

Tehran to host intl. conference on polyolefin pipes on Monday

The first international conference on polyolefin pipes will be held by Jam Petrochemical Company in the form of specialized panels and sideline exhibitions.

According to Jam Petrochemical Company, the first international conference of polyolefin pipes with the presence of reputable foreign companies in the petrochemical industry and among universities will be held on 14 topics with practical scientific presentations by experts in this field at Olympic Hotel in Tehran on June 15 and 16, 2020.

The two-day conference will be held in three sections: scientific articles, workshops and sideline exhibitions.

Those interested can log on to the conference website at www.ippfacon.ir to register for the event.

Iran to use capsule hotels as accommodation for tourists

In a Saturday ceremony with the presence of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan, the first capsule hotel imported to the country was unveiled to be used as a new type of recommendation for tourists.

The capsule hotels are imported by the Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran and are to be distributed across Iranian provinces to be used by tourists.

As reported, in the first phase of their use, 200 capsules are to be distributed in Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Shiraz and Tabriz as transient accommodations for tourists.

Capsule hotels or Pod hotels are a type of hotel developed in Japan that features many small bed-sized rooms known as capsules. Capsule hotels provide cheap, basic overnight accommodation for guests who do not require or who cannot afford larger, more expensive rooms offered by more conventional hotels.

The first capsule hotel in the world opened in 1979 and was the Capsule Inn Osaka, located in Japan.

Output of Nine Industrial Products Increases

The Ministry of Industries, Mining and Trade's review of the first two months of the current Iranian year (March 20-May 20) shows the output of nine industrial products (out of 22) saw growth during the period compared with the corresponding period of the year before.

A total of 118,000 washing machines were produced during the two months, up by 144% compared with last year's corresponding period. Acrylic fiber production stood at 1,300 tons to register a year-on-year increase of around 95.1%. Production of television sets rose by 49.9% to 109,200 vehicles.

A total of 140,200 cubic meters of particle boards were produced during the period under review, indicating a 30% YOY rise.

Production of auto tires totaled 39,700, up by 26.6% YOY.

More than 81,400 tons of mineral oil were produced in two months, indicating a 15% growth YOY.

Petrochemical production rose by 5.6% YOY to 10.11 million tons, followed by pickup trucks that increased by 5.5% to reach 8,400 vehicles.

Production of detergent powder reached 91,000 tons, up by 0.7% YOY.

» **License Owner & Managing director:** Reza Mahzunieh
 » **Editor-in-Chief:** Marzie Rabiei
 » **Assistant Editor-in-Chief of English Section:** Bahare Yousefi
 » **Isfahan Office:** Hoora Building, Shahid Mofateh Street, Ahmad Abad Square, Isfahan, Iran
 » **Tel:** 031-32274500
 » **Public Relations:** 031-32274754

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 » **Fax:** 031-32274507, 32274511
 » **Lithography and printing:** Golriz
 » **Isfahan subscribers Office:** 031-32274508
 » **website:** esfahan-news.com
 » **SMS:** 30007232

Rise in Home Appliance Output

Iran's output of home appliances increased by nearly 8% in the last Iranian year (March-2019-20), the deputy industries minister said.



Plans are to boost production by 34% in the current year for production to hit 11.6 million home appliances," Mo h a m m a d Reza Kalam

was also quoted as saying by Tasnim News Agency, adding that by March 2022, production will meet the total domestic demand for home appliances.

Domestic demand for home appliances was around 13.6 million in the year ending March 2018, but has now reduced to 12 million given the rise in the value of foreign currencies and prices.

Mandatory ID Numbers for Home Appliances

All home appliances in the Iranian market have been recently required to have an identification number printed on them, otherwise they will be deemed as contraband and their producers or sellers will be subject to anti-smuggling penalties, says the head of the Headquarters to Combat Smuggling of Goods and Foreign Exchange.

"Iran's home appliance market has a turnover of 400 quadrillion rials [\$2.25 billion]. The domestic market is sizable and smuggling in the field is very high and this is why the ID numbers scheme is first being carried out in this sector. We plan to gradually expand the scheme to include other products as well," Ali Moayyed Khorramabadi was also quoted by ILNA as saying.

