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Iran: Nuclear deal is in 'the ICU'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has said that the nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is in the intensive care unit (ICU), and that he doesn't see bright prospects for the deal. The remaining signatories of the JCPOA have met for the first time in a bid to save

the 2015 landmark pact following the U.S. decision to unilaterally withdraw and reimpose sanctions on Tehran.

According to Euro News, at Iran's request, delegates from China, Russia, France, Britain, Germany and the European Union gathered on Friday in Austria's capital, Vienna, where they reaffirmed their commitment to the agreement. →2

Iran-Europe technological co-op greatly benefits both sides: VP

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Cooperation between Iran and Europe for development of startups and technology has great advantages for both sides, Sourena Sattari, Iran's vice president for science and technology, said on Thursday.

He made the remarks at the Iran-Europe Cooperation Conference, which was held from June 21 to 22 in Brussels, Belgium. "As representative of Iran's govern-

ment, we pave the way for boosting ties between Iranian and European startups and innovation companies," he said, ISNA reported.

He pointed to financial transactions between Iran and European countries as an important part of cooperation.

Iran is ready to open up effective channels and establish infrastructures to facilitate financial transactions with European countries, he added. →10

'Dozens of Saudi troopers, mercs slain in western Yemen'

Yemeni army soldiers, backed by fighters from allied Popular Committees, have launched a major operation against Saudi troops and pro-Saudi militiamen loyal to resigned Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi in the country's western coastal province of Hudaydah, killing and injuring tens of them in the process.

An unnamed Yemeni military source

told Arabic-language al-Masirah television network that Yemeni troopers and allied fighters launched separate attacks against Saudi soldiers and their mercenaries north of al-Majlis and al-Durayhimi districts on Friday, dealing stinging blows to them.

The source added that at least 11 armored vehicles were destroyed during the offensives as well. →13



ARTICLE

Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

Merkel lost the game!

German Chancellor Angela Merkel attacked Iran's regional policy in his most recent statement. This is while the German government is one of the main supporters of the terrorist and takfiri groups in the West Asian region. Many analysts of international affairs believe that Germany will support the killing of the Yemeni people by exporting arms to Saudi Arabia. Also, many of Germany's export arms to the Middle East are in the hands of terrorist and takfirist groups such as ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra. Angela Merkel knows well that German exports of weapons to Saudi Arabia were carried out by terrorist groups in the region, but it should not be forgotten that the goal of Germany is to insecure the West Asian region.

As Reuters reported, German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Thursday said European countries shared concerns over Iran's ballistic missile program and called for solutions to its "aggressive tendencies" in the Middle East. "Iran's aggressive tendencies must not only be discussed, but rather we need solutions urgently," she said after meeting Jordan's King Abdullah in Amman. She announced 384 million euros (\$445 million) of aid to Jordan this year. Germany has remained party to the Iran nuclear deal, which lifted sanctions on Tehran in exchange for curbing its atomic program, after U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from it in May.

The fact is that the Chancellor of Germany has deliberately closed his eyes to the facts and facts in the world. Undoubtedly, Merkel must respond to Berlin's support for Saudi Arabia and the Zionist regime instead of condemning Iran. So far, many Palestinians, Yemeni people, Syria and Iraq have fallen victim to the Tel Aviv and Riyadh crimes in the region. Meanwhile, the German government has not only failed to take action against Saudi Arabia and Tel Aviv, but has supported its crimes.

On the other hand, these days, few people mention the German Chancellor as a powerful politician in the world. In his recent trip to Jordan, Angela Merkel also failed to analyze the realities of the world as an independent and powerful politician. →7

IHRC condemns police killings of peaceful pro-Zakzaky protestors

KADUNA, NIGERIA — IHRC strongly condemns the killings by armed police yesterday of two protestors in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna.

The dead were among thousands who had turned out to protest against the ongoing detention of the leader of the country's Islamic Movement, Sheikh Zakzaky. It was the second day in succession that armed police had opened fire with live ammunition on peaceful pro-Zakzaky protestors.

On Wednesday at least three people were wounded, one of them critically in another protest.

The Islamic Movement has issued a statement accusing the security forces of planning to sabotage the demonstrations and also attack pro-Zakzaky protestors in their own homes in cahoots with hired thugs. The Movement reminded people that is committed to upholding the law at all times and that in its 30 years it has never advocated or employed violence.

Sheikh Ibrahim el-Zakzaky and his wife were arraigned by the state High Court in Kaduna in May in the latest in a long line of blows inflicted



on the sheikh designed to cripple the Islamic Movement of Nigeria which he leads.

The authorities allege that the sheikh and supporters of his group abetted the commission of culpable homicide when they blocked roads in the city of Zaria in December 2015. In reality the charges seem to be designed to deflect government responsibility for a planned and systematic attack by soldiers on the Islamic Movement that left at least 1000 civilians dead in December 2015, an

Normalization of relations with Zionism at new station

By Ramin Hossein Abadlan

TEHRAN — The process of normalizing the relations between Arabs and the Zionist regime has entered a new phase, and Al-Khalifa and Al Saud regime officials stand in the forefront of it with Tel-Aviv.

Director of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage based in Bahrain, Mounir Bouchenaki has recently announced the official participation of a Zionist delegation in a cultural conference in Bahrain. "An Israeli delegation will attend the meetings. This is an international meeting organized by UNESCO, held June 24-July 4, and Bahrain is just the host".

He added, "Any country in the UN has the right to attend the meetings. There will also be a Palestinian delegation attending."

About four months ago, the king of Bahrain officially signed a decree to normalize relations with the Zionist regime. He also ordered the establishment of so-called "The King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence" in the presence of members of the board of directors for that purpose.

Qatar's Al-Sharouq newspaper also issued a report about the process of normalization of Arab countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, with the Zionist regime about 6 months ago. The paper focused on developments in 2017, in particular the foreign policy of the three countries - Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain - in response to the Palestinian issue and wrote: "The year 2017 in history certainly will be mentioned as the year of the normalization of

attack which is now the subject of a preliminary investigation by the International Criminal Court.

Police violence against the supporters of Sheikh Zakzaky is nothing new. In April police snipers in the centre of the Nigerian capital Abuja opened fire at a Free Zakzaky protest killing at least one and injuring two.

Since 8 January 2018 at least six protestors have been killed by security forces. Hundreds more have been arrested and sustained injuries from beatings during their detention. The majority of those freed were released without charge.

The sheikh's ordeal began after he was shot along with his wife, Zeenah, and arrested during an orgy of violence unleashed over three days in December 2015 on supporters of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria in what was widely seen as a bid to curb the movement's growing popularity.

At least 1000 civilians, mostly Islamic Movement supporters, were killed in the attacks and hundreds arrested in the attacks.

relations between Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE with the Israeli regime."

"The last few months of 2017 are full of amazing developments in relations between the Persian Gulf Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain, with the Israeli regime. Although they did hold relationship with Tel-Aviv, it was all behind closed doors. In the last months of 2017, however, the three Arab countries broke all the red lines in the normalization of relations with the Israeli regime" the newspaper continued.

Al-Sharouq also said: "We are all witness to bilateral meetings that nobody could have imagined until now. The Israeli prime minister told the British prime minister that many Arab states regard Israel as a vital alliance and not an enemy. →7

Relief foundation inaugurates over 500 houses in quake-hit Kermanshah

The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, a 4-decades old charitable organization, inaugurated over 500 houses in quake-stricken Kermanshah province, western Iran, on Thursday.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Parviz Fattah, the foundation's chief. The houses will be given to the underprivileged families.

On November 12, 2017 a destructive magnitude 7.3 earthquake hit Kermanshah. Some 90,000 houses were partly or completely damaged by the tremor in urban and rural areas of the region. The quake took over 660 lives and left more than 10,000 injured.



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ARTICLE

Sondoss Al Asaad
Political analyst from Beirut

Why Hudaydah, is overwhelming question

For three consecutive years, the kingdom of despotism, which leads the Arabs collation, has imposed an unjustified blockade on Yemen. The Saudis have earmarked this impoverished country for a brutal military attacks, since the onset of their offensive war in March 2015. Since then, Yemen has been witnessing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, amid the silence of the so-called International Community and the Western capitals, which claims to be the beacons of democracy and human rights. The Saudis, obviously, are leading a racist Takfiri criminal theocracy; known for the spread of radicalism through founding and backing various terrorist groups, i.e. al-Qaida, the Taliban, Boko Haram and ISIS.

In fact, the West frequently hails the Saudis as the models of steadfastness against Terror while it is clear enough enough that the reason behind attacking the Yemenis are their hatred of religious freedom and their geopolitical interests. In the first place, the Yemenis, as far as the Saudis are concerned, are [Kafar] i.e. infidels, dissents and apostates. They are referred to as Iranians, traitors and Majoois and therefore eligible to be murdered.

