

Iran's flights at airports 'doubled' in current year: CEO

Chief Executive of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company (IAC) said that total flights of airports running under IAC in first two months of current year (March-May) registered a 100% hike. Siavash Amir-Makri broke the news on Tuesday and reiterated that flights of the country recorded a 100 percent growth in the first two months of the current year as compared to the months of the previous year.

He put the total number of flights launched in the first two months of the current year at 48,735. In this period, about 3,637,000 passengers were transported at airports of the country, showing a considerable 75 percent hike as compared to the last year in terms of dispatching and admitting passengers.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Amir-Makri pointed to the transport of passengers in foreign and international flights and stated, "Statistics on flight and transportation of passengers in foreign and international flights show 100 percent hike in the first two months of the current year."

Iran, Vietnam to open new chapter in tech coop.

Iran, and Vietnam are to hold a technology and trading meeting next month to improve their technological cooperation.

Iranian and Vietnamese knowledge-based companies active in the fields of medical equipment, energy, IT, and artificial intelligence (AI) are to take part in the event.

The meeting would be held online from June 26 to July 21 by International Affairs and Technological Exchange Center affiliated to Iran's Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology. Those interested in participating in the meeting can register until June 21.

Vietnam exceeded China in economic growth in 2020 and can be a good destination and market for Iranian knowledge-based companies to offer their products and interact with Vietnamese companies and economic activists.

The country has set records in annual economic growth in the recent decade, so the latest statistics show it has exported 60 billion dollars of goods and services to the United States.

Vietnam is the next destination for Iranian knowledge-based companies working on medical equipment, energy, IT, and artificial intelligence (AI) to find a way of cooperating with Vietnamese counterparts in the upcoming virtual meeting.

Vietnam's market is thirsty for new technologies and products, but they cannot afford their needs from European and American markets because of high costs.

Among energetic Asian economies, Vietnam enjoys a growing economy with high potential. Companies and investors from all over the world are increasingly seeking to enter this country.

Long-time growth, high population, political stability, and young human forces are the most important factor to convince Iranian companies to interact with Vietnam.

Recognizing this, Iran's Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology has partnered with Behbood Tajhiz Behin Andish Co (BTBACO) to provide knowledge-based companies in Iran with an export market to extend their sales overseas.

Interaction with Vietnam would connect Iran to ASEAN free trade region, expanding the playground for Iranian companies to be active in the vast region of Southeast Asia.

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Sirik power plant highlighting Iran-Russia energy cooperation

In August 2016, Iran had signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Russia for implementing a -1,400 megawatt power plant project in Iran's southern Hormozgan Province.



Technopromexport pledged to invest up to €1.2 billion in the project of Sirik power plant.

The construction of the mentioned thermal power plant started in February 2017; however, it came to a halt due to some administrative and funding problems from the Russian side.

After years of postponing, eventually, the Russian side came to the conclusion that the contractor [for the project] should be replaced. On this basis, a new contractor was selected, which was also approved by Iran.

Once fully operational, the Sirik project would add some 12 terawatt-hours (TWh) of power to Iran's current generation capacity. In last September, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian had announced that Russia has changed the contractor that was supposed to work on the Sirik power plant and the new contractor was going to start working on the project in the coming weeks.

The construction operation of the power plant then was started on June 10 with the order of President Hasan Rouhani and in a ceremony attended by the energy minister.

The project is to be completed in 55 months using a Russian government loan and by Russian and Iranian contractors and then will be handed over to the Iranian employer.

As stated by the managing director of Iran's Thermal



Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH), Iran and Russia, as two neighboring countries, along with the expansion of strategic relations, are always trying to remove obstacles to improving economic and trade cooperation, one of which is the development of bilateral cooperation in the field of energy, especially the construction of a joint power plant.

In a situation where the electricity industry is facing a serious shortage of financial resources for the development of electricity generation projects due to the inadequate increase in electricity sales tariffs and oppressive sanctions, the use of different methods of providing resources to advance the projects envisaged in this sector is of particular importance, Mohsen Tarzatabal noted.