The official asked customers to demand ID numbers from sellers of home appliances to be reassured that the product they want to buy is original and not a contraband.



"By using the ID number, customers can access a guarantee system and receive after-sales services," he added.

Moayyedi noted that the scheme was supposed to kick off in January, but it was postponed due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus.

Spokesman of the Producers of Household Appliances Guild Union Hamidreza Ghaznavi says that based on the new regulation, after receiving an ID number through a website introduced by the Ministry of Industries, Mining and Trade, each product will be given a random tracking code and both the ID number and tracking code are required to be printed on the product, Mizan Online reported.

Speaking earlier on the same subject, Morteza Miri, the head of Home Appliances Sellers Union, said ID numbers should be printed on domestic home appliances before leaving the factory.

Based on official figures, 75% of Iranians are customers of foreign home appliance brands and the remaining 25% use products manufactured in Iranian factories, which also require foreign spare parts. "Though foreign companies that were active in Iran have

left the country due to the reimposition of sanctions against us, yet, the transition of consumption from foreign brands to domestic ones has not taken place. The main reason for this is that smuggling of these items has increased," he said.

Ghaznavi believes much space has been created for domestic production to thrive. "It's the first time in almost 10 years that we are experiencing such an opportunity. Previously, foreign brands were advertised, foreign brands used to assemble their goods here in the country and almost everyone could use a commercial card to import home appliances. Today none of these problems exists," he said.

Ghaznavi noted that if production increases to reach an economic scale, prices too can decrease by around 20%.

Smuggling Deals Blow to Domestic Production Alongside apparel, foodstuff, mobile phones and gold ingots, household appliances are among the main contraband products widely available in the Iranian market.

"The government banned the import of household appliances in 2018, but they continue to be smuggled into the country. These

contraband items enter Iran from the western borders ... Besides the issue of authenticity of smuggled products, since import tax is not paid for them, they are sold at unrealistic cheaper prices in the domestic market," Secretary-General of Iran's Home Appliances Association Habibollah Ansari has been quoted as saying.

Miri said two out of three home appliances in the market are contraband. Latest data provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration show a total of \$215 million worth of home appliances were imported into Iran during the last fiscal year (March 2018-19), down from \$1.28 billion in the previous year, indicating an 83.43% plunge year-on-year.

Some 80,000 home appliance production units are active in Iran, 3,000 of which have created more than 100 jobs each.

Spokesman of the Headquarters to Combat Smuggling of Goods and Foreign Exchange has told Fars News Agency that contraband home appliances worth more than \$2.2 billion were smuggled into Iran in the fiscal 2018-19, adding that this robs Iranians of around 80,000 job opportunities.

Tropical, Subtropical Fruit Exports at \$500m

A total of 620,000 tons of tropical and subtropical fruits worth close to \$500 million were exported from Iran during the last Iranian year (March 2019-20), according to the director general of the Tropical and Subtropical Fruits Bureau with the Ministry of Agriculture. "Our main exports were citrus fruits, dates, pomegranates and figs," Zahra Jalili Moqaddam was quoted as saying by Mizan Online as saying. The official added that the land under cultivation of tropical and subtropical fruits in Iran amounts to 730,000 hectares, which yield more than 8.1 million tons every year. Tropical and subtropical fruits account for around 40% of Iran's horticultural products, said the official, adding that in terms of citrus fruit production, Iran is the world's seventh biggest.

Iran is also said to be the leading pomegranate and second biggest date producer in the world with more than 900,000 tons and 1.2 million tons of output per year respectively.

India-Iran trade become normal soon: Expert

"There is no particular problem in trade with India now and bilateral relations will return to normal soon," Vice president of India-Iran Chamber of Commerce Parham Rezaei told ILNA. Speaking with ILNA news agency correspondent, the Iranian official refers to outbreak of coronavirus and added "following the coronavirus epidemic, we faced challenges with our trade relations with India and although the situation has not returned to normal but it is expected within the next week or two it is going to be over." Rezaei said that there is no problem with financial transfers with India and the deposited money can be used for basic goods. Iran's main non-oil exports to India include steel, ammonia, gas condensates, petrochemicals, and paraffin. India's main exports to Iran include agricultural products such as rice, oilseeds, cotton, tea as well as textiles, thread, and industrial machinery. Iran has been an important trade partner for India with bilateral trade in 2018-19 posting a 23.7 percent growth to \$17.03 billion. Of this, mineral oil and fuel imports were key, accounting for \$12.3 billion.

