean water, and at the city's hospitals, many of which are completely without medicines. But he again said the old regime was **to blame** for the situation, not British forces.

Nevertheless, out on the streets of Basra, there is growing impatience with the speed of change, or rather the lack of it. Faces that a week ago smiled in welcome are now turning increasingly **surly**. Such impatience may be unfair, but if they hope to win the peace, coalition forces are going to have to **move fast** to do something **tangible** to improve the lives of people here.

■ **Words**

adamant: determined not to change his mind
humanitarian crisis: a serious situation affecting the health and well-being of the population
deeply traumatized: extremely upset by an event or situation
at the hands of: committed by
thanks to: if something happens thanks to another person or thing, that person or thing caused it to happen
black spots: dangerous areas
to blame: responsible for
surly: bad-tempered
to move fast: to act quickly
tangible: something that can be easily seen or noticed (Source: BBC)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

Home to home program to be launched to combat COVID-19

The Ministry of Health is to start a home to home program on Tuesday with the aim of finding people suspected of having coronavirus from around the country.

Some 300,000 teams of specialists will visit homes in collaboration with health centers for COVID-19 screening, Health Minister Saeed Namaki said, IRNA reported.

“As one of the leading countries in the Eastern Mediterranean region, we have started a big move and have prepared a plan that will be implemented as part of the national campaign to defeat COVID-19,” he explained.

“We are also preparing the health centers and we will identify sporadic cases, and all suspected cases will be referred to health centers for further treatment.”

The number of coronavirus cases in the country has risen to 1501, with 66 deaths so far.

آغاز طرح بیماریابی خانه به خانه برای مقابله با کرونا از فردا

وزارت بهداشت طرحی را با هدف یافتن افراد احتمالی مبتلا به ویروس کرونا از فردا در سراسر کشور آغاز می کند.

به گزارش ایرنا، سعید نمکی وزیر بهداشت گفت ۳۰۰ هزار اکیپ با همکاری مراکز درمانی برای غربالگری کرونا و بیماریابی خانه به خانه مردم از روز سه شنبه به خانه های مردم مراجعه می کنند.

او افزود: حرکت بزرگی را شروع کرده ایم و طرحی را آماده کرده ایم که در قالب بسیج ملی شکست کووید ۱۹ به عنوان یکی از پیشنهادها کشورهای شرق مدیترانه اجرا می کنیم.

نمکی گفت مراکز بهداشتی و درمانی را نیز آماده می کنیم. در اسرع وقت موارد پراکنده بیماری را شناسایی می کنیم و موارد مشکوک به مراکز بهداشتی و درمانی ارجاع می شوند و تحت پیگیری قرار می گیرند.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“by-, bye-”

■ **Meaning:** near or past

■ **For example:** I took a pleasant **byroad** which follows the coast.

PHRASAL VERB

Open out

■ **Meaning:** if a road, path, or passage opens out, it becomes wider

■ **For example:** Beyond the forest the path opened out into a track.

IDIOM

Cross someone's path

■ **Explanation:** to meet somebody, usually unexpectedly or by chance

■ **For example:** Ms. Bridgewater was my English teacher but haven't crossed her path since I left school.

War-torn Yemen at a ‘critical juncture’, warns UN

Yemen is at a crossroads, the United Nations' envoy to the war-torn country has said, as tens of thousands of people flee the northern province of Al-Jawf after fierce clashes.

Yemen's Houthis seized provincial capital Al-Hazm earlier this month after heavy fighting with government troops, ending a relative lull in the violence that had raised hopes for a more permanent de-escalation.

"Yemen is, in my view, at a critical juncture: we will either silence the guns and resume the political process, or we will slip back into large-scale conflict," Martin Griffiths said during a visit to Marib province.

"Fighting needs to stop now. Military adventurism and the quest for territorial gains are futile," he told reporters, according to a transcript provided by his office.

"They will only drag Yemen to many more years of conflict."

The latest clashes in northern Yemen came after a months-long relative lull in the violence as the warring parties showed an apparent interest in de-escalation.

But efforts to resume a political process appear to be unravelling. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said the fighting between the warring parties in Al-Jawf has displaced tens of thousands of people to Marib province.

"The ICRC and the Yemen Red Crescent Society have helped around 70,000 people, or 10,000 families, by providing food, tents, blankets, jerrycans, basins and hygiene kits," the agency said in a statement on Saturday.

"In Al-Jawf governorate, increased clashes have hampered efforts to help patients and those in need."

(Source: agencies)

Sanders, Biden up attacks as head-to-head race takes shape

The Democratic presidential primary is down to two major candidates, and it shows.

Former Vice President Joe Biden and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders are spending their first weekend as their party's last top White House contenders increasingly taking aim at one another. Each wants to show he's the best choice before six more states - Idaho, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota and Washington - vote Tuesday.

It reflects the new contours of a race that once featured 20-plus Democrats. An increasingly bitter matchup could endure for months as Biden and Sanders compete for the right to face President Donald Trump in November.