Implementing the plan to build Sirik power plant using foreign financial resources has been the most economical way of financing this plan due to the prevailing economic conditions in the country, lack of available resources for government to spend on construction projects and lack of direct access to foreign exchange resources, the official further explained.

Based on the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), every year 25,000 MW should be added to the country's power generation capacity, of which 3,700 MW should be generated by the thermal power plants, he said, adding, "In this regard, one of the ways provided in the development plan law to generate such capacity is to use and attract domestic and foreign financial resources."

To build nearly 4,000 MW of new power plant capacity each year, €3.5 billion in resources are needed in the power generation sector alone. This is important while all the revenue sources of the thermal power generation company are less than one-sixth of the required resources in the budget each year.

of using foreign financial resources, he said: "Using foreign financial resources has several benefits, including the entry of new financial resources, maintaining the sovereign role of the government, not considering investment risk, full knowledge of how to implement the project, complete and centralized technical and financial control, adherence to the technical and implementation system of the country, timely payment of project costs, completion of the project with minimal deviation from the schedule compared to similar projects, compliance with international standards from the conclusion of the contract to the implementation, in addition to job creation. Benefiting from the foreign funds through various methods can contribute to the economic development of the country, the official underlined, and said, "For example, in the field of "capital", the foreign financier brings financial resources to the host country, and given that a large part of these resources is spent domestically, it increases productivity, employment and income in the society."

For this purpose, after four years of negotiations and consultations, it was decided to provide about 85 percent of the 1.4 billion-euros needed for the construction of the Sirik power plant, ie 1.2 billion euros will be financed by the Russian side and the rest from the government's internal resources, Tarzatabal stated.

Explaining the benefits

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NO 787

Sudoku

Solution: NO 786

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News

Iran's Non-Oil Trade With Neighbors Hit \$5 Billion in Two Months

Iran traded 9.1 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$5.02 billion during the first two months of the current fiscal year (March 21-May 21). Latest data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration show Iran's non-oil exports to these countries amounted to 6.59 million tons worth \$2.18 billion during the two months under review. This is while imports stood at 2.56 million tons worth \$2.83 billion, thanks to the resumption of business activities in some of the regional countries. Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Oman, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Armenia, the UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are Iran's 15 neighboring countries.

Oil industry accounts for 80% of Iran's newly indigenized products

Iranian Vice-President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari has said that 80 percent of the products that are being produced for the first time in the country are related to the oil industry.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Oil Industry Innovation and Technology Park on Monday, Sattari stressed the significant role of knowledge-based companies and startups in indigenizing the knowledge for the production of new equipment and products, saying: "The government will support research on new equipment and the private sector invests on the mass production of the final products."

"The Petroleum Industry Research Institute can be a great platform [for working on the indigenization of equipment and products], but one cannot expect a researcher at this institute to produce a final product," he said.

"The condition must be prepared for startups to thrive," the official said, adding: "Technology companies provide this opportunity."

According to Sattari, most of the investment needed for the expansion of work on new technologies must be provided by the private sector and not the government.

"The private sector needs to invest 10 times more on such projects compared to the budget that the government has spent on this park," he stressed. The Oil Industry Technology and Innovation Park, established on a 32-hectare land near Tehran, is a governmental and non-profit organization that aims to develop oil industry-related technologies in collaboration with universities, research and development institutes, and private companies.

African Journalists Urge Gov'ts to Condemn Israel for Targeting Media

African journalists called on the African Union and governments to condemn Israel's deliberate targeting of journalists and news media and hold it legally accountable for crimes committed against media workers during its recent attacks on Gaza and elsewhere in occupied Palestine. African governments were urged "to stand on the right side of history" by unequivocally condemning the human rights violations committed by the Israeli government. The search for permanent solutions, said FAJ President Sadiq Ibrahim Ahmed, required governmental interventions, the Middle East Monitor reported. In a two-day African Journalists Leadership Conference which took place in Accra, Ghana, earlier this month and which was held less than a week after Israel ended its brutal bombing campaign of the besieged Gaza Strip where it destroyed a building that housed the Associated Press news agency and several other media outlets, the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ) condemned the "total impunity" that Israel enjoyed in its killing of journalists and destruction of media offices "under the bogus pretext of self-defense." The destruction of the Al-Jalaa building was widely regarded as an attempt to silence journalists covering Israel's military attacks. In less than a week, Israel bombed the offices of at least 18 media outlets. Conference delegates also condemned the pressure that Israel was exerting on news media organizations "to sack and censor Palestinian journalists who are advocating for media freedom and protesting against the violations of the rights of Palestinians." Associated Press was found to have fired 22-year old journalist, Emily Wilder, for her pro-Palestine views.