NO 508

Sudoku

Solution: NO 507

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News

Knowledge-based firms showcase latest products in "Coronatech 2020" expo

More than 50 knowledge-based companies and startups put their latest products and achievements to the public view at an exhibition entitled "Surge in Production and Achievements in Fight against Coronavirus" entitled "Coronatech 2020" on Saturday. At the initiative taken by the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology, the exhibition of "Coronatech 2020" kicked off its work at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds today. Accordingly, knowledge-based companies and

startups displayed their latest achievements at the exhibition of "Coronatech 2020" in the group of medical equipment, coronavirus diagnostic kits, raw materials of producing face masks, personal protection products, disinfectants [consumables and equipment] in the fight against COVID-19.

Companies producing homegrown coronavirus diagnostic kit, COVID-19, also participated in this exhibition. This exhibition of "Coronatech 2020" will run for three days.

Intimidating ICC members shows Trump team's anti-human rights spirit: Vaezi

A Yemeni diplomat said the Saudi-led coalition's insistence on the continuation of war on Yemen in spite of the heavy economic and humanitarian losses incurred by Al Saud reveals that the coalition is only a tool in the hands of the US and Israel.

June, 14, 2020 - 10:37
Politics Comments
Saudi-Led Coalition A Tool in US, Zionist Hands: Yemeni Diplomat

In an interview with Tasnim, Moataz al-Qarshi, a Yemeni diplomat working in Syria's Damascus, said Saudi Arabia would stop the war on Yemen if the kingdom were an independent state with the ability to make independent political decisions.

"Saudi Arabia is nothing but a tool among the American-Zionist tools in the region." He added that Riyadh would have not basically launched any war on Yemen if it had been aware of the consequences and damages of the offensive. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other members of the military coalition are instruments implementing the plots hatched by Washington and the Zionist regime to destabilize the region, Qarshi said.

He also noted that the war against Yemen has inflicted heavy economic and humanitarian losses on Saudi Arabia's ruling system, and that the Saudi regime has not achieved any of its objectives such as conquering Sana'a or suppressing the Ansarullah movement despite using all military options. Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the devastating war on Yemen in March 2015 in order to bring former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crush the Houthi Ansarullah movement. The US-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 100,000 lives over the past five years.

Showing Iran as security threat, goal of US, Zionist regime: FM Zarif

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that distorting Iran's image and presenting it as a security threat is the main goal of the United States and Zionist regime.

Zarif made the remarks in a live Instagram interview on Saturday.

In response to the question of the strategy of the Iranian Foreign Ministry in dealing with the external pressures,

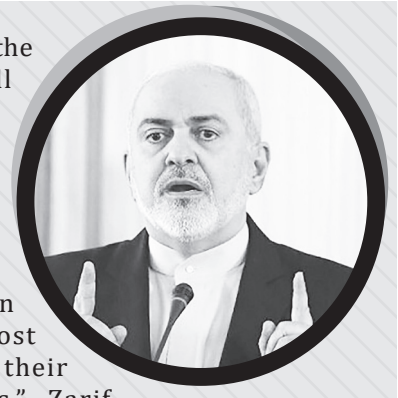
Zarif said, "The policy we chose at the beginning of 11th and 12th government dubbed 'hope and prudence' was to try to interact with the world. I believe that this policy is a right and accurate policy."

However, he added, "The Israeli regime and the United States have made their utmost efforts over the past years, especially during Iran's 2015 nuclear deal, to show Iran as a security threat."

There is a term in the international relations that if you do not have a good relationship with a country, make it difficult for the whole world and tell the world that this country poses a security problem for you, he said.

"[The situation over] our nuclear issue provided the

suitable condition for the Israeli regime to tell the world that Iran is a security threat." "That's why we are facing some challenges as they [the US and the Israeli regime] have been making their utmost effort to realize their malicious objectives," Zarif stressed.



Iran's 5 countermeasures to extension of arms embargo

Iran has five options on the table in response to US efforts to extend arms embargo on Tehran, which will allow the country a chance for "countermeasure" against continued lack of commitment by the Western sides and Washington's plots.