On the other hand, Yemen, and particularly its Hudaydah, the Red Sea city, which is home to 600,000 people and the entry-point for the vast aids is now under the mercy of a new assault. The city has been regarded as Yemen's fourth-largest city and a major economic dry cargo imports. Its strategic location has given it great significance, as it is located 140km west of the capital Sanaa. To the north is the Ras Isa oil terminal, which served the Marib oilfields and was the main export terminal and the nearby port of Saleef. To the east is the fertile Tihama plain, the most important agricultural region in Yemen. To the west, the Red Sea and major international shipping lanes that are used to trade goods between Europe, Asia and Africa through the Suez Canal.

On 13 June 2018, the hostile Saudi-led coalition have launched an offensive against Hudaydah in defiance of warnings of massive human casualties, by the UN and international rights organisations. →13

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



‘Sanctions will only disgrace you, Mr. Trump’

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Movahedi Kermani, Tehran’s interim Friday Prayer preacher, has warned U.S. President Donald Trump against anti-Iran measures, saying imposing sanctions on Iran will only harm Trump himself.

“Mr. Trump, impose as many sanctions as you can, but beware that the result of sanctions is your own disgrace,” Ayatollah Movahedi Kermani said, addressing worshippers in Tehran on Friday.

He also warned Muslims around the world not to be deceived by the enemies, especially the U.S. and the Zionist regime. “The world of Islam is facing a widespread assault by the enemies, America and the Zionist regime of Israel in particular,” he said, Fars reported.



Hands at work to undermine Judiciary: prosecutor general

POLITICS TEHRAN — Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri said on Friday “certain hands” are at work to undermine the Judiciary, ISNA reported.

“We do not deny that there are flaws and shortcomings, however, generalizing (accusations) against all the hard-working judges based on the corruption of a few of them shows that there are certain hands who strive to undermine the Judiciary to pursue their own agenda,” Montazeri said, addressing worshippers in Tehran.

He stressed that the biggest characteristics of the Islamic Republic is bringing justice based on Islamic rulings.



General: Iran’s spiritual influence cannot be wiped out

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps deputy chief said on Thursday that Iran’s growing influence in the Middle East cannot be eliminated because of its spiritual nature.

Brigadier General Hossein Salami also deplored recent calls for negotiations with the U.S., saying, “Today, some are seeking to nurture the minds of the (Iranian) youths with the idea that bowing to the enemy can repel threats,” Tasnim reported.

“This is while, so far, we have been successful through resisting and building power structures,” he said, stressing that the enemy will attack Iran as soon as it loses its power.



U.S. not committed to international deals: advisor

POLITICS TEHRAN — By exiting the 2015 nuclear deal the United States has proven that it does not abide by international agreements, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, said on Friday.

In a meeting with Swiss Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Pascale Baeriswyl, Amir-Abdollahian said the Islamic Republic expects Europe to respond to Washington’s lack of commitment and that Tehran is carefully observing European countries’ decisions and actions.

On regional issues, he said Tehran has always supported diplomatic channels to resolve the issues and opposes foreign intervention in regional countries, including Syria and Yemen.



‘Iran adamant supporter of talks on Yemen crisis’

POLITICS TEHRAN — Former Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Reza Mirabian says the Islamic Republic has been strongly supporting political talks to settle the Yemen conflict, criticizing Riyadh for military involvement in Yemen.

“Iran always places special emphasis on the point that solution to the Yemeni crisis is political not military but the Saudi government does not accept it,” Mirabian said, Mehr reported on Friday.

With regard to the measures taken by Iran on the conflict, he said, “The Islamic Republic of Iran will make its utmost effort to restore peace and security to Yemen.”



Two Iranian border guards killed

POLITICS TEHRAN — Two Iranian border guards were killed and three others sustained injuries in armed attacks at a border post in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan on Wednesday night.

They were killed as a police station in the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan came under an attack by a group of gunmen, but the Iranian forces foiled their attempt to intrude into the country, Mehr reported.

Iranian military forces along the southeastern border areas are frequently attacked by terrorist groups coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Sanctions ‘unacceptable’ while Tehran honoring JCPOA: Salehi

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic deems “unacceptable” the continuation of sanctions while Tehran honors the 2015 nuclear pact, Atomic Energy Organization of Iran chief Ali Akbar Salehi warned in a meeting with Secretary General of European External Action Service (EEAS) Helga Schmid in Norway on Wednesday.

Salehi called for genuine and practical measures by the European parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to save the nuclear agreement, Tasnim reported.

The nuclear deal was clinched between Iran, the European Union, Germany, France, Britain, Russia, China and the United States. However, last month Donald Trump walked out of the agreement and plans to re-impose sanctions on Iran.

Under the agreement, which went into force in January 2016, Iran lowered its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

“In order to preserve BARJAM (a Persian acronym for the JCPOA), we need our expectations and needs to be met and cruel sanctions to be lifted permanently,” Salehi asserted.



Europe, he said, has taken “good steps” to save the JCPOA but the focus should be on the end result of the policies adopted by

the European Union.

■ 100 European firms to enter talks with Iran: Schmid

Shinzo Abe may visit Iran in July

By staff and agency

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is considering visiting Iran in July for talks with President Hassan Rouhani.

According to Kyodo News, the envisaged visit would be part of Abe’s trip to Europe and the Middle East slated for mid-July.

Abe is expected to convey Japan’s continued support for the 2015 nuclear deal.

Tokyo is also seeking to strengthen economic ties with Tehran, a major producer of oil and natural gas.

On May 8, President Donald Trump officially withdrew

the U.S. from the UN-endorsed nuclear agreement and plans to reimpose sanctions on Iran.

Iran has warned the remaining parties to the nuclear agreement – the European Union, E3 (Germany, France and Britain), Russia and China – that if its interests are not guaranteed it will not remain in the deal.

On May 11, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono expressed support for preserving the JCPOA, the official name for the nuclear agreement.

In phone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Kono urged all other parties to

remain committed to the multilateral agreement.

On May 23, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a set of demands from Europe to save the nuclear deal. He warned that Iran would restart its nuclear activities if they failed to act swiftly.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the JCPOA could only continue if the Europeans fulfill these conditions including: Promising not to ask Iran about its ballistic missile program or its regional activities; guaranteeing that Iran’s oil will continue to be sold; and having European banks guarantee financial transactions with Iran.

Parliament to decide on FATF based on Leader’s guidelines: Larijani

POLITICS TEHRAN — The parliament will decide on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) based on the guidelines set by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Thursday.

“The Islamic Consultative Assembly will take action in this respect based on

the Leader’s view and his guidelines,” he told reporters on the sidelines of a meeting of the Supreme Council of Provinces.

In a meeting with the Majlis speaker and lawmakers on Wednesday, Ayatollah Khamenei said that parliament should pass legislation to combat money

laundering according to its own criteria.

“As we have stated about some ‘international conventions recently raised in the Majlis,’ the Islamic Consultative Assembly, which is cultivated, matured and prudent, must make laws independently on issues such as combating terrorism or battling money-launder-

ing,” the leader.ir quoted him as saying.

He added, “Of course, some provisions of international treaties may be good, but there is no necessity to join conventions whose underlying objectives we are not aware of or know that they have some problems by citing these provisions.”

Zarif lists Iranian demands from U.S.

U.S. should acknowledge ‘unwarranted’, ‘unlawful’ acts against Iranians, Zarif demands

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has written a long article enumerating the list of Iran’s demands from the United States.

Zarif’s article followed a list of demands from Iran by U.S. Secretary of States Mike Pompeo on May 21 in which he demanded Tehran to fully halt its nuclear enrichment program among other things.

“U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in a baseless and insulting statement, issued a number of demands of and threats against Iran in brazen contravention of international law, well-established international norms, and civilized behavior. His statement reflected a desperate reaction by the U.S. administration to the overwhelming opposition of the international community to the persistent efforts by the White House to kill the JCPOA, and the ensuing Washington’s isolation,” Zarif has said.

Zarif has demanded the U.S. government should openly acknowledge its “unwarranted and unlawful” actions against the people of Iran over the past decades.

Following is an excerpt of the article posted on the Foreign Ministry website:

A short list of the rightful demands of the Iranian people from the U.S. government could include the following:

1- The U.S. government must respect Iran’s independence and national sovereignty and assure Iran that it will end its intervention in Iran’s domestic affairs in accordance with international law in general, and the 1981 Algiers Accord in particular.

2- The United States must abandon its policy of resorting to the threat or use of force – which constitute a breach of the preemptory norms of international law and principles of the Charter of the United Nations – as an option in the conduct of its foreign affairs with or against the Islamic Republic of Iran and other States.

3- The U.S. government should respect the State immunity of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is a fundamental principle of international law, and, while rescinding previous arbitrary and unlawful financial judgments, it should refrain from executing them in the U.S. and extra-territorially.