"«We have a two-person race,» Sanders said Saturday in Dearborn, a Detroit suburb with one of the nation's largest Arab American populations. «And all over this country, people are asking themselves which candidate can best defeat Trump. I have zero doubt in my mind that, together, we are the campaign that can beat Trump.»

Campaigning in St. Louis, Biden took a number of veiled swipes at Sanders, even as he called on Democrats to rise above Trump's division.

He told the crowd that if they wanted to nominate a «lifelong» and «proud» Democrat, they should pick him. Sanders has run for office as an Independent and identifies himself as a democratic socialist.

"«If you want a nominee who'll bring the party together, who will run on a positive progressive vision for the future, not turn this primary into a campaign of negative attacks - because that will only reelect Donald Trump if we go that route - if you want that, join us,» Biden said.

Winning, he added, «means uniting America, not sowing more division and anger.»

The former vice president also gently knocked Sanders' weeks of suggestions that he is the candidate who can prompt record voter turnout in November and defeat Trump, saying that actually «we're the campaign that's going to do that.»

Sanders is clearer in drawing contrasts, arguing that no Democrat will win the presidency «with the same-old, same-old politics of yesteryear.»

And in a sign of how biting the contest may become, Sanders supporters - including his campaign manager - raised questions about Biden's stamina after he gave a seven minute speech in St. Louis. At his second stop, in Kansas City, he again gave a truncated version of his stump speech, speaking for a little over 15 minutes.

(Source: AP)

Damascus won't let Ankara split any Syrian territory in embattled Idlib: Jaafari

➔ Elsewhere in his remarks, Jaafari stated that the Israeli regime directly supports terrorist groups wreaking havoc in Syria, and mounts offensives on the Syrian soil to support them.



"The battle of Idlib is a key element of the final victory over terrorism. Everyone knows it, and the United Nations even explicitly points to such a fact in its official reports," he said.

He concluded that despite the high prices that the Syrians have paid because of the war, «We have made important political and military achievements that will definitely benefit the resistance front. Our battle is part of a long war, and we will not retreat until we restore our rights in the occupied Golan Heights.

The remarks come two days after the Russian and Turkish presidents came to an agreement on a ceasefire regime in Idlib, where Turkish violations have brought about an unwarranted flare-up of already high levels of violence.

Putin and Erdogan announced the deal on Thursday at a joint press conference in Moscow after three hours of face-to-face talks.

According to the agreement, joint Russian-Turkish patrols will secure a six-kilometer-wide corridor along the M4 highway connecting the two government-held provinces of Latakia and Aleppo.

The ceasefire also consolidates Syrian control over the M5 highway which links the capital Damascus to the major cities of Hama, Homs and Aleppo.

(Source: press TV)

MbS top royal rivals arrested in apparent power consolidation

➔ The arrests came just days after Prince Ahmed, the king's only surviving full brother and a potential rival to bin Salman, had returned from a falcon hunting trip abroad. His son, Prince Nayef, was with him at the time, a person close to the family said.

Prince Ahmed was one of only three people on the Saudi Allegiance Council who opposed bin Salman becoming crown prince in 2017.

In 2018, he made comments critical of the crown prince to protesters chanting for the downfall of the Al Saud dynasty in London, but later said he had been misinterpreted.

Mohammed bin Nayef was next in line to the throne before he was suddenly replaced by bin Salman in 2017. Since being ousted, Prince Nayef has effectively been under house arrest and prevented from leaving the kingdom.

Three sources with knowledge of the crackdown, including a regional source, said Mohammed bin Nayef and Prince Nawaf had been picked up at a private desert camp.

The arrests have sparked speculations that aging King Salman is about to die or abdicate.

Reuters cited a regional source as saying that bin Salman "accused them of conducting contacts with foreign powers, including the Americans and others, to carry out a coup d'etat."

The news agency further quoted sources as saying that King Salman had himself signed the arrest warrants.

Meanwhile, the Middle East Eye news portal reported that moments after the arrests, bin Salman had ordered the princes to tweet their loyalty to him.

"Although many questions still remain about what has happened in Saudi Arabia in the last 24 hours, what is clear is that MBS is now facing ruling Saudi Arabia without the backing of the rest of the royal family," said Hugh Miles, editor of ArabDigest.org.

"This is a major problem for him because any would-be Saudi king is expected not only to have the royal family's full allegiance,



but also to be able to prove it."

Michael Stephens, a scholar at the Royal United Services Institute, said, "It looks like MBS is just taking out all rivals."

"The problem is that after the Khashoggi murder, trust in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is very low," he added. "No one will believe the official narrative."

Bin Salman is said to be the chief culprit behind the brutal killing of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi by a Saudi hit team inside the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul on October 2, 2018.

■ 'Sign of nervousness'

The latest detentions come at a time of heightened tension with regional rival Iran and as MBS implements ambitious social and economic reforms, including an initial public offering by oil giant Saudi Aramco on the domestic bourse last December.

Saudi Arabia is also the current chair for the Group of 20 (G20) major economies.