As the time for the removal of the arms embargo on Tehran approaches, Washington is trying to create obstacles and prevent the normalization of Iran's position in the global arms market. However, the fact of the matter is that Iran's hands are not exactly tied in this situation.

Late last year, the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who has worked hard to get his country out of the JCPOA and put maximum pressure on Iran, while failing to mention the US' billion-dollar arms deals with Arab countries, referred to a clause in the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, of which the JCPOA is a part, and called the end of Iran's arms embargo a cause of insecurity in West Asia.

Pompeo and the US Special Representative for Iran, Brian Hook, have repeatedly called for an immediate halt to the process of the embargo removal, which is set to take place in October under Resolution 2231.

The Washington Post reported late last month that the US would initially seek a consensus in the Security Council to pass a resolution under which Iran's arms embargo would be extended indefinitely.

The report went on to say that if the United States failed in doing so, it would use Resolution 2231 to declare itself a party to the JCPOA and trigger the dispute mechanism. Doing so would snap back all UN sanctions under Chapter VII, which also includes the arms embargo.

Iran, in response, has cited the unilateral and illegal withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, which practically stripped the US of any rights regarding the deal, and stressed that the country would take countermeasures if the US succeeded in re-imposing the arms embargo.

Although countries such as China and Russia have officially stated that the US efforts are illogical as Washington is no longer a party to the nuclear deal, Tehran also has several options on the table that could stop these efforts from bearing fruit.

1. Limiting inspections
Given that Iran is under the strictest methods of inspection, it seems that the country can limit the scope of the inspections regarding the area, the number of inspectors, and the level of access.

In this regard, Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman



of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), noted the possibility of limiting inspections in a press conference at Fordow enrichment facility on November 9, 2019, saying "regarding our steps to reduce commitments to the JCPOA, I should mention that the IAEA's inspections are no longer necessary, and if they still want to continue the inspections, they will just be wasting their time."

Mohammad Ali Pourmokhtar, a member of the Legal and Judicial Commission of the 10th Parliament, also noted the lack of commitment by the Western sides, saying "If the Europeans continue to fail to live up to their commitments and the country's interests are not met, certain restrictions will be imposed on the IAEA's inspections."

Mohammad Javad Jamali Nobandegani, Deputy Chairman of the National Security Commission of the 10th Parliament, also said in this regard, "imposing certain restrictions on the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities could be on the agenda as part of reducing the country's commitments to the JCPOA."

2. Increasing the level of enrichment
Before the signing of the nuclear deal, Iran was enriching uranium at 20 percent, and many saw this as a bargaining chip for the country. Political analysts believe that with enrichment above 5 percent considered as a redline, the country's announcement of a return to the 20 percent could be an effective step against the West's continued lack of commitment. Kamalvandi said in his press conference last year in Fordow, "We have the ability to enrich uranium up to 60% and we will do it based on the needs of the country and the directives of our authorities."

senior officials order for 20 percent enrichment, we will get it done in four minutes."

In this regard, the Deputy Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the 10th Parliament also said, "one step of reducing Iran's commitments could be the increase in the level of enrichment as much as required in order to force Europeans to fulfill their obligations."

3. Stopping the implementation of Additional Protocol
Iran is implementing the Additional Protocol voluntarily under the JCPOA, and according to the terms of the agreement, the country's Parliament must review and ratify the Additional Protocol eight years after the deal was adopted.

However, given that the United States unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA and that the three countries, Britain, Germany, and France, are not fulfilling their commitments under the deal, some officials have noted that Iran could stop the implementation of the Additional Protocol as a countermeasure and a serious warning to the remaining European signatories to the nuclear deal to fulfill their commitments.

Ali Motahari, the former deputy speaker of the Iranian Parliament, said in this regard, "Now that Iran is under so much pressure and its nuclear facilities are under inspection more than any other country, we can refrain from implementing the Additional Protocol."

The spokesman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the 10th Parliament also said in the same vein, "When the Additional Protocol is being implemented voluntarily, but the other side does not live up to its commitments, then the Islamic Republic can stop the voluntary implementation of this protocol."