4- The U.S. government should openly acknowledge its unwarranted and unlawful actions against the people of Iran over the past decades, including inter alia the following, take remedial measures to compensate the people of Iran for the damages incurred, and provide verifiable assurances that it will cease and desist from such illegal measures and refrain from ever repeating them:

5- The United States government must cease its

persistent economic aggression against the Iranian people which has continued over the past four decades; nullify the cruel and extensive primary and extraterritorial sanctions, rescind hundreds of legislations and executive orders aimed at disrupting Iran’s normal development which are in flagrant contravention of international law and have been universally condemned, and compensate the Iranian people for the enormous damages to the Iranian economy and its people.

6- The U.S. government should immediately cease its violations and breaches of the JCPOA, which have caused hundreds of billions of dollars in direct and indirect damages for disrupting trade with and foreign investment in Iran, compensate Iranian people for these damages and commit to implement unconditionally and verifiably all of its obligations under the accord, and refrain (in accordance with the JCPOA) from any policy or action to adversely affect the normalization of trade and economic relations with Iran.

7- The U.S. government should release all Iranians and non-Iranians who are detained under cruel conditions in the U.S. under fabricated charges related to the alleged violation of sanctions, or apprehended in other countries following unlawful pressure by the U.S. government for extradition, and compensate for the damage inflicted on them. These include pregnant women, the elderly and people suffering from serious health problems; some of whom have even lost their lives in prison.

8- The U.S. government should acknowledge the consequences of its invasions and interventions in the region, including in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf region, and withdraw its forces from and stop interfering in the region.

9- The U.S. government should cease policies and behavior that have led to the creation of the vicious DAESH terrorist group and other extremist organizations, and compel its regional allies to verifiably stop providing financial and political support and armaments to extremist groups in West Asia and the world.

10- The U.S. government should stop providing arms and military equipment to the aggressors—who are murdering thousands of innocent Yemeni civilians and destroying the country – and cease its participation in these attacks. It should compel its allies to end their aggression against Yemen and compensate for the enormous damage done to that country.

11- The U.S. government should stop its unlimited and unconditional support for the Zionist regime in line with its obligations under international law; condemn

its policy of apartheid and gross violations of human rights, and support the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

12- The U.S. government should stop selling hundreds of billions of lethal—not beautiful—military equipment every year to regions in crisis, especially West Asia, and instead of turning these regions into powder kegs it should allow the enormous amount of money spent on arms to serve as funding for development and combating poverty. Only a fraction of the money paid by U.S. arms customers could alleviate hunger and abject poverty, provide for potable, clean water, and combat diseases throughout the globe.

13- The U.S. government should stop opposing the efforts by the international community for the past 5 decades to establish a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It should compel the Zionist regime—with its history of aggression and occupation—to de-nuclearize, thus neutralizing the gravest real threat to regional and international peace and security, which emanates from the most destructive arms in the hands of the most warmongering regime in our time.

14- The U.S. government should stop increasingly relying on nuclear weapons and the doctrines of using nuclear weapons to counter conventional threats—a policy that is in flagrant contravention of its commitment under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the 1995 NPT Review Conference Declaration, and UN Security Council resolution 984. The U.S. should comply with its moral, legal and security obligations in the field of nuclear disarmament, which is a near unanimous demand of all United Nations Member States, and virtually all people across the globe, including even former US Secretaries of State. As the only State that is stamped with the shame of ever using nuclear weapons itself, it is incumbent on the U.S. to relieve humanity from the nightmare of a global nuclear holocaust, and give up on the illusion of security based on “mutually assured destruction” (MAD).

15- The U.S. government should once and for all commit itself to respect the principle of pacta sunt servanda (agreements must be kept), which is the most fundamental principle of international law and a foundation for civilized relations among peoples, and discard in practice the dangerous doctrine which views international law and international organizations as merely “a tool in the US toolbox”

(See the full text on the Tehran Times website)

Iran: Nuclear deal is in ‘the ICU’

➔ “I told the conference today that the JCPOA is in the intensive care unit because it has lost its balance as a result of U.S. withdrawal from the deal,” Araqchi told reporters.

He said Tehran was negotiating with

the other signatories “to see if they can provide us with a package which can give Iran the benefits of sanctions lifting.”

“The next step is to find guarantees for that package,” he said, adding that

Iran needed specifics on how that would happen by the end of May.

Since the U.S. exit from the JCPOA, the Islamic Republic has repeatedly threatened it will pull out from the deal as well if its economic interests are not met.



#OccupyICEPDX: Protesters 'occupy ICE' over U.S. immigration policy

Dozens of protesters have occupied the grounds of the local U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office in Portland, Oregon to protest the Trump administration's immigration policies, including the separation of thousands of children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The group, calling it itself #OccupyICEPDX, set up camp on Sunday, calling for the abolition of ICE and an end to government's "zero tolerance" approach to immigration.

The protesters vowed to remain on Thursday after it successfully shut down the office a day earlier.

Since the camp was erected, up to 400 people have shown up for nightly vigils.

Individuals stand by the road holding signs such as "Everyone is Welcome Here", "Stop Child Abuse - Abolish Ice" and "Close the Trump Concentration Camps".

Roberta, who asked not to use her surname, held a sign reading: "Truth, Freedom, and Justice for all."

She told Al Jazeera: "We've gotten lots of honks and only a few fingers."

#OccupyICEPDX comes amid a widespread outcry over the government's "zero tolerance" approach towards migrants and refugees who cross the U.S. southern border without documents. The approach included a practice of separating children from parents who were held.

After repeatedly saying only legislators could end the controversial tactic, U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Wednesday, to keep families together. It remains unclear, however, what will happen to the children who have already been separated from their families.

According to the Associated Press, about 500 of the 2,300 children separated have been reunited with their parents, but it was not clear if they remained in detention.

While the executive order ends the separation of families, many fear the practice will only shift to detaining families for long periods of time - a tactic likely to be challenged in the courts.

■ 'Occupy with a purpose'

The scene in Portland is a throwback to the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement. That movement made income inequality a national issue but it lacked any concrete demands, and it fizzled out within months.

The difference this time is "it's Occupy with a purpose - Abolish ICE," said Amina Rahman, a labor organizer and Portland native.

The camp, which now includes about 50 tents, has a kitchen feeding hundreds, security patrols, media representatives, medical care, a library, a children's area that includes storytelling and care for infants, and nightly entertainment such as a troupe of Aztec dancers.

Locals drive up and unload trays of food and cases of bottled water alongside the three-story ICE building that's surrounded by an eight-foot metal fence and security cameras. A local ice cream shop sent its truck to hand out treats to protesters, and a pizzeria owner hand-delivered a stack of pies.



On Monday evening, as ICE employees in cars tried to leave work, 20 people locked arms and blocked the driveway, according to organizer Jacob Bureros.

The vehicles went back inside the facility and two police officers with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), under which ICE operates, tried to negotiate with protesters.

Bureros said police asked the protesters for "reasonable accommodation," explaining that "nine of the employees inside need to go home to their families."

He said protesters started yelling: "What about the families you are holding?"

The ICE facility includes a jail area meant for temporary detention before immigrants are shipped off to long-term holding facilities in the Pacific Northwest.

DHS police threatened to arrest protesters, but has not carried out the threat.

On Tuesday, protesters said about a dozen DHS police arrived and created a area to allow the remaining employees to leave.

Portland police have not been present at the protests.

On Wednesday, Mayor Ted Wheeler stated that he does not want the Portland police "to be engaged or sucked into a conflict, particularly from a federal agency that I believe is on the wrong track."

At the time of publishing, ICE had not responded to Al Jazeera's repeated requests for comment. According to local reports, ICE said it will not resume operations at the Portland office until "there are no longer security concerns resulting from the ongoing protests there."

The 'Occupy ICE' protests have since spread to other cities, with demonstrators setting up camp outside ICE offices in New York, Los Angeles and other places.

Back in Portland, protesters vowed to remain.

"We need to make this a national movement," Jenny Nickolaus told Al Jazeera.

"We are staying here until ICE is abolished or until we are physically removed."

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Taliban kill 16 Afghan soldiers, kidnap engineers after ceasefire ends

Taliban militants killed at least 16 Afghan police and two civilians in western Badghis province after their three-day ceasefire for the Eid al-Fitr holiday ended at the weekend, officials said on Friday.

The Taliban, fighting to impose strict law after their 2001 ouster, resumed their campaign on Thursday after rejecting President Ashraf Ghani's request to extend their ceasefire beyond Sunday.

On Wednesday, they killed at least 30 soldiers and captured a military base in Badghis.

A senior security official in Kabul said the Taliban were fighting to capture eight checkpoints in Badghis. On Thursday, they gained control over two checkpoints and ambushed arriving reinforcements.

Haji Saleh Bek, governor of the Abkamari district, said 16 police were killed.