MBS has been lauded at home for easing social restrictions in the kingdom and opening up the economy.

But he has come under international criticism over a devastating war in Yemen, the murder of Khashoggi in the kingdom's Istanbul consulate and the detention of women's rights activists seen as part of a crackdown on dissent.

"Prince Mohammed is emboldened - he has already ousted any threats to his rise, and jailed or murdered critics of his regime without any repercussion," Becca Wasserman, a policy analyst at the US-based RAND Corporation, said of the latest crackdown.

"This is a further step to shore up his power and a message to anyone - including royals - not to cross him."

Rami Khouri, a journalism professor at the American University of Beirut, echoed Wasserman's sentiment, saying the idea of a coup being fomented was unlikely in light of the "immense, direct and brutal control" that the crown prince has over all of the kingdom's security agencies.

"It is a sign of the nervousness of the crown prince and the people around him who rule Saudi Arabia because they probably expect that the king will either abdicate or pass away soon. They expect there might be some kind of challenge to the succession," Khouri said.

"The critical thing about this, I think, is that it is the final affirmative confirmation, the seal on Mohammed bin Salman taking over the mantle of the Arab autocrats that used to be held by people like Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi and Hafez al-Assad."

U.S. coronavirus death toll reaches 19; New York declares emergency

At least 19 people have now died in the United States from the coronavirus as the virus spread to 30 states with the latest of the hundreds of confirmed cases nationwide reported in Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia and New York.

The latest deaths were reported in Florida on Saturday, involving two people in their 70s, while Washington, DC registered its first case.

On Saturday, New York became the latest state to declare an

emergency as the number of those infected by the virus rose to 89.

District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser said on Saturday that a man in his 50s tested positive for coronavirus in Washington, DC. Another person - also in his 50s and living in Nigeria - who travelled through the city, has also tested positive in Maryland, Bowser said.

Jennifer Smith, who leads Washington's public health laboratory, said officials had the capability to test about 50 patients

per day. The district has also ordered more than 42,000 masks to be delivered to the district's fire and emergency medical workers, officials said.

Virginia recorded its first case on Saturday when a U.S. Marine stationed at Fort Belvoir was found to have the virus.

To contain the epidemic, concerts, festivals and other public events have been cancelled across the U.S.

(Source: al Jazeera)

Trump intensifies fight against press with libel lawsuits

The libel lawsuits filed by President Donald Trump's campaign against The New York Times, The Washington Post and CNN are indicative of a dramatic escalation in the president's long fight with the media.

Donald Trump's re-election campaign has recently sued CNN for publishing an opinion piece about the alleged Russian efforts to assist his 2016 presidential bid.

According to the libel lawsuit, filed in the U.S. district court for the northern district of Georgia on Friday, Trump did not stop Moscow from helping the campaign during the presidential election.

"The complaint alleges CNN was aware of the falsity at the time it published them but did so for the intentional purpose of hurting the campaign while misleading its own readers in the process," Senior Legal Adviser to Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. Jenna Ellis told Fox News.

"The campaign filed this lawsuit against CNN and the preceding suits against The New York Times and The Washington Post to hold the publishers accountable for their reckless false reporting and also to establish the truth," Ellis added.

Legal experts believe that the suits

have failed to meet the high bar to prove defamation of a public figure, but fear an environment in which powerful elected officials like Trump could use the courts to intimidate the press.

"The concern here is not that one of these suits would win on the merits — it's the chilling effect that it has on public discussion of political affairs," Jonathan Peters, the Columbia Journalism Review's press freedom correspondent and a University of Georgia media law professor, told The Hill.

Also, Brian Hauss, a staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union's speech, technology and privacy project, told The Hill, "The Times and The Post have the resources to hire excellent legal counsel who will demonstrate why these lawsuits are completely meritless."

Hauss said the Trump campaign's legal actions exemplify what are known as "strategic lawsuits against public participation," which press advocates say are lodged with the aim of silencing discussion on topics of public concern and drawing out long, financially burdensome court disputes.

(Source: agencies)

Afghanistan: Ghani, Abdullah set to hold parallel inaugurations

Political rivals in Afghanistan have issued separate invitations for inauguration ceremonies on Monday.

Abdullah Abdullah, rival of Afghanistan's president-elect Ashraf Ghani, issued invitations to a parallel swearing-in ceremony due next week, his spokesman said on Saturday.

"We've sent the invitation to all national and international organizations and all necessary preparations have been taken," Fraidoon Khwazoon, Abdullah's spokesman said, referring to invitations to an inauguration ceremony due to take place in Kabul on Monday morning at a similar time to Ghani's.

A political impasse and threat of parallel governments jeopardize a nascent peace process in the nation, as the United States tries to push the Afghan government towards talks with the Taliban.

In February, Afghanistan's Electoral Commission announced Ghani as the winner of September's presidential election, but Abdullah claimed that he and his allies had won the polls and insisted that he would form a government.

Sedq Sediqi, a spokesman for Ghani,

emphasized that his side was the recognised winner of last year's polls.