4. Leaving NPT
Iran joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 and kept its membership in this controversial treaty

after the Islamic Revolution. Many experts believe that it is a mistake for Iran to continue its participation in the NPT in the face of repeated failure of the Western sides to fulfill their commitments to the nuclear deal.

Admiral Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, had said before Trump's decision to withdraw from the JCPOA, "If the United States withdraws from the nuclear deal known as the JCPOA, one of Iran's options is to withdraw from the NPT." After the US withdrawal from the JCPOA, Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization (AEOI), said in a statement that the AEOI had made as many as 15 proposals to reduce Iran's commitments to the nuclear deal, and leaving the NPT was one of them.

According to the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council and the spokesman of the Atomic Energy Organization, it is clear that leaving the NPT is one of the options on Iran's table to counter the US and Europeans' lack of commitments, and the possibility of making this decision in its due time is very high. In addition to Shamkhani and Kamalvandi's remarks, Hamid Baeedinejad, Iran's ambassador to London, told British journalists and media outlets, "some circles in Iran are of the opinion that at the moment, the country is not benefiting from its membership to the NPT. Following the issues surrounding the JCPOA, more and more people are paying attention to what is being said about leaving the NPT."

5. Leaving the JCPOA
One of the most important countermeasures against the Western sides' continued lack of commitment and the US' sabotage is to withdraw from the nuclear deal. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in an interview, "Iran has several options and leaving the JCPOA is one of them. This is definitely one of the dozens of options we have."

NEWS

Divorces Rise by 30% in Saudi Arabia: Report

Divorces in Saudi Arabia have risen by 30 percent in the month of February after the quarantine during the coronavirus pandemic caused many wives to discover that their husbands had other wives and families, a report said.

It was reported back in February that marriages within the kingdom had increased by five percent compared to the same month last year, with 13,000 marriages having been conducted and 542 registered online, according to the Dubai-based news site (Persian) Gulf News.

The number of divorces that month, however, was at a record 7,482, resulting in a 30 percent increase in requests for divorces and 'khula' - the process in which a woman can divorce her husband. Annulment is also an option for the women, particularly in cases in which they prove they were harmed by the husband.

Citing statistics from the Saudi Ministry of Justice, the report noted that 52 percent of divorce requests and cases that month were from the cities of Mecca and the capital Riyadh. It also said that the majority of women who requested divorces from their husbands were employees, businesswomen, prominent women in the community, and female doctors.

Suspects Nabbed in Iran for Arson

Iran's Police chief said a number of suspects have been arrested in connection with recent acts of arson.

Asked by reporters about a recent wave of suspicious fires in various parts of Iran, Police Commander Brigadier General Hossein Ashtari said on Sunday that the law enforcement and other organizations in charge have taken action to handle the issue.

"Good measures have been taken in this regard," he said.

"Some of the fires have started unintentionally and a number of others deliberately, and a number of (suspected) individuals have been identified and arrested in connection with it," the general added. A series of mysterious blazes and wildfires in the past couple of weeks across Iran have raised concerns among the authorities and citizens.

Tehran's Fire Department announced on June 13 that a big fire at a flower market in the capital's Khavaran Road has been contained. There were no casualties, but 32 flower stands were destroyed. Over the past week, several wildfires have also broken out in pastures and forests, as well as blazes in some parks in Tehran.

Upcoming IAEA Board Session to Focus on Iran: Russia

The upcoming virtual meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors will be held in mid-June to discuss various issues, including Iran, a Russian diplomat said.

"Virtual session of #IAEA Board of Governors is scheduled to start at 10 a.m. on 15 June. It may be lengthy, taking into account a big number of agenda items. #Iran is expected to be the focus of attention," Russia's Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov tweeted on Sunday.

In May 2018, US President Donald Trump took an illegal and unilateral decision to end Washington's participation in the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers and re-impose the sanctions that the agreement had lifted, in defiance of the fact that the accord has been endorsed by the UN Security Council in the form of Resolution 2231.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo last month claimed Washington technically remained a "participant" in the deal, known as the JCPOA, in order to use a mechanism embedded within the accord to make the UN maintain an arms embargo on Tehran.