Another government official, Mohammad Naser Nazari, said the Taliban had planted a bomb on the body of a soldier that exploded when people attempted to retrieve the bodies. Two civilians were killed.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the most recent attack, but the Taliban are active in Badghis and have repeatedly claimed attacks against Afghan security forces there.

Ghani extended by 10 days his unilateral ceasefire, initially due to end on Wednesday.

The Taliban observed a ceasefire over the three-day holiday but rejected the government's request to extend it.

Some critics have said Ghani's ceasefire allowed the Taliban to freely enter government-held areas and plan attacks.

In the Spin Boldak area of the southern province of Kandahar, on the border with Pakistan, the Taliban attacked a road construction company compound late on Thursday, a local government official said.

They abducted 13 engineers and 20 security guards, the official said. Four security forces were killed when they tried to rescue the hostages, all Afghan nationals. The Taliban did not immediately comment on the attack.

Last month, seven Indian engineers and an Afghan national working for a power plant were kidnapped in Baghlan province in the north, prompting several private international companies to reduce their presence in Afghanistan.

(Source: Daily Star)

EU leaders set to prolong Russia sanctions again

European Union leaders will next week extend until the end of January economic sanctions against Russia over its intervention in Ukraine, diplomats and officials said.

The curbs on Russia's energy, defense and financial sectors have been prolonged every six months since first being slapped mid-2014 after Moscow annexed the peninsula of Crimea from Kiev and backed rebels fighting government troops in east Ukraine. EU leaders meeting in Brussels on June 28-29 will agree another six-month extension of the curbs on doing business with Russia currently in place until the end of July.

Moscow vows to never return Crimea and the east Ukraine conflict has killed more than 10,000 people and turned into a frozen confrontation, with low-intensity, sporadic fighting still taking place regularly.

The decision follows talks between the world's seven most industrialized countries (G7) who met in Canada earlier in June. The format used to be held as G8 but Russia was kicked out in 2014 over Crimea.

Since then, the leaders of the world's leading powers have used their annual meetings to coordinate their stance. This

year, they called on Moscow to stop undermining democracies and said in their statement:

"We recall that the continuation of sanctions is clearly linked to Russia's failure to demonstrate complete implementation of its commitments in the (peace) Minsk Agreements and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty."

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has said he wanted to re-admit Russia but also signed up for another sanctions extension at the meeting in Canada, the first major international gathering for the head of the new populist government.

"Italy thinks it is important to have a dialogue with Russia but this does not mean that the system of sanctions can be overcome overnight," Conte has said.

The EU is also at loggerheads with Russia over its role in the war in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East, as well as the Kremlin's track record on human rights.

It also blames Moscow for a March attack in the British town of Salisbury on a former Russian spy using a Russian-made military grade nerve agent. Moscow denies guilt.

(Source: Reuters)

Trump weighs meeting with Putin

U.S. President Donald Trump said he is considering meeting with Russian leader Vladimir Putin and is sending his national security advisor to Moscow to discuss the idea.

National Security Advisor John Bolton will travel to Moscow next week, the White House said Thursday.

"We are looking at the possibilities," Trump said when asked about a possible face-to-face with Putin.

Such high-level talks would be scrutinized in the wake of the wide-ranging probe into Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and possible collusion with the Trump campaign.

Speculation has been rife in Russian and Western media on the highly anticipated summit between the presidents, which they first discussed in March.

The announcement of Bolton's visit came almost two weeks after Trump said that Russia should be re-admitted to the G7, from which it was suspended for its annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The White House said Bolton would travel June 25-27 to meet with U.S. allies in London and Rome, followed by a trip to Moscow.

On Tuesday, the Kremlin said there were no plans for the meeting before the July 11 NATO summit in Brussels, which Trump is expected to attend.

Trump is due to participate on July 11-12 in the summit before heading on to Britain to meet with Prime Minister Theresa May and Queen Elizabeth II.



Earlier this month, Putin said he was ready to meet his U.S. counterpart as soon as Washington gave the green light, adding that Vienna could be a possible venue for such a summit.

Despite European sanctions against Moscow, Austria has remained close to Russia and - unlike several other European countries - has not expelled Russian diplomats after an ex-Russian spy and his daughter were poisoned

in Britain.

Ties between Washington and Moscow have been strained by the Russia probe, as well as the poisoning case and Trump's decision to pull out of the Iranian nuclear deal.

The last, brief meeting between Putin and Trump took place in November 2017 in Vietnam during an APEC leaders summit.

(Source: AFP)

Russia skeptical about UN report on Syria's Eastern Ghouta: Lavrov



Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says he is "skeptical" about a United Nations report accusing the Syrian government of committing alleged crimes against humanity when its troops carried out a military operation in Eastern Ghouta earlier this year.

"We are in principle very skeptical towards the methods of this sort of work, whether it comes to war crimes or the use of chemical weapons," the top Russian diplomat said at a joint press conference with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in Moscow on Thursday.

Lavrov's comments came a day after the world body released a report alleging that forces loyal to the government in Damascus had "deliberately" starved civilians during the operation between February and April this year.

Lavrov further cast doubt on the validity and reliability of the UN report, saying the research committee behind the report had neither visited the area nor carried out any investigations on the ground, and had based their report on "data obtained through social networks" and "videos filmed by witnesses."

He also said that they had "allegedly interviewed with 140 people," adding that Moscow did not trust any information obtained through "such remote methods."

Militants belonging to a number of factions had held the Eastern Ghouta, an enclave in the vicinity of the capital Damascus, since 2012 and had practically held hostage its inhabitants, some 400,000 people.

Syrian troops and allied fighters from popular defense groups managed to fully liberate the enclave from the clutches of militants in early April, after months of intense fighting with terror groups, which had used the area as a launch pad for deadly rocket attacks against residents and civilian infrastructure in the capital.

For his part, Guterres stressed the importance of joint efforts aimed at resolving the years-long crisis in the Arab country. He said that work was underway to create suitable conditions for settling the crisis in Syria, and that the world body was in close contact with Moscow to safeguard Syrian territories.

Russia has backed Syria's fight against terror since late 2015 when its air force and troops arrived in the Arab country at an official request of Damascus to help the government fight against ISIL (Daesh) and other Takfiri militants.

Russia's assistance has proved to be a major success as Syria has managed to liberate key areas over the past years, including the second largest city of Aleppo, by relying on Russia's air cover and military advice.

(Source: Press TV)

Iraqi Hashd al-Sha'abi pledges 'suitable' response to deadly Syria strike

The Iraqi voluntary and pro-government Popular Mobilization Units have pledged to get revenge for a deadly air raid on their fellow fighters in Syria's eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr earlier this week, blaming the United States or Israel for the attack.

Hezbollah Brigades spokesman Jaafar al-Husseini said it was still too early to say definitively whose forces carried out the late Sunday strike against the border town of al-Hari near the frontier with Iraq but insisted it "could only have been" the Americans or Israelis.

"When it becomes known who was responsible then there will be an appropriate response and the hand of the resistance will strike anywhere," Husseini said during a memorial ceremony for the fallen fighters at a mosque in Baghdad.

Both the Syrian government and Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units - commonly known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha'abi, initially pinned the blame on the U.S.-led coalition purportedly fighting the ISIL (Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group.

"We have reasons to believe that it was an Israeli strike," a U.S. official later told AFP on condition of anonymity. Israel has so far declined to comment.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry has denounced the deadly airstrike in Syria, saying it "expresses rejection and condemnation of any air operations targeting forces in areas where they are fighting Daesh, whether in Iraq or Syria or any other area where there is a battlefield against this enemy that threatens humanity."

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country.

Russia has been helping Syrian forces in an ongoing battle in the province of Dayr al-Zawr as the Daesh terrorist group struggles to keep its last positions in eastern Syria.

The Russian military assistance, which began in September 2015 at the official request of the Syrian government, has proved effective as the Syrians continue to recapture key areas from Daesh and other terrorist groups across the country with the backing of Russian air cover.

On May 21, the General Command of the Syrian Army and Armed Forces announced in a statement that complete security was restored to Damascus and its countryside after al-Hajar al-Aswad district and al-Yarmouk camp had been totally purged of Daesh terrorists.

The development was preceded by flushing the Takfiris out of the towns of Yalda, Babbila and Beit Sahem on the southern outskirts of Damascus.

(Source: Press TV)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	108872.9
IFX	1241.61

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,4600 rials
EUR	49,163rials
GBP	55,885 rials
AED	11,562 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$67.10/b
Brent	\$74.77/b
OPEC Basket	\$72.48/b
Gold	\$1,268.75 /oz
Silver	\$16.40/oz
Platinum	\$870.85/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Tehran, Bratislava confer on boosting economic ties

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — In his one-day trip to Slovakia on Thursday, Iranian Economy Minister Masoud Karbasian explored development of mutual economic ties with his Slovakian counterpart Peter Žiga.