Resistance not to give up military option against Americans

The Secretary-General of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq Sheikh Qais Khazali emphasized that the Resistance groups will not give up the military option against American unless US forces withdraw from the region. On Monday, Sheikh Qais Khazali reiterated that the Resistance groups will not stop launching military option against American forces except with their withdrawal from Iraq and will continue their attacks against US forces, according to Alsumaria News. "We all have prepared ourselves for all the challenges and opportunities facing ahead and one should do not think that we are afraid of threats" he said, adding that the decision to escalate the conflict has been made in practice and Americans should be confident that "we are fully prepared to respond." He then pointed to the victories gained by Iraq's Popular Mobilization Unit (PMU), also known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, and said that all the conflicts that Hashd al-Sha'abi has entered into have resulted in nothing but victory and success.

Russian diplomat criticizes US stance on arms race in space

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister said on Tuesday that the lack of desire among Washington and its Western allies to work on the prevention of an arms race in space causes concerns. The lack of desire among Washington and its Western allies to work on the prevention of an arms race in space causes concerns, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said in an interview published Tuesday, TASS reported. "We balance on the verge of an arms race in space. Currently, a total of 30 countries have signed bilateral agreements with Russia not to deploy arms in space first. It is not about country X being able to develop space weapons and become the first in this field one day. If Russia has signed up 30 times with someone in the international community not to be the first in this field, then it is true to its words," he said. "And the lack of desire among the US and its Western allies to do anything in this field causes troubling thoughts. We must put a cap on this before it's too late," Ryabkov underscored.

NATO adopts tough line on China at Biden's debut summit with alliance

NATO leaders warned on Monday that China presents "systemic challenges," taking a forceful stance towards Beijing in a communique at Joe Biden's first summit with an alliance that Donald Trump openly disparaged.



The new U.S. president has urged his fellow NATO leaders to stand up to China's authoritarianism and growing military might, a change of focus for an alliance created to defend Europe from the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The language in the summit's final communique, which will set the path for alliance policy, came a day after the Group of Seven (G7) rich nations issued a statement on human rights in China and Taiwan that Beijing said slandered its reputation. "China's stated ambitions and assertive behaviour present systemic challenges to the rules-based international order and to areas relevant to alliance security," NATO leaders said in the communique. Biden also told European allies that the alliance's mutual defence pact was a "sacred obligation" for the United States - a marked shift in tone from

Biden stopped at the NATO headquarters' memorial to the Sept. 2001, 11, attacks on the United States by al Qaeda militants, when NATO triggered its Article 5 for the first and only time. Under the article, the alliance treats an attack on one member state as being an attack on all.



his predecessor, Trump, who had threatened to withdraw from the alliance and accused Europeans of contributing too little to their own defence. "I want all Europe to know that the United States is there," said Biden. "NATO is critically important to us." Biden stopped at the NATO headquarters' memorial to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States by al Qaeda militants, when NATO triggered its Article 5 for the first and only time. Under the article, the alliance treats an attack on one member state as being an attack on all. Later at a news conference, Biden, who will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday in Geneva, said China and

Russia were trying to split the transatlantic alliance and that, while he was not seeking conflict with Russia, NATO would respond if Moscow "continued its harmful activities". He described Putin as tough and bright. "Russia and China are both seeking to drive a wedge in our transatlantic solidarity," Biden said. He also pledged to support Ukraine in its conflict with Moscow, although he was non-committal on whether Kyiv could one day join NATO. "We are going to put Ukraine in a position that they will be able to maintain their physical security," Biden said, without giving more details. While there are still differences in strategies

on how to deal with China across the West, Biden said NATO was united under U.S. leadership. "America is back," he said, seeking to reassure Europeans that a Trump-like populist would not be back in the White House in four years. "The leadership of the (U.S.) Republican Party is fractured and the Trump wing of the party is the bulk of the party, but it makes up a significant minority of the American people". German Chancellor Angela Merkel, at her last summit of the alliance before she steps down in September, described Biden's arrival as the opening of a new chapter. She also said it was important to deal with China as a potential threat, while keeping it in perspective.