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20000 Rials

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IDO head calls on officials to pay more attention to culture

Islamic Development Organization [IDO]'s Chief Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi criticized lack of enough measures in boosting culture in the country. He made the remarks at the open session of the Parliament on Sunday while addressing lawmakers about the IDO's plans and status. The issue of culture is being neglected in the county, he lamented, noting that the fact that few lawmakers have welcomed joining the 'culture fraction' of the Parliament proves this. He added that more work needs to be done in mosques, social media, and elsewhere to enhance the Islamic culture among the youth generation. Qomi went on to criticize lack of enough monitoring over social networks such as Instagram which consume a significant part of Internet bandwidth in the country. "The country's bandwidth has increased by 2.5 fold in the past year and 60 to 70 percent of this is often dedicated to Instagram." The social media blocked a poet with 200k followers after posting a poem about General Soleimani but is home to a singer whose tracks are full of inhumane concepts, Qomi added.



Headlines

Iran's 5 countermeasures to extension of arms embargo

Showing Iran as security threat, goal of US, Zionist regime: FM Zarif

Output of Nine Industrial Products Increases

CALL TO PRAYER TIME IN ISFAHAN

Morning call to prayer:

04:15:46

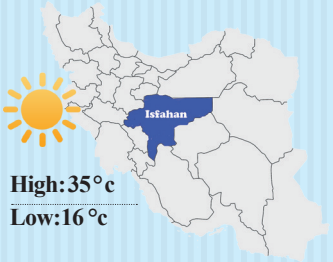
Noon call to prayer:

13:03:57

Evening call to prayer:

20:32:46

WEATHER



High: 35°C

Low: 16°C



Bakhtegan breaks record of water level of Iranian lakes

Changes in pattern of refilling water in lakes and wetlands of Iran indicate that Bakhtegan in south of the country broke record of the water level of the Iranian lakes in Ordibehesht, the second month of the Iranian year from April 20 to May 20. Bakhtegan Wetland with 894 percent increase in water balance broke the monthly record compared with the level in the preceding year, head of Department of Environment of southern province of Fars Hamid Zahrabi said on Sunday. Last year, level of water refill in Bakhtegan was 15.68 cubic kilometers, while the figure was 155.9 this year, Zahrabi added. The figure has been found by Geographic Information System (GIS) affiliated to Iranian Space Agency, the official announced.



Rise in Home Appliance Output

Report: UAE Draining Billions of Dollars in Armament Contracts

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has drained an important part of its financial liquidity in armaments over the past ten years, yet it has not participated in any official military operations, except in Yemen.

However, the UAE's interventions in countries such as Libya has made it a major sponsor of war there and the escalation of political and security tensions against international efforts to extinguish the war that has been raging for years.

UAE imports reached \$4.98 billion in the last five years, coinciding with its war on Yemen, as part of an international coalition.

The data does not include any additional expenditures on its military forces, or the financing of any tensions, whether in Libya or Yemen, the Middle East Monitor reported.

Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) show that the numbers come despite the decline in the UAE's arms imports by 46 percent in 2019 (\$644 million), after increasing by 24 percent in 2018 (\$1.2 billion).

Since March 2015, the Saudi-led Arab Coalition has been launching military operations against the impoverished Arab country.

According to a report by Anadolu Agency, the US has acquired nearly two-thirds of the value of the weapons the UAE has imported during this period, as its share amounted to \$3.37 billion, representing 67.7 percent of the imports during the five years.

The UAE is one of the US' closest allies in the region, especially after President Donald Trump took office in 2016.

The UAE is also the third-largest oil producer in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries

(OPEC), after Saudi Arabia and Iraq, with about three million barrels per day.

The UAE's revenues have been affected since mid-2014, and this has been exacerbated with the crude oil's loss of two-thirds of its value during the first quarter of 2020, in the worst quarterly performance ever due to the coronavirus pandemic.

On Wednesday, the Emirates Central Bank expected the country's economy to retract by 3.6 percent after a slowdown in economic activity due to the pandemic.

The bank also expected the retraction of the growth of non-energy sectors by 4.1 percent in 2020, and the total oil and gas sector output by 2.4 percent this year.

To confront the coronavirus, the Emirati government has announced a \$13.5 billion economic stimulus package and has taken a series of measures to support the aviation and real estate sectors.