As Shada news agency reported, the Iranian minister called for ever-increasing economic and trade ties between the two sides in this meeting and named expansion of bilateral cooperation in banking, industrial, and trade sectors as the two sides' priorities.

"Slovakia stands among one of the main economic partners of Iran in East Europe," Karbasian said.

Several Slovakian senior economic officials took part in this meeting, the report confirmed.



U.S. sanctions wont affect Tehran-Baghdad oil swap deal: Iraq

ENERGY **TEHRAN** – Iraqi Oil Minister Jabar al-Luaibi said the future U.S. sanctions on Iran will not affect the oil swap agreement reached in December 2017 between the two countries, Reuters reported.

The minister made the remarks on the sidelines of on OPEC meeting in Vienna on Friday.

Based on the agreement, Iraq is going to send 60,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil from the northern Kirkuk fields in return for Iranian oil which is going to be delivered to southern Iraq, with the crude trucked to Iran's Kermanshah.

For the time being, the minister said crude being shipped to Iran was being made in payment for electricity Iraq had received, rather than as a crude swap.

"We have just started really small quantities for their refineries, not on a swap basis," he told reporters.

The transportation was to start in late January and oil officials have declined to give reasons for the delay other than it was technical in nature.

Tehran, Dushanbe discuss Iranian companies' contribution to Tajikistan's road-building projects

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— In a meeting between Iranian energy minister and Tajik transport minister in Dushanbe, the two sides discussed the issue of Iranian companies' presence in the road-building projects in Tajikistan.



Expressing his satisfaction over the performance of Iranian companies in building a tunnel in Tajikistan, the Tajik minister called for these companies' cooperation in the next phase of the project which is installing equipment inside the tunnel, Iranian Energy Ministry's news portal, PAVEN, reported on Thursday.

The five-kilometer tunnel shortens the distance between Dushanbe and Khujand, the official noted.

Iranian energy minister, for his part, expressed satisfaction over the current level of cooperation between the two countries and said Tajikistan can benefit from Iran's good experiences in the field of building freeways and tunnels specially in mountainous areas.

He also expressed hope that the second phase of the tunnel in Tajikistan will be started soon by participation of Iranian companies.

Stock market index gains 12,583 points in 55 days

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) gained 12,583 points to hit 108,872 points during 55 days since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21), Mehr news agency reported on Friday.

As reported, 58,555 billion securities worth 156.957 trillion rials (about \$3.719 billion) were traded through 3.629 million deals in the stock market.

Players in Iran's capital market witnessed a historical record in growth of TEDPIX which gained 3,306 points to hit 102,452 points on June 17, something unprecedented

in the 50-year history of the country's stock market.

As reported, 1.821 billion securities worth 5.49 trillion rials (about \$130 million) were traded through 100,000 deals in a day.

Also, IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), rose 37.6 points to stand at 1,191 points.

As reported, 613 million securities worth 1.26 trillion rials (about \$29.8 million) were traded through 58,000 deals in a day.

Shares in different groups of commodities including base metals, chemical products, and minerals witnessed stable status

Iran, Serbia ink trade, aviation & agro co-op MOUs

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During the 15th meeting of Iran-Serbia Joint Economic Committee in Belgrade on Thursday, the two countries signed three memorandums of understanding (MOUs) on trade, aviation, and agricultural cooperation, Shata news agency reported.

The meeting's final agreement was signed by Serbian Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications Rasim Ljajic and Iranian Minister of Industry Mohammad Shariatmadari,

the report said.

The agreements on aviation and agriculture sectors were respectively signed between Shariatmadari and Serbian Minister of Construction, Transportation, and Infrastructure Zorana Mihajlovic and Serbian Minister of Agriculture Branislav Nedimovic.

Some senior officials from both countries were reportedly present at the signing ceremonies of the agreements.



of purchases in that day.

The historical increase in the stock exchange index had begun on June 13, which was named 'Golden Wednesday of Stock Market', when TEDPIX gained 2,767 points to stand at 99,146 points.

Rise in stock exchange indexes was anticipated given the recent issues related to the

political and economic status of the country, but a 2,767-point growth in a single day was beyond the expectations.

The experts of capital market say some factors such as turbulences in the markets of foreign currency, gold coin, and housing and also entrance of new liquidity is the main reason for such unprecedented rise.

OPEC output gain ‘nominal’

And Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the deal added up to "less than 700,000 barrels per day" in practice, the Guardian reported.

OPEC is not expected to actually release a hard target, but the figures align with comments from ministers that the group will strive to stop overshooting its 18-month-old deal to keep 1.8 million bpd off the market. Output among the 24 nations has actually fallen by about 2.8 million bpd, due largely to cratering production in Venezuela and supply disruptions elsewhere.

The accord is a much-needed show of unity from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia., Bloomberg reported.

UAE's energy minister Suhail Al Mazrouei,

who is also OPEC president, said OPEC had made "the best choice", balancing the interests of its members and other producers.

OPEC will meet again on Saturday with non-members, including Russia, to ratify Friday's agreement.

■ Outcome of OPEC meeting was what I said upon my arrival to Vienna: Zanganeh

Oil Minister Zanganeh said the group reached a consensus to stick to the body's output reduction agreement it struck back in 2016 to cap production by 1.2 million bpd after the 174th OPEC meeting, Shana news agency reported.

"As I said on the minute of my arrival in Vienna, we needed to fully comply with the output reduction agreement of the

organization and nothing more," Zanganeh stated.

"We agreed on this issue and nothing more. I think that the OPEC decision is acceptable and reasonable. It is also legal, because we have a valid resolution by the end of September," the minister told reporters.

He refused to give any number for the amount of increased production.

"I think only a few OPEC members are able to enhance their output. Some countries may be unable to fully deliver the agreed levels but we have agreed on full compliance of the pact. As I had predicted, some member countries did not want to say anything against U.S. interests or discuss de-politicization of the market. I already knew this."

(Source: Agencies)

Chinese media says U.S. has ‘delusions’ as impact of trade war spreads

U.S. protectionism is self-defeating and a "symptom of paranoid delusions" that must not distract China from its path to modernization, Chinese state media said on Friday as Beijing kept up with its war of words with Washington over trade.

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened on Monday to hit \$200 billion of Chinese imports with 10 percent tariffs if China retaliates against his previous targeting of \$50 billion in imports.

China's commerce ministry accused the United States on Thursday of being "capricious" over bilateral trade issues and warned that the interests of U.S. workers and farmers would ultimately be hurt by Washington's penchant for brandishing "big sticks".

The official China Daily said in an editorial the United States had failed to understand that the business it does with China supported millions of American jobs and that the U.S. approach was self-defeating.

The English-language paper cited research by the Rhodium Group saying that Chinese investment in the United States declined 92 percent to \$1.8 billion in the first five months of the year, its lowest level in seven years.

"The woes the administration is inflicting on Chinese companies do not simply translate into boons for U.S. enterprises and the U.S. economy," it said in an editorial headlined "Protectionism symptom of paranoid delusions".

"The fast-shrinking Chinese investment in the U.S. reflects the



damage being done to China-U.S.-trade relations ... by the trade crusade of Trump and his trade hawks," it said.

The 30-stock Dow Jones Industrial Average slumped for an eight consecutive session on Thursday as shares including Caterpillar Inc and Boeing Co wilted.

Big U.S. manufacturers and automakers were also under pressure after Germany's Daimler cut its 2018 profit forecast and BMW said it was looking at "strategic options" due to the Sino-U.S. trade war.

Shares of Apple Inc, whose iPhones are assembled in China by Foxconn, also declined.

Foxconn Chairman Terry Gou said on Friday the U.S. -China trade war is the Taiwanese company's biggest challenge.

"What they are fighting is not really a trade war, it's a tech war. A tech war is also a manufacturing war," Gou said.

A Sino-U.S. trade war could disrupt supply chains for the technology and auto industries - sectors heavily reliant on outsourced components such as those supplied by Foxconn - and derail growth for the global economy, analysts say.

(Source: CNBC)

EU's retaliatory tariffs on U.S. products come into effect

The EU has officially imposed tariffs on US jeans, motorbikes, bourbon and other items in response to a similar move from the U.S. The measures have some experts worried the world could be heading toward a trade war.

European Union retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods came into force on Friday, in response to U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum.

The EU said it has no choice after failing to secure an exemption to U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs, but the response has raised fears of a global trade war.

What the EU is targeting

The tariffs target \$3.4 billion (€2.9 billion) worth of American imports including:

●Steel products such as bars and rods,

rolled steel, stainless steel, wire, tubes, chain, pipes and scaffolding, as well as kitchen appliances, ovens, ladders and washbasins.

●Clothing and textiles such as jeans, men's leather shoes and bed linens.

●Eye make-up and lipstick.

●Motorbikes and mopeds "with reciprocating internal combustion piston engines" of 500 cc capacity as well as some boats, yachts, canoes and rowboats.