"The election season is over and president-elect Ghani was given the winner's certificate by the independent election commission based on the outcome of the election and country's constitution," Sediqi said on Saturday.

Ghani and Abdullah are old rivals who held roles in the previous government under a US-brokered power-sharing agreement.

A former foreign minister, Abdullah held the specially created post of chief executive in the outgoing government.

Diplomats and experts have said a lack of cohesion among Afghan political leaders will make it difficult for talks with the Taliban, which are due to start on Tuesday, to take place.

"This is a bad omen for the peace process," a diplomat whose country's embassy in Kabul had been told an invitation to Abdullah's ceremony was on the way, was quoted as saying by Reuters news agency.

He said diplomats from different countries were calling and messaging each other to find out about each other's plans.

(Source: al Jazeera)

Italy 'quarantines' 16 million people in Lombardy & 14 other provinces in attempt to stop coronavirus outbreak

Italian PM Giuseppe Conte has signed an emergency decree, virtually locking down the Lombardy region and 14 other provinces until April 3, to curb the spread of coronavirus that killed at least 233 across the country so far.

While the central government stopped short of enforcing a mandatory quarantine and introducing a complete travel ban, calling it a "reduced mobility" regime, the bill virtually banned citizens from entering or leaving the "red zones" unless for an emergency or "essential work reason."

The quarantine measures — the most drastic outside of mainland China so far — affect an estimated 16 million people across Lombardy, including its capital, Milan, as well as 14 other provinces in the Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna, and Veneto regions.

In addition to schools and universities, all museums,



gyms, cultural centers, ski resorts, and swimming pools will be closed in the affected areas until at least April 3. Anyone with a temperature of 37.5C or higher, or who is showing signs of respiratory infection, regard-

less whether they are confirmed coronavirus positive or not, are "strongly recommended" to self-isolate at home. Bars and restaurants, however, are allowed to stay open between 6am and 6pm, as long as they "guarantee at least a meter of distance between customers," Conte said.

The draft of the bill, which was leaked earlier on Saturday, triggered heated debate and pushback from regional authorities. Conte eventually signed the bill after midnight, saying that while he "very much appreciated" and was ready to address the opposition's concerns on Monday or Tuesday, Italy could not lose another day in the battle against the deadly disease.

With 233 people officially confirmed dead and over 5,800 infected by Sunday morning, Italy is currently the third hardest-hit nation after South Korea and China — the original source of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

(Source: RT)

AFC World Cup qualifiers face postponement

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) met at the Home of FIFA to discuss football activities in Asia and considered to postpone upcoming World Cup qualifiers over the novel coronavirus.

"For both FIFA and the AFC, the well-being and health of all individuals involved in football matches remains the highest priority, and as such, a formal proposal to postpone upcoming matches in the Asian FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifiers will now be shared with the relevant member associations," the FIFA statement said.

"FIFA and the AFC will provide an update on these fixtures in the coming days following consultation with the AFC member associations."

The women's Olympic playoff between China and South Korea, both hard-hit by the virus, is also up for discussion, as well as the AFC Futsal Championship in Turkmenistan.

Asia's next qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup are scheduled for March 26 and 31. The women's Olympic playoff, already postponed once, is set for April 9 and 14 and the futsal championship is due to start on February 26.

FIFA will continue to monitor the situation in relation to COVID-19 in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), the confederations and the member associations. Information on other international matches may be provided by the relevant confederation or member association.



Bagheri officially appointed Iran assistant coach



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis assistant coach Karim Bagheri has been officially appointed as assistant coach of Dragan Skocic in Iran national football team.

He will work simultaneously in Persepolis and Team Melli.

"It's a great honor for me to help Team Melli. We all must try for Iran's success. I am a soldier of my country," Bagheri said.

Bagheri started his coaching career in Persepolis in 2012 and has played a key role

in the team's successes in the recent years.

As Branko Ivankovic's assistant, he helped Persepolis win three titles in Iran Professional League, one Hazfi Cup and three Super Cups during a three-year period.

The Iranian federation has also negotiated with former Iran striker Vahid Hashemian who worked as assistant coach of Marc Wilmots.

Iran will have four must-win matches in late March and early June in the 2022 World Cup qualification.

Iran's Abbasali undergoes successful ACL injury



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian karate athlete Hamideh Abbasali had successful surgery on her knee on Thursday.

The surgery was performed by Iranian surgeon Babak Amini in Hannover, Germany.

Abbasali went arthroscopic knee surgery on her Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) tear.

She suffered an injury at the Karate 1-Premier League event in Salzburg, Austria on Sunday, where he won a gold medal after

beating her Italian opponent Clio Ferracuti 2-1 at the Female Kumite over-68kg final.

Abbasali, who was in danger of missing the 2020 Olympic Games, will be released from the hospital on Friday and will be recovered for the Games in Tokyo.

She has won eight Asian Championships gold medals, one silver and two bronzes so far.

Abbasali claimed a gold medal in the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon and one bronze medal in the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta.