Iran to Emerge as Major COVID Vaccine Producer by Summer's End: Minister

Iran's minister of health said the country will become one of the world's biggest producers of the coronavirus vaccine by the end of summer. In comments after opening a new hospital in the central province of Isfahan on Tuesday, Saeed Namaki said Iran will be known as a major producer of the coronavirus vaccine in the world by the end of summer. He also noted that the distribution of the

first Iranian vaccine for the coronavirus, the emergency use of which has just been authorized, would begin across the country today. The minister further deplored foreign vaccine sellers for the failure to honor their commitments, saying Iran's efforts have resolved a series of problems as the import of the COVID vaccine to Iran has resumed. In comments on Monday, Namaki said the emergency-use authorization has been granted for COVIran Berekat, the homegrown vaccine for the coronavirus named after the pharmaceutical group that has developed it.

The minister also noted that the emergency use of another vaccine developed jointly by Cuba and the Pasteur Institute of Iran will be authorized next week. The COVIran vaccine has gone into three stages of clinical trials, the last of which involved 20,000 people in the cities of Tehran, Bushehr, Shiraz, Karaj, Mashhad and Isfahan. Iran has already granted emergency use authorization to Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine, Covaxin made by India's Bharat Biotech, Oxford/AstraZeneca developed by Russia's R-Pharm Group, and the AstraZeneca-SKBio made in South Korea.



American navy aircraft carrier enters South China Sea

A US aircraft carrier group led by the USS Ronald Reagan has entered the South China Sea. According to Al-Jazeera, the USS Reagan enters the South China Sea, as part of a routine mission, the US Navy said, at a time of rising tensions between Washington and Beijing, which claims most of the disputed waterway. The carrier is being accompanied by the guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh and the guided-missile destroyer USS Halsey, the US Navy said on Tuesday. China frequently objects to US military missions in the South China Sea, saying they do not help promote peace or stability, and the latest mission comes after China condemned the Group of Seven (G7) nations for a statement criticizing Beijing over a range of issues. "While in the South China Sea, the strike group is conducting maritime security operations, which include flight operations with fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, maritime strike exercises, and coordinated tactical training between surface and air units," the US Navy said. China has ramped up its military presence in the South China Sea in recent years, including building artificial islands and air bases, where it has installed missile systems and other equipment. The South China Sea has become one of many flashpoints in the testy relationship between China and the US.

NATO States Must Decide If They Want to Make Friends in Earnest: Russia

NATO member countries should make up their mind regarding their policies towards Moscow, if they really do not want to be included in the lists of unfriendly states, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said. NATO's summit in Brussels on Monday urged Russia to remove the Czech Republic and the United States from the list of unfriendly countries. "If I got their message right, NATO has in fact expressed its wish to make friends, hasn't it? The logic is simple: a request for being removed from the list of unfriendly ones implies they wish to be considered as friends," Zakharova wrote in her Telegram-channel, TASS reported. "And they did so despite our behavior that they continue to regard as 'irresponsible and dangerous'? Time is ripe for them to make up their mind: either they stop thinking up spy stories, which they use as a pretext to impose sanctions, or feel no surprise the moment they see themselves on the lists of unfriendly ones," Zakharova said.