●Food products including maize, rice, cranberries, cranberry juice, orange juice, sweetcorn and peanut butter.

●Vice products such as bourbon, whiskey, cigarettes, cigars, burroots (a type of thin cigar) and other types of tobacco.

(Source: www.dw.com)

Largest banks clear U.S. Fed's toughest annual stress tests

The 35 largest U.S. banks are poised to put more money toward dividends, share buybacks and business investments, after clearing the first stage of an annual regulatory stress test on Thursday, showing they have enough capital to withstand an extreme recession.

Although the lenders would suffer \$578 billion in total losses in the Federal Reserve's most severe scenario to date, their level of high-quality capital would be greater than the threshold that regulators demand - and above levels seen immediately leading up to the 2007-2009 crisis, the Fed said.

Thursday's results are the first of a two-part exam, showing whether banks would meet minimum requirements under the Fed's methodology, using materials they submitted. Some might still stumble in next week's second, tougher test, which includes operational factors like risk management.

"This is the science and next week is the art," said Mike Alix, financial services risk leader at PwC. "This is the mathematical calculation that shows there are robust levels of capital for most firms. Next week will be the judgment."

The Fed introduced the stress tests during the financial crisis to ensure the strength of the banking industry, whose ability to lend is considered crucial to the health of the economy.

Since the first test in 2009, banks have seen losses abate, loan portfolios improve and profits grow. The banks that now undergo the exam have also strengthened their balance sheets by adding more than \$800 billion in top-notch capital, the Fed said.

U.S. subsidiaries of six foreign lenders, including Deutsche Bank, Credit Suisse Group AG and UBS Group AG, also go through the

test and had their results publicly released for the first time.

Deutsche Bank, whose U.S. operations have been under intense regulatory scrutiny, also easily met all the minimum capital requirements, as did Credit Suisse and UBS, the results showed.

Other banks tested include household names like JPMorgan Chase & Co, Citigroup Inc, Bank of America Corp and Wells Fargo & Co, as well as major regional lenders like Capital One Financial Corp, PNC Financial Services Group Inc and U.S. Bancorp and Wall Street banks Goldman Sachs Group Inc and Morgan Stanley.

Banks investors view the test as a hurdle for capital returns through stock buybacks and dividends. It could also boost the case for regulatory relief promised by the Trump administration.

The Fed increases the difficulty of the test as the broader economic environment improves. This year the test features a severe global recession with the U.S. unemployment rate rising by almost 6 percentage points to 10 percent, accompanied by a steepening Treasury yield curve.

Some banks' results were hurt this time by the new federal tax law, which changed the impact of past losses on hypothetical tax bills under the scenarios, senior Fed officials said.

The second portion of the test will be released on Wednesday. Those results will determine whether the Fed approves or denies capital plans. Banks now have an opportunity to resubmit those plans if they find their own projections were much sunnier than the Fed's.

(Source: Reuters)

Turkish Lira traders brace for a tumultuous week after elections

Investors are bracing for a big move in the Turkish lira after this weekend's election and they're paying to protect themselves.

As Turks prepare to go to the polls on Sunday, the cost of hedging against fluctuations in the currency over a one-week period is trading close to the highest since the global financial crisis. Options that expire on Monday are pricing in at least a 2 percent move in the lira in either direction.

While it's "fair" to expect a move of that magnitude in the lira initially as investors digest the election result, it could become even more pronounced in the following days, according to Henrik Gullberg, a strategist at Nomura International Plc in London.

One-week implied volatility on dollar-

lira options climbed to 36 percent on Thursday, close to May's almost 10-year high of 39 percent. Bloomberg pricing suggests buyers of straddles that expire on Monday have a breakeven of around 1,000 lira pips, which corresponds to around 4.85 and 4.65 per dollar, while local Turkish banks are offering protection at a breakeven of around 1,500 pips.

Part of the reason the market is preparing for turbulence is because the outcome is too close to call. Further clouding the outlook is that there's a good chance the first round of voting will not be conclusive, which could extend the political uncertainty that's been weighing on markets until a second poll on July 8.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Oil prices rise as OPEC meets

Oil prices rose more than 1 percent on Friday as OPEC held a meeting to reach a deal to increase output to compensate for losses in production at a time of rising global demand.

Benchmark Brent crude was up \$1.05 a barrel at \$74.10 by 0925 GMT. U.S. light crude was 80 cents higher at \$66.34.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries met in Vienna together with non-OPEC oil producers to discuss output policy.

Oil prices have been on a roller-coaster ride over the last few years, with the international marker, Brent, trading above \$100 a barrel for several years until 2014, dropping to almost \$26 in 2016 and then recovering to over \$80 last month.

The most recent price rally followed an OPEC decision to restrict supply in an effort to drain global inventories.

The group started withholding supply in



2017 and this year, amid strong demand, the market tightened significantly, triggering calls

by consumers for higher supply.

Falling production in Venezuela and Libya,

(Source: Reuters)

as well as the risk of lower output from Iran as a result of U.S. sanctions, have all increased market worries of a supply shortage.

Another big uncertainty for oil is the escalating dispute between the United States and its trading partners, which could hit U.S. crude oil exports to China.

Asian shares hit a six-month low on Friday as tariffs and the U.S.-China trade battle start taking their toll.

If a 25 percent duty on U.S. crude imports is implemented by Beijing, American oil would become uncompetitive in China, forcing it to seek buyers elsewhere.

Chinese buyers are already starting to scale back orders, with a drop in supplies expected from September.

"If China's import demand dries up, more than 300,000 bpd of U.S. crude will have to find a new destination," energy consultancy FGE said.

Turkey announces deadline for offshore wind farm bids



The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources on Thursday said it will accept applications for a 1,200-megawatt (MW) offshore wind plant which will be the biggest in the world and the first of its kind in the country till Oct. 23.

According to the announcement in the Official Gazette, the Renewable Energy General Directorate of the Ministry will start assessing applications the same day and will inform applicants about the date and place of tender. The applicants will be able to form a consortium to attend.

The ceiling price for one megawatt-hour has been set as \$8 and applicants will compete for the lowest bid in a reverse auction.

The investor who submits the lowest bid will sign an energy purchase agreement including the first 50 terawatts-hour of electricity production starting from the first commissioning of the plant.

Energy Minister Berat Albayrak said Wednesday that the tender specifications required 60 percent local equipment production and employment of Turkish engineers at a rate of 80 percent.

Albayrak said that Turkey's energy sector has accomplished key projects in energy technology and the country has completed

all the necessary work to build its first offshore wind farm.

The new plant will have an installed capacity of 200 megawatt-hours, becoming the largest offshore wind farm in the world.

Around 60 percent of the turbines for the plant will be domestically manufactured in partnership with Turkish organized industrial zones, the minister said.

"A total of 80 percent of the engineers working in the project will be Turkish," he added.

The energy minister had announced the project in February. The candidate regions for the power plant were named in March as Saros and Gallipoli in the Marmara region and K?y?koy in the Thrace region.

Since offshore wind farms are more efficient, Turkey is looking to use its Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts.

Turkey held a 1,000-megawatt solar Renewable Energy Resource Zones (YEKA) tender in 2017 with a winning bid of \$6.99 for one megawatt-hour and \$3.48 for 1,000-megawatts.

The country plans to increase its wind and solar capacity by 10,000 megawatts each in the coming decade.

(Source: Daily Sabah)

Libya clashes at oil ports cut output by nearly half



Libya's oil output has dropped by nearly half following clashes between rival groups in the country's key oil export ports, the head of the National Oil Company said on Wednesday.

"Production has seen a reduction by 450,000 barrels per day, plus 70 million cubic feet of natural gas, equivalent to \$33m in sales based on market prices," Mustafa Sanalla told AFP news agency.

The Ras Lanuf and Al-Sidra terminals have been closed since last Thursday when armed groups attacked oil facilities held by forces loyal to renegade General Khalifa Haftar in eastern Libya.

Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army has since launched an offensive to push the militias out of the area, with the violence causing "catastrophic damage", according to the state oil company.

Sanalla said the clashes "will ultimately result in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in construction costs, and billions in lost sales opportunities".

On Monday, the NOC said fires caused by the clashes had destroyed two crude tanks, reducing storage capacity at the Ras Lanuf terminal by 400,000 barrels.

"Maintenance teams are still dealing with

the aftermath of the blaze and are trying to ascertain the extent of the damage to the terminal," Sanalla said.

Aside from oil infrastructure damaged by conflict, Sanalla said Libyan authorities were also struggling to "conquer the shocking scale" of fuel theft.

"The smugglers think they can operate with impunity -- to the extent that the country is losing more than \$750 million a year through domestic fuel smuggling alone," he said.

Libya's economy relies heavily on oil, with production at 1.6 million barrels a day under long-time Libyan ruler Muammar Gaddafi.