Coronavirus throws S Korea's Olympic plans into chaos

Travel restrictions around the world on arrivals from virus-hit South Korea are plunging its Olympic preparations into turmoil, with some athletes considering self-imposed exile and some at risk of missing the Games altogether.

South Korea is a country that takes the Olympics seriously, coming eighth in the medal table at Rio 2016 with nine golds, and fifth at London 2012 with 13.

But it also has the largest number of reported novel coronavirus cases in the world outside China, with the national total passing 6,000 on Thursday, less than five months before the Tokyo Olympics.

Scores of countries and regions have imposed travel restrictions and more than 20 -- including Olympic host



Japan -- have ordered two weeks' quarantine on arrivals from South Korea. Around 40 others have barred foreigners who have recently been in the country.

Unless exemptions are granted, the measures make it impossible for South Koreans to take part in international competitions in those countries -- costing them ranking points and sometimes putting Olympic qualification in doubt.

The national judo team were planning to arrive in Russia next week for the Ekaterinburg Grand Slam from March 13 to 15. But on Wednesday, Moscow announced its two-week quarantine. Most of the remaining judo competitions are in countries that already have entry bans, including Turkey, Mongolia and Qatar.

(Source: Japan Times)

AFC Emergency Meetings conclude in Doha and Dubai

Representatives of the competing Member Associations (MA) from the AFC West Zone have provided the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) with a series of proposals for completing the 2020 AFC Champions League Group Stage.

Following the meeting with MAs from the East Zone in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

last week, the AFC met with the West Zone representatives in Doha, Qatar and Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, this weekend.

All matches in AFC Champions League Match Day 3 were postponed in the West Zone and the AFC has now asked for the cooperation of the Member Associations in

producing a plan by which the remaining matches can be played before the Round of 16.

The Quarter-finals will be moved to September and the Semi-finals to October 14/15 and 28/29. The AFC Champions League Final dates (November 22 - East and November 28 - West) will remain unchanged.

As with the East Zone, the MAs provided some proposals which will now be considered by the AFC and the various stakeholders, including commercial partners. The AFC will then make a further statement on any developments and any potential new schedule in due course.

(Source: the-afc)

Judge rules Ronaldinho must remain in Paraguayan jail

ASUNCION (Reuters) — Former Brazilian international Ronaldinho Gaucho was ordered to remain in jail in Paraguay on Saturday after a judge ruled him a flight risk.

The ex-Barcelona forward was arrested on Friday for attempting to enter Paraguay with a false passport two days earlier and spent Friday night in a police cell along with his brother and business manager Roberto Assis.

The pair asked to be released into house arrest but that was rejected by the judge, who also dismissed Assis's claims to have a heart problem because he showed no proof.

Judge Clara Ruiz Diaz said their alleged offence was a "serious one against the interests of the Paraguayan state".

Because the pair posed a flight risk they must remain in custody, she added. Under Paraguayan law, officials now have six months to complete their investigation but Ronaldinho's lawyers, who called the decision "incredible," are expected to present an appeal in the coming days.

"He (Ronaldinho) doesn't understand what's going on," Tarek Tuma told reporters.

Saturday's courtroom drama came after an astonishing

four days that began on Wednesday when the duo attempted to enter Paraguay with doctored passports.

They were detained but a prosecutor who believed they were tricked into taking the fake documents recommended they be released after receiving an alternative punishment such as paying a fine to charity.

A judge, though, rejected that idea late on Friday and shortly afterwards the pair were arrested.

A police official told local media the pair had been placed in a cell with one other inmate. They were given soap, cushions and repellent to protect against mosquitoes.

Although workers at the facility took selfies with the famous detainee, officials said the Brazilians did not receive any preferential treatment.

Paraguayan television showed the two men arriving in court in handcuffs at around noon local time on Saturday.

The brothers were invited to Paraguay by a local casino owner and had arrived on Wednesday to take part in a soccer clinic for children and a book launch.



Although he last played professionally in 2015, Ronaldinho, who also represented Brazilian clubs Atletico Mineiro, Flamengo and Fluminense, is still hugely popular with global football fans for his skills and showmanship.

The 39-year-old was named FIFA world player of the year in 2004 and 2005 and won the World Cup with Brazil in 2002 and the Champions League with Barcelona in 2006.

Hong Kong can't travel to Tehran: HKFA

Hong Kong Football Association president Pui Kwan-kay says that they cannot travel to Tehran to play Iran at the 2022 World Cup Asian qualifier.

The match has been scheduled for March 26 at the Azadi Stadium, however football activities in Asia will likely be postponed due to novel coronavirus fears.

The Hong Kong Football Association is awaiting confirmation from the Asian Football Confederation on new arrangements, but chairman Pui Kwan-kay said it made sense to postpone the qualifiers to later in the year.

"We can't travel to Tehran for the away match as the government has already announced Hong Kong citizens would need to be in isolation for 14 days after returning, which is not possible for any professional player," said Pui. "In fact, it's difficult to identify a neutral ground to play these days because many countries in the region are also affected by the virus."