The UAE's arms imports peaked in 2015 at \$1.22 billion, then declined by 22 percent in 2016, reaching \$955 million. In 2017, the arms imports rose again by one percent to \$965 million, and by 24 percent to \$1.2 billion in 2018, while they fell back by 46 percent to \$644 million.

The US' share of global imports has grown from 66.4 percent in 2015 to 69 percent in 2016, 62.5 percent in 2017, and 76.5 percent in 2018 (the highest share), while it reached 59.5 percent in 2019.

On April 19, Abu Dhabi announced the issuance of multi-tiered sovereign bonds with a total value of \$7 billion.

Whereas, on June 2, Abu Dhabi announced the issuance of multi-tiered sovereign bonds with a total value of \$3 billion, by reopening the recently issued bond issuance program, according to the report.

Trump focuses on re-election bid by renewal of arms embargo against Iran

US President Donald Trump, by renewing arms embargo against Iran, is to show power to his fans and followers for re-election bid, an American scholar Dr John Calabrese has said.

Dr Calabrese made the remarks in an exclusive interview held with IRNA in New York on Sunday.

Dr Calabrese, who teaches US foreign policy at American University in Washington and is Scholar in Residence at the Middle East Institute, highlighted two reasons behind the US administration' contortions that are first to renew arms embargo on Iran and second to demonstrate that it is "delivering" on past pledges.

The full text of the interview is as follows:

First, as you know on May 8, 2018, President Donald Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum titled: "Ceasing US Participation in the JCPOA and Taking Additional Action to Counter Iran's Malign Influence and Deny Iran All Paths to a Nuclear Weapon."

As I understand it, this Memo constituted the US "official withdrawal" from the JCPOA and paved the way for the reinstatement of unilateral sanctions and corresponding American pressure on others to follow suit. About a month ago, Secretary Pompeo reportedly decided to have his staff prepare a legal document arguing that the US remains a "participant state" in the nuclear deal. I do not have the legal expertise to make an authoritative statement as to whether this argument is persuasive.

However, it appears to me that the Trump administration is going through these contortions for two reasons: 1) as a means of renewing the arms embargo on Iran and 2) as a domestic political ploy to demonstrate to a portion of its constituency that it is "delivering" on past pledges.

Regarding the first point, renewing the embargo, the Trump administration seems to be preparing the "participant state" argument as an instrument to gain other Security Council

members to follow its lead. If they don't, then the threat is that the US could and would have the right to insist upon "snapback sanctions". However, it is difficult to imagine that either Russia, or for that matter, China, would accede to a renewal of the conventional arms embargo. European Security Council members -- Britain and France -- are probably hoping that either Moscow (more likely) or Beijing will obstruct this effort.

In any case, under the JCPOA, the US would have to demonstrate that "snapback sanctions" were warranted. To my knowledge, there is no concrete evidence that Iran is non-compliant. So, it is hard to see how Washington could advance its claim and gain support for it.

This leads me to the second point, namely domestic politics in the heat of the fast-approaching US election season. President Trump -- and Secretary Pompeo, for that matter -- are on the defensive. Putting the arms embargo renewal and snapback sanctions issues in this context, these maneuvers strike me as being fundamentally about solidifying the "electoral base".

Note that over the past few weeks, President Trump has taken the side of law enforcement officers, brandished a Bible in front of a historic Church that had been damaged in protests, and called for accelerating the confirmation of conservative judges.

On the foreign policy front, Trump announced the imminent withdrawal of nearly 10,000 American troops from Germany and abrogation of its commitment to the Open Skies Agreement. Then, of course, there are renewed sanctions threats against China for its policies in Hong Kong, toward Taiwan, etc.

Circling back to Iran, against the backdrop of these initiatives, perhaps the outcome is not as important as the "performative" value in domestic political terms.

If the administration's coercive approach succeeds, it can proclaim "victory". Should such an approach fail, it can claim that it tried but was undermined by perfidious strategic rivals and limp, feckless allies.

As I understand it, this Memo constituted the US "official withdrawal" from the JCPOA and paved the way for the reinstatement of unilateral sanctions and corresponding American pressure on others to follow suit.

Since March 2015, the Saudi-led Arab Coalition has been launching military operations against the impoverished Arab country.