The 2011 uprising against Gaddafi saw production fall to about 20 percent of that level, before recovering to over one million barrels a day by the end of 2017.

"Those that seek to disrupt NOC operations and sequester facilities for their own gain should be seen for what they are -- criminals," Sanalla said.

"Libyan natural resources and oil and gas revenues must be a catalyst for reconstruction and national prosperity, not conflict," he added.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Venezuela says oil output recovery by end of 2018 will be 'a challenge'

Venezuela has the ability to boost crude output by 1 million barrels per day (bpd) by end of the year in its bid to recover lost production, although the oil minister also said on Friday this goal would be "a challenge" for state oil firm PDVSA.

"We hope that by year-end, we will have recovered the lost production, we have the capacity to do so, we've said so," Manuel Quevedo told reporters at a meeting of

the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries in Vienna.

President Nicolas Maduro said last month PDVSA would seek to boost oil production by 1 million bpd this year, and would seek help from Russia, China and OPEC if needed. Output has plummeted under U.S. sanctions and due to an economic crisis.

"This is a goal for 2018 that is very challenging for PDVSA ... but it's the goal we've set ourselves," Quevedo said.

The minister earlier said Venezuela was pumping about 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil. The country had been producing about 2.373 million bpd as recently as 2016, Thomson Reuters data shows.

(Source: Reuters)

Australia no longer expects gas shortfall before 2030

Australia no longer faces a looming gas shortage, thanks to government pressure on exporters to divert the commodity into local markets and a reduced demand forecast for gas-fired power, according to estimates from the nation's energy market operator.

"No supply gaps are forecast before 2030 under expected market conditions," the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) said on Friday in its annual outlook for gas.

That is starkly different from a year ago, when dire warnings from the body about potential shortfalls in eastern Australia from 2018 onward prompted the government to threaten to curb liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports.

The nation's three east coast LNG plants, operated by Royal Dutch Shell, ConocoPhillips, and Santos, averted those curbs by promising to plug the expected deficit.

Their moves, combined with greater availability of LNG on the global market, the start-up of a new pipeline from the Northern Territory to Queensland, and growth in wind and solar power diminishing the need for gas-fired power, have eliminated the feared shortage, AEMO said.

"Alongside international market changes, newly committed electricity generation re-



sources have resulted in a favorable increase of gas availability for the east coast market," AEMO executive general manager David Swift said in a statement.

More than 4,000 megawatts of wind and solar power are due to start up in the next two years, which should ease demand for gas-fired power except when renewable generation is low, he said.

AEMO cut its gas consumption forecast for 2019 by 55 petajoules from its last estimate made in September, while increasing its gas production outlook from fields in the southern states by 16 PJ.

In September, it had predicted a supply gap of between 54 PJ and 107 PJ for 2018, or up to 17 percent of market demand.

An extra 8 PJ of gas has also been freed up

for the local market as a global LNG glut has given overseas buyers more supply choice, AEMO said.

While producers told the market operator output would increase from southern gas fields, AEMO's forecasts "still show that further exploration and development will be needed to meet demand from as early as 2022", Swift said.

Production forecasts from gas producers show an increase in output of 144 PJ between 2019 and 2022, AEMO said, while flagging those new supplies will be more costly to produce than existing production.

The sharply changed view has not deterred groups considering importing LNG to south-eastern Australia within the next two years, as they see the assumptions on future gas production as bullish and view LNG import terminals as much cheaper to install than developing new gas fields.

"For the sake of a new entrant and a compelling, certain product, I just think imports win, hands down," said James Baulderstone, chief executive of Australian Industrial Energy, one of at least three groups considering importing LNG.

(Source: Reuters)

Oil CEO claims industry needs 'another Iraq' to satisfy demand

Global demand for oil is so high at present that the world needs to find another Iraq or North Sea to make up the shortfall, Crescent Petroleum's chief executive told CNBC on Thursday.

Speaking at the OPEC meeting in Vienna, Austria, Majid Jafar, CEO of the United Arab Emirates-based oil and natural gas producer, said it was clear that too much industry cash was going out in dividends when firms need to be building more infrastructure.

"The big message here has been the industry is not investing enough. Investment is down 50 percent from where it was three or four years ago and hasn't really recovered," he added.

Projections suggest that the global demand for oil will exceed 100 million barrels per day in 2019.

"Actually, what we have seen in this meeting is we need to add another Iraq or North Sea every year and it is not clear where it is coming from," Jafar said.

The petroleum boss said the oil industry currently had an image problem where the public thought it was "dying and not important anymore."

He added that the rise of renewable energy was important, but only accounted for 3 percent of the total energy output with 60 percent still provided for by oil and gas.

Jafar said he remained bullish on the Middle East as an energy producer as it had half the world's oil and gas but only a third of the world's production.

(Source: CNBC)

Permian bottlenecks begin to bite

The pipeline constraints in the Permian are finally starting to bite, threatening to derail the extraordinary production boom that has been underway for the last few years.

Permian drillers are "quitting new wells at a record pace," according to Bloomberg. The region's pipeline network is already just about full, forcing steep and ever-widening discounts for oil coming from West Texas. The number of drilled but uncompleted wells (DUCs) remains very high, evidence that companies are drilling wells but deferring completions, likely because they have no way of shipping the oil. As a result, they are leaving it in the ground. Last week, the Permian rig count fell by four.

The EIA says that the number of DUCs in the Permian jumped by 100 in May, which is actually a bit below the average monthly increase over the past year, but still up 90 percent from a year earlier. Every month, the DUC list in the Permian jumps to a new record high.

Moreover, the price discounts and the lack of pipeline space could force companies to begin shutting down older wells. "I think without a doubt you're going to see shut-in wells," Judy Stark, president of the Panhandle Producers & Royalty Owners Association, an industry group, told Bloomberg.

The CEO of Pioneer Natural Resources, Scott Sheffield, said in a Bloomberg interview that the Permian pipelines would be totally full in the next three to four months, which could mean a shutdown of a growing number of wells. "Some companies will have to shut in production, some companies will move rigs away, and some companies will be able to continue growing because they have firm transportation," Sheffield said.



His assessment backs up the conclusion of an increasing number of analysts, who have described the state of the industry as one of "Haves" and "Have Nots" -- those with pipeline space under contract, and those without.

Evidence of a slowdown is starting to multiply. Halcon Resources Corp. said on Tuesday that beginning in July it will idle about a quarter of its drilling fleet because of "lower near-term realized oil prices in the Midland market." C&J Energy Services Inc., a drilling services company, suspended plans to expand its fleet.

The pipeline problem is expected to grow worse over the course of the year and into at least the first half of 2019. Ryan Smith of East Daley Capital told Reuters that pipelines could start rejecting new customers as early as next quarter (which begins in a few weeks).

"We have started to see some producers drop rigs in the basin and would think investors will focus on these issues on upcoming 2Q calls and into the fall as E&P budgets are put together," Barclays wrote in a note. "As a result, we think producers may slow down growth in the Permian and build up drilled but uncompleted (DUC) wells and/or reallocate resources elsewhere until the constraints are worked out."

The pipeline bottlenecks are unfolding alongside other problems cropping up in the Permian. Barclays noted that "productivity improvements are slowing and the decline rate is accelerating in the Permian," even as absolute production is still expected to rise 600,000 bpd year-on-year in both 2018 and 2019.

The bank downgraded its projection for Permian supply growth by 50,000 bpd this year and next because the estimated ultimate recovery from the average Permian well is not increasing at the same rate as it once was, "despite the continued increase in proppant intensity and average lateral lengths," a situation likely the result of "parent-child well interference and expansion into less-lucrative acreage." In other words, the shale industry dramatically ramped up the intensity with which it drilled shale wells, but they have nearly picked just about all of the low-hanging fruit in terms of productivity gains.

The pipeline constraints and the subsequent drilling and completion slowdown could result in the Permian producing 200,000 to 300,000 bpd less than originally expected in 2019. Barclays says that scenario is not necessarily the most likely, but if it came to pass, it could be felt globally, pushing oil prices up by 5 to 10 percent.

Meanwhile, Goldman Sachs said that Permian-exposed refiners will enjoy a windfall from the enormous price discounts for Midland crude. The investment bank said that after its tour of the Permian it came away with "increased confidence around the view that Permian crude differentials need to widen further."

So, while the "Haves" should come out okay, and the "Have Nots" might be forced to curtail production, the undisputed winners of this predicament are refiners who can gain access to heavily discounted Permian oil. Goldman likes Delek US Holdings, who sources 70 percent of its oil throughput from the Permian.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Who is behind the wheel in a changing Saudi Arabia?

By Adam Taylor

For decades, if a critic of Saudi Arabia wanted a simple shorthand for what he thought was wrong with the country, there was one obvious example: Saudi women were not allowed to drive. The restriction was without parallel in the modern world, and to many it showed that while Saudi Arabia was a wealthy and seemingly modern U.S. ally, its society was fundamentally stuck in the past.