"But no one knows when the epidemic will subside, so it's not a bad decision to postpone the qualifiers for seven months. It's better to play safe, players' health is always top priority."

(Source: South China Morning Post)

FIFA orders Persepolis to pay Ivankovic 1.1 million euros

PLDC — A FIFA Tribunal has ordered Persepolis to pay more than one million euros to former coach Branko Ivankovic after the tribunal found that the Iranian club has not paid his wage.



The amount corresponds to Ivankovic's wage Persepolis had agreed to pay him.

Ivankovic parted company with the team eight months ago and FIFA has ordered the Iranian team to pay the Croatian coach 1,102,000 euros.

The Iranian team must pay 18,900 euros for trial cost as well.

Persepolis have to also pay 100,000 euros to Ivankovic's assistant Igor Panadic and it should pay 100,000 euros to Zlatko Ivankovic (assistant) and Marco (fitness coach).

Persepolis must pay the above-mentioned money to their former coaches until 45 days or else it will be banned from signing players for three transfer windows.

Iran out of FIBA U17 Basketball World Cup

Iran have been out of the FIBA U-17 Basketball World Cup following the cancellation of the FIBA U-16 Asia Championship.

The competition was originally scheduled to take place in Tehran but FIBA decided to change the host and Beirut was named to entertain the competition.

FIBA, at last, canceled the competition to stop the spread of coronavirus outbreak.

Following the cancellation of the Championship, the qualification of the Asia/Oceania teams was based on the FIBA World Ranking Youth Men, with Australia, China and Korea claiming berths as the three best-ranked countries.

(Source: FIBA)

Son strikes gold at London Football Awards

Son Heung-min's magnificent goal for Tottenham Hotspur against Burnley has taken the 'Goal of the Season' accolade at the London Football Awards. The Korea Republic star scored what has to be one of Spurs' all-time great goals, certainly in the Premier League era, in their 5-0 win against the Claretts on December 7.

Picking the ball up on the edge of Tottenham's box, Son sped away from Robbie Brady and James Tarkowski before blasting past Dwight McNeil.

He skipped away from last man Erik Pieters, sprinted away from Matt Lowton and Ben Mee and then provided a composed finish, slotting the ball past Nick Pope. It was 12 seconds from start to finish and a thing of footballing beauty.

Son beat fine strikes from Jordan Ayew (Palace v West Ham), N'Golo Kante (Chelsea v Liverpool), Sebastien Haller (West Ham v Bournemouth) and Sophie Ingle (Arsenal Women v Chelsea) to claim the award.

(Sources: Tottenham Hotspur, AFP)

Iranian gymnasts to compete at FIG World Cup in Baku

IRNA — Saeed Reza Keekha and Mehdi Ahmad Kohani will participate at the Federation Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) World Cup in Baku, the Azerbaijan Republic.

The competition will be held from March 12 to 15.

The Iranian pair won two silver medals at the FIG World Cup in Melbourne, Australia in February.

Keekha won the silver at the pommel horse discipline while Kohani claimed a silver at the rings.

Keekha and Kohani are training in Turkey's camp and will fly to Baku from there.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

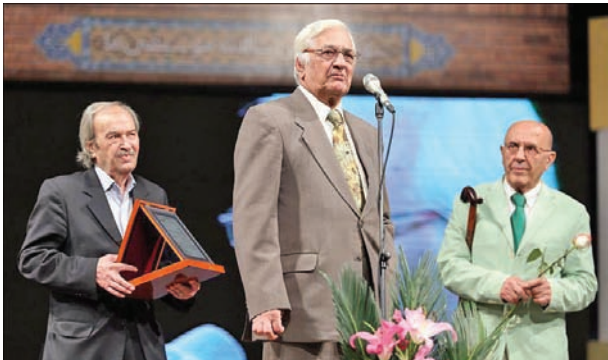
A sweet smell is pleasant and honey is animating,
riding is joyful and looking at green land is
exhilarating.

Imam Ali (AS)

Tar virtuoso Hushang Zarif dies at 81

1 → Zarif began learning music from masters such as Musa Marufi and Ali-Akbar Shahnazi at the National Music Academy and High Music Academy in Tehran when he was a young adult.

After developing his music skills as a tar soloist, he worked with several orchestras and ensembles, which were collaborating with Iran television and the Art and Culture Ministry.



Tar virtuoso Hushang Zarif speaks before receiving a lifetime achievement award during the 3rd annual Musicema Awards at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on October 11, 2015. Ney virtuoso Hassan Nahid (L) and critic Javad Mojabi are also seen in the photo. (Musicema/Saeid Abdollahi)

He performed at various international festivals across the world, including the Shriram Shankarlal Music Festival in India and the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music in Austria.

He later put his central focus on education and his students, such as Hossein Alizadeh, Dariush Talai, Arshad Tahmasbi and Hamid Motebassem, achieved worldwide fame.