News

Demolition of More Palestinian Homes in Al-Quds on Israel's Agenda

Israel plans to destroy more than a dozen Palestinian homes at an area in the occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds neighborhood of Silwan, as the Tel Aviv regime continues with its land expropriation policies irrespective of international outcry and UN Security Council resolutions. Fakhri Abu Diab, member of the Defense of Silwan Land Committee, told Palestine's official Wafa news agency on Monday that 17 houses belonging to Palestinian families in al-Bustan neighborhood will be demolished by the end of next month. Abu Diab added that Israeli officials have issued demolition orders to residents of 98 buildings. He noted that the Jerusalem municipality has notified the families affected to evacuate and demolish their houses themselves. The municipality has warned the Palestinians that failure to do so would mean the families would have to cover the

demolition costs. Since 2005, residents of al-Bustan have received warnings to demolish nearly 90 homes under the pretext of building without a permit, in favor of a settler organization that seeks to turn the land into a park. According to Palestinian NGO Grassroots al-Quds, both home demolitions and court-ordered forced displacements are tactics used to expel Palestinian residents. Last month, Amnesty International sharply criticized the planned eviction of several dozen Palestinian families from their homes in Silwan neighborhood as "another illustration of Israel's criminal policy of forced displacement of Palestinians." Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa in the London-based organization, Saleh Higazi, said the Israeli regime is "fanning the flames of the latest upsurge in violence and perpetuating the same systematic human



rights violations against Palestinians" by continuing to pursue the Jerusalem al-Quds District Court's decision on a pending appeal against the ordered eviction. He argued that the measure follows massive outcry over planned expulsions from Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds, where protests against the decision led to Israeli violence against Palestinians and the 11-day war on the Gaza Strip.

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Iranian filmmaker awarded by UNESCO

Mehdi Falamarzi from Shiraz, southern Iran, received an award from UNESCO office in Iran for making the movie '3cc' in the First Regional 100-Second Water and Energy Film Festival. The First Regional 100-Second Water and Energy Film Festival was held online by the Ministry of Energy of Iran in cooperation with the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office to commemorate World Environment Day 2021 in Tehran. Short movies from Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan in the categories documentary, drama and animation were shown in the festival. Falamarzi won the honorable mention and cash prize for his film '3cc'. The pivotal slogan of the Festival was "100 Seconds for Water and Energy" to demonstrate the importance of energy under the global status quo and with respect to the environment. The five themes of the Festival were (1) the environmental value of water and energy, (2) the economic, social, and cultural values of water and energy, (3) climate change, water, and energy, (4) the role of the media in promoting optimal water and energy consumption management, and (5) access to safe drinking water and sustainable energy.

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CALL TO PRAYER TIME IN ISFAHAN

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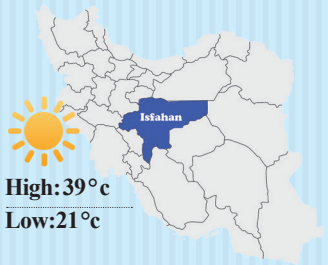
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Evening call to prayer:

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WEATHER



NATO leaders stress revival of JCPOA

The leaders of NATO member states on Monday backed talks on reviving the JCPOA in a statement, without mentioning US illegal withdrawal from the nuclear deal or European countries' failure in their commitment to the international agreement. The leaders of 30 member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) issued a joint statement on Monday and supported the Vienna talks on the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



Iran to Emerge as Major COVID Vaccine Producer by Summer's End: Minister

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Wildfires rip through US State of Arizona in summer heat

Multiple wildfires were burning in the US state of Arizona as of Monday, and the authority warned of very high fire danger this week due to hot temperatures and thunderstorms.

Arizona already saw two massive fires from early this month, including Telegraph and Mescal fires, which burned down more than 160,000 acres (674.5 square kilometers) of forest and grassland.

According to InciWeb, an interstate incident information system, Telegraph Fire, which started on June 10 in Pinal County, less than 1 mile from the 250-person community Top-of-the-World, was estimated at 88,589 acres (358.5 square kilometers) with 74 percent containment as of Monday, Xinhua reported. "Active fire activity burning in timber with grass and under-story, brush and timber with litter and under-story, has warranted numerous evacuation status alerts." InciWeb reviewed the fire, which was listed as one of the biggest wildfires in the state's history. Meanwhile, Mescal Fire, which started on June 1, spread to 72,250 acres (292.4 square kilometers) with 88 percent containment, the InciWeb said Monday, adding there had been

no increase in size for the fire for the last four days, however, a new fire, called Gravel Fire, was reported near the scene on Sunday.