In a statement published on Persian media, Alizadeh called Zarif a legend and wrote, "He filled our spirits with the fragrance of love and life to cause us to remain steadfast and be happy with his memories."

Zarif was also a skillful player of the setar and tombak. His expertise in performing the tombak led him to write the book "Tombak Learning" in collaboration with tombak virtuoso Hossein Tehrani.

He was also the author of "Vocal Radifs of the Iranian Traditional Music". Both of the books are still among the resources being used for instruction at music educational centers in the country.

"Esfahane Dashti" is one of his albums, which contains the eminent Iranian composer Ali-Naqi Vaziri's pieces "The Disheveled Girl", "The Acrobat" and "Gymnastic Musical".

Cultural officials sent messages of condolences to his family. "He enjoyed a high status in Iranian traditional music and with his exemplary humble and dignity played a key role in creating invaluable works and teaching his students and transferring his learning to today's generation," Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi said in his messages of condolence.

SXSW canceled as tech and entertainment world faces coronavirus

NEW YORK (Reuters) — The South by Southwest music, technology and film festival in Austin, Texas, was canceled on Friday, adding to a growing list of events being suspended around the world over concerns about the spreading coronavirus outbreak.

Known as SXSW, the annual showcase of pop culture had been scheduled to run March 13 to 22. Organizers and local officials said at a news conference that they had concluded it was unwise to draw crowds of people together in close proximity with the number of coronavirus cases rising around the world.

The novel coronavirus has spread across more than 90 countries. No cases have been confirmed in Austin.

"It is not a panic decision," Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt said of the cancellation.

SXSW began 33 years ago as a music festival but evolved to also highlight technology, video games, TV shows and movies. It has become a major promotional event for media and tech companies and last year attracted more than 417,000 people, organizers said.

Apple Inc (AAPL.O), Netflix Inc (NFLX.O), Facebook Inc (FB.O) and others had pulled out of the festival in recent days, ramping up the pressure to scrap it entirely.

The spread of coronavirus, which has infected more than 100,000 people worldwide and killed more than 3,400, has sent ripples throughout the media, music and technology businesses.

Earlier this week, Comcast Corp's (CMCSA.O) Universal Pictures postponed the global release of James Bond movie "No Time to Die," originally scheduled for April, to November. And the Ultra Music Festival, one of the world's largest dance music festivals and set for this month in Miami, was canceled.

"The Sun" director Majidi warns about higher risk of coronavirus for child laborers

A R T TEHRAN — Majid d e s k Majidi, the director of "The Sun", a drama about child labor in Tehran, has warned officials of the higher risk of contracting coronavirus disease for child laborers in Iran.

In a statement published on Saturday, Majid described his meeting with Ahmad and Kazem, two children who gather paper, glass and other materials from the waste bins in Tehran for recycling to make a living.

"They were two brothers Ahmad, 10 and Kazem, 12. The elder brother was completely inside the trash can gathering pieces of trash and throwing them outside while his little brother was selecting pieces of paper and plastic, and putting them in a large sack," he said.

"I asked the elder brother to come out of the trash can and told him he would get sick this way but he refused and continued working with this little brother. Consequently, I tried to change the atmosphere and become friends with them," he added.

"Now that there is a bad disease (coronavirus) it is very dangerous. The two began to laugh and the little boy said with a smile, 'my brother says we ourselves are coronavirus'," he wrote.

"The two then explained that they used to sell items in metro stations or at intersections or even washed windshields, but after the new virus outbreak, people don't buy things and don't even permit them to wash their cars' windshields, so they are forced to look inside trash cans and take refuse materials for recycling," Majidi said.



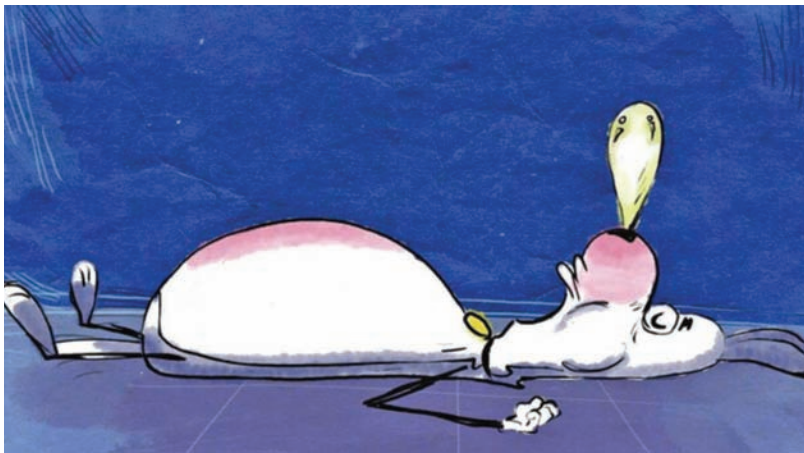
Majid Majidi attends a press conference for "The Sun" during the 38th Fajr Film Festival at Mellat Cineplex on February 10, 2020. (Mehrf/Majid Asgaripur)

"They said that are not alone. Many children have lost their sales and are forced to search inside the trash cans," he noted.