Another new wildfire, dubbed Cornville Fire, was also reported on Sunday about 160 kilometers north of Phoenix, capital city of Arizona, and scorched 1,200 acres as of Monday, according to the InciWeb.

One outbuilding was destroyed in the blaze and several other structures were threatened, a tweet from Arizona State Forestry said, adding evacuations were prompted by the wildfire.

"The fire continues to move to the east/northeast with fire activity expected to increase as temperatures warm up. Extreme temperatures and dry winds, along with rugged terrain will challenge firefighters today," InciWeb said Monday.

Arizona State Forestry also said in a news release on Saturday that critical fire weather would have the potential for "rapid fuel ignition and fire spread with very erratic and extreme fire behavior."

The release said the state had already seen 208,190 acres (842.5 square kilometers) burned in 848 wildfires this year, compared to 138,443 acres (560.3 square kilometers) burned in 902 wildfires over the same time period last year.

Children Orphaned by COVID-19-Facing Uncertain Future in India

Despite Indian government assurances to provide free food and education to children orphaned by the COVID-19-pandemic across the country, a majority continue to face an uncertain future after losing one or both parents amid the second wave of the pandemic.

In a recent report, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) said that 3,621 orphans had lost both parents to the disease, while more than 26,000 had lost one parent.

"We are still in the process of compiling data, but looking at the initial figure, it looks grim," an NCPCR official told Arab News.

"The challenge is to reach out to them and extend all support," he added.

Shainza Sadat, 12, lost her mother to COVID-19 in the third week of April in the capital city, New Delhi, after her family failed to find hospital bed space.

"Life is difficult now in my mother's absence," Sadat told Arab News, adding: "Everything is established. Our main support system has gone."

Her father Anwar said that since his wife's death, "the family was without an anchor."

He added: "The pandemic has jolted us. It's not easy to raise a 12-year-old daughter single-handedly without her mother's support." The second wave of the pandemic across India earlier this year claimed more than 300,000 lives and wreaked havoc across towns and villages in the country of 1.3 billion people.

After losing their father to COVID-19 late last year, Shatrudhan Kumar, 13, and his seven-year-old brother, from the Jehanabad district in the eastern state of Bihar, also lost their mother to the disease in April.

"I want to study, but now it's a challenge to live without any support," Kumar told Arab News. "We are living with our relatives, but how long can we depend on them?"

The Bihar government has registered 48 cases of children losing both parents and 1,400 cases of single parent deaths to COVID-19.

"Life is difficult now in my mother's absence," Sadat told Arab News, adding: "Everything is established. Our main support system has gone."

Chinese Scientist at Center of Virus Controversy Denies Lab Leak Theory

The Chinese scientist at the center of theories that the coronavirus pandemic originated with a leak from her specialized lab in the city of Wuhan has denied her institution was to blame for the health disaster. "How on earth can I offer up evidence for something where there is no evidence?" Dr. Shi Zhengli told the New York Times in rare comments to the media. "I don't know how the world has come to this, constantly pouring filth

on an innocent scientist," she told the US daily, AFP reported. US President Joe Biden last month ordered intelligence agencies to investigate the origin of the pandemic, including the lab leak theory.

The leak hypothesis had been floated earlier during the global outbreak, including by Biden's predecessor Donald Trump, but was widely dismissed as a conspiracy theory. But it has gained increasing traction recently, fueled by reports that three researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology became sick in 2019 after visiting a bat cave in the southwestern Chinese province of

Yunnan. Shi is an expert in bat coronaviruses, and some scientists have said she could have been leading so-called "gain-of-function" experiments in which scientists increase the strength of a virus to better study its effects on hosts. According to the New York Times, in 2017 Shi and her colleagues at the Wuhan laboratory published a report on an experiment "in which they created new hybrid bat coronaviruses by mixing and matching parts of several existing ones—including at least one that was nearly transmissible to humans—in order to study their ability to infect and replicate in human cells."