Majid asked the officials and the people to form campaigns to support these children and keep them safe until this new virus abates.

"The Sun" won the Crystal Simorgh for best film at the 38th Fajr Film Festival last month.

"The Dog That Was Sick" wins award at Canterbury Anifest



A scene from Iranian director Parvin Tajvid's short animation "The Dog That Was Sick".

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k director Parvin Tajvid's short animation "The Dog That Was Sick" won the second prize for best art design at the Canterbury Anifest in the English city last week.

French animation "Dernier Round" directed by Anatole Bournique, Maeva Chaulvet, Katia Hochstetter, Nicolas Jaffré and Thais Mercier won the festival's first prize in this category.

Produced by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and

Young Adults (IIDCY), "The Dog That Was Sick" tells the story of a dog that gets sick because it eats whatever it finds. When the vets take out the things the dog has eaten to save its life, the dog eats them all again.

"Aripi" by Ukrainian director Dmitri Voloshin was crowned best animation at the festival.

The short animated movie is about an astronaut who, as a child, dreamed of flying and being free. And now he seems to be flying in the sky, but he is actually locked in the capsule of a spacecraft.

Manchester festival to review Iranian short films



A scene from "Don't Forget Today" by Ahmad Monajjemi.

A R T TEHRAN — A lineup d e s k of 14 Iranian films will go on screen in a special section dedicated to Iranian cinema at the 16th Kinofilm Manchester International Short Film and Animation Festival in the English city.

"One Night" by Aida Alimadadi, "Cleaner" by Mohammadreza Miqani, "Showan" by Bijan Zarin, "Dissect" by Siavash Shahabi and "I'm Not an Actress" by Ali Jalali are among the films.

The lineup also includes "Serok" by Zhivar Farajzadeh, "She Who Wasn't Tamed" by Saleh Kashefi, "Azadeh" by

Mirabbas Khosravinejad, "Flying Fish" by Mohammad Torivarian and "Don't Forget Today" by Ahmad Monajjemi.

Also included are "Umbra" by Saeid Jafarian, "August" by Samira Noruznasseri, "Hearing Aid" by Hamid Yusefi and "The Feast of the Goat" by Saeid Zamanian.

Iranian films "Oblivion" by Fatemeh Mohammadi, "Emesis" by Azin Hamidnia and "Watch Me" by Reza Mehranfar will also go on screen in other sections of the festival.

The Kinofilm Manchester International Short Film and Animation Festival will be held from March 22 to 29.

Qom Documentary House producing shorts on coronavirus

A R T TEHRAN — The Qom Documentary d e s k House is producing a number of shorts on coronavirus in the city of Qom, where the first cases of the new virus infection in two Iranian men were reported.

Javad Yaqmuri and Mehdi Amini, two filmmakers from the house, have spent the past two weeks recording all the efforts made by the doctors, nurses and medical staff in the Kamkar Hospital in the city, the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) announced in a press release published on Saturday.

"The coronavirus medical staff, dressed in protective

clothing, have created impressive moments, which have been recorded by our cameras," Yaqmuri said.

"The shorts try to give hope and portray bittersweet moments that we have witnessed in the hospital," he added.

"We believe these short documentaries will keep people calm. That is, as much as masks and medicine are necessary for the people these days, watching these documentaries seems to be necessary as well," he noted.

All the shorts will later be merged and made into one long documentary in the future, he said.



Javad Yaqmuri (L) records short documentaries on coronavirus at the Kamkar Hospital in Qom.

Paris to host exhibition by Iranian photographers

A R T TEHRAN — An exhibition of photos by the members of Iran's Young Photographers' House opened at Iran's cultural office in Paris on Friday.

The opening ceremony was attended by Iranian cultural attaché Jamal Kamyab and a number of Iranian and French cultural officials and artists, the office announced on Saturday.

Entitled "In My View" (A Mon Avis), the exhibition is displaying 21 photos by 15 photographers, including Yasamin Abbaszadeh, Mohammad Eshqi, Reza Sayyadi, Hamid Khorasani, Leila Kaboli, Saman Rastegar and Farshad Mohammadi.

The exhibition will be running until March 12.



A poster for "In My View" photo exhibition.

Puppet show director Golzar Mohammadi dies at 42

A R T TEHRAN — Puppet show d e s k director Golzar Mohammadi, who was the secretary of the 18th Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival, died in her home in the western Iranian city of Sanandaj on Sunday morning after months of suffering from cancer. She was 42.

Mohammadi who was in Tehran, wished to go back home to spend her last days in her father's house, her friend Nazila Nurishad has said.

There will be no funeral ceremony for her because of the spread of the coronavirus in the country, but there will be a memorial service in Tehran at a more favorable time after fears of the coronavirus contagion abate, she noted.

Mohammadi was a graduate of theater and had directed several puppet shows, including "Tiba and Tibuni" and "King Jamshid and the Monster".



Golzar Mohammadi in an undated photo.