As of this weekend, that example will no longer stand. Sunday will be the first day in Saudi history that women will legally be allowed to drive, a symbolic milestone for the kingdom and its 32-year-old crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, often known as MBS.

The move to allow Saudi women to hold driver's licenses was announced in a royal decree last September. Though signed by King Salman, it was widely attributed to MBS's influence, part of a grander plan the millennial crown prince is implementing to move Saudi Arabia into the future.

But nine months later, it's apparent that things aren't quite as simple as just issuing a proclamation. Though women will be allowed to drive, it's unclear how many actually will. A relatively small number of women have received licenses, and many more women may be nervous to join them — plenty of Saudi men are not fully on board with the policy.

"Many men have vented their opposition to the decision to lift the ban using a Twitter hashtag that translates to 'you will never drive,'" reported Margherita Stancati and Donna Abdulaziz of the Wall Street Journal. "After the ban's planned lifting was announced in September, a man was arrested for posting a video online in which he threatened to set fire to women and their cars if they dare to drive."

And in recent weeks the government has arrested some of the most prominent female campaigners who had pushed for women on the roads. As one activist told The Washington Post's Loveday Morris, the "arrest campaign is an arrest campaign against feminism in Saudi [Arabia]."

The arrests showed that for all the talk of a new, "normal" Saudi Arabia, the country's reinvention is, in many ways, skin-deep. MBS may have opened the door to female drivers and previously restricted forms of entertainment, including cinemas, but major political reform is not on the agenda anytime soon. And the changes are primarily driven by economic considerations, even those surrounding women's rights.

The country's state-run economic giant, Saudi Aramco, has long given women Western-style freedom within its compounds. As he announced the royal decree about driving last September, then-Saudi ambassador to Washington Prince Khaled bin Salman said that women "need to drive themselves to work."

That idea fits in with the much-hyped Vision 2030 plan first unveiled by MBS in April 2016. The plan, launched as a dip in oil prices made Saudi Arabia's economic future look precarious, calls for Saudi Arabia to diversify its economy away from energy and cut the economic flab accumulated after living for decades on a diet of petrodollars. One goal listed in that plan is to increase female participation in the workforce from 22 percent to 30 percent by the year 2030.

MBS is clearly not afraid to upend things, as evidenced by the widely criticized anti-corruption drive in which he placed some of his fellow royals under house arrest at the Ritz Carlton Riyadh. In addition to his domestic reforms, he has pushed an aggressive and certainly risky foreign policy that sees Saudi Arabia facing off against Iran, and isolating Qatar, an old ally.

MBS's social-policy moves have also hit at the power of the country's conservative Islamists. "We don't know what's happening," said one man in Riyadh who described himself to my colleague Kareem Fahim as a Salafist, a member of a strict conservative strain of Islam. "It's like we're becoming strangers."

Between considerable palace intrigue and rampant rumors online, there are fears that this segment of society could pose a threat to the Saudi government. "The religious people are quiet for now. Will they continue to be quiet, or will they react violently?" one ex-official wondered while speaking to the Economist.

That may help explain why the Saudi government is willing to do things like arresting female activists only weeks before women are allowed to drive — it not only taps the brakes on a social reform that is unsettling for many in the country, but also reminds Saudis who is in charge.

For Saudi women hoping for reform, it puts them on unsteady ground. The rules that prohibited women from getting driver's licenses were just one restriction among the many placed on Saudi women. Some of these other rules are also starting to shift: The Post's Liz Sly recently reported that in the comparatively liberal city of Jiddah, some women have started to abandon the head-to-toe abayas that previously covered them, and cafes are removing the sections that divided men from women. But such changes are spread unevenly.

Perhaps the most onerous of all — the male guardianship system that legally puts every Saudi woman under the authority of a male relative — remains in place. As one anonymous Saudi woman told Agence France-Presse: "I can drive in my own country, but I cannot leave my own country unless my own son permits it?" For now, at least, much in MBS's ambitious kingdom is still the same.

(Source: The Washington Post)

Between considerable palace intrigue and rampant rumors online, there are fears that this segment of society could pose a threat to the Saudi government.

A world of right-wing populism suits Israel's colonial plan perfectly

Neither reasonable voices within Israel, nor global criticism, have hindered the ambitions of its 'occupation geopolitics'

By Taha Ozhan

Israel's strange influence in Washington and the Arab region entered a new stage with U.S. President Donald Trump's ascent to power. Already exploiting the vacuum left by Arab uprisings to cement its occupation, Israel received open-ended, irrational support for the occupation from Trump.

Israel is routinely trampling Palestinians' rights under the almost-free political insurance policy provided by the White House. Israel has built a geopolitical fantasy upon the fictional premise that Palestinians will someday renounce all of their rights - even that they will leave their land.

No one has faith anymore that this approach, which insists on the present Israeli occupation as the de facto starting point in meaningless negotiations with the Palestinians, will foster peace.

■ Rising populism

Over the years, Israel has developed a distinct logic of occupation beyond historical, fundamentalist Zionism. Neither reasonable voices within Israel, nor global criticism, have hindered the ambitions of this "occupation geopolitics" and theology.

Israel has been aided by the rising wave of populism and the far-right in Europe and the U.S., along with the wave of totalitarianism that swept through the Middle East after status-quo actors defeated the Arab uprisings. To the Israeli geopolitical mentality, the zeitgeist in the region and the wider world presents a vulgar, but fertile, ground for deepening the occupation.

This backdrop has facilitated the U.S. embassy move to Jerusalem, routine massacres in Gaza, and the disregarding of Palestinians as interlocutors. Israel has reduced the entire problem to a simple cost-benefit analysis, allowing the status quo to survive in its favor. Unless Israel, which has succumbed to a prison administration mentality, faces a new intifada or receives serious pressure from regional states, the



Israel has been aided by the rising wave of populism and the far-right in Europe and the U.S., along with the wave of totalitarianism that swept through the Middle East after status-quo actors defeated the Arab uprisings.

status quo will persist.

Israel does not see the vicious cycle that other actors are warning about, because it is mired in a problematic mental state that has worsened since Trump took office. This schizophrenic condition allows Israel to mentally live in Washington but physically reside in the Middle East.

In an age where conquests have become obsolete, Israel, which has maintained the longest occupation in the modern era, can be at peace with this condition only if it lives

in the past.

■ Palestinian politics

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Trump can present the occupation as a success story, as such a shallow perspective has not met wide opposition in an era when geopolitics have been reduced to the issue of post-9/11 "terrorism".

Motivated by a blind "Islamist-phobia", the Persian Gulf and Egypt have positioned themselves in the Trump-Netanyahu axis in

the post-Arab Spring period, reducing the prospects for an end to the occupation.

The state of Palestinian factions also invites pessimism. To guarantee that a meaningful negotiations process will not start, Israel has gone to great lengths to ensure that Palestinian groups do not transform from resistance movements into representative political actors. Such primitive reasoning guided efforts by Israel and the U.S. to prevent Hamas from taking power after it won the 2006 elections.

However, there is no excuse for the failure of Palestinian groups to become more politically mature. The crisis of representation after Yasser Arafat's death threw all Palestinian groups into a vicious cycle. In the meantime, Arab governments who viewed the Palestinian problem as a burden after the Arab Spring made matters worse.

■ Radical democratic shift

At this point, we cannot expect a paradigm shift in Israel/Palestine. After the Trump administration's "human rights exit" at the UN, the U.S. has officially declared that it cannot be an honest broker for Palestinians. Furthermore, the U.S., EU, UN and regional states have neither the vision nor the motivation to navigate towards a solution.

Only one actor can make revolutionary strides towards solving the problem: the Palestinians. Notwithstanding the heavy cost of the occupation, a democratic shift in Palestine's political representation could upset the Trump-Netanyahu axis. If their vision is limited to maximizing power, Palestinian factions will be unable to pull out of their current skid.

The worn-out perspective of "unifying" disparate Palestinian groups has lost its meaning. Palestinians are in urgent need of meaningful political representation and a radical democratic shift. Building a new Palestinian political language will be the first step towards breaking Israel's approach, which is to deepen the occupation and kill all hopes for peace.

(Source: Middle East Eye)

Four things to watch in Turkey's elections

By Soner Cagaptay

This Sunday, June 24, Turkey's citizens will cast two ballots, one for the presidency and other for the parliament. Opinion polls suggest a tight race for what is a historic election for both Turkey and its president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

In April 2017, Erdogan won — with a narrow 2 percent margin — a referendum to change Turkey's constitution. This ushered in an executive-style presidential system, with Erdogan at the helm. Now, in the snap elections he called for June 24, he is hoping to win and assume the powers set out in that referendum.

If Erdogan wins the elections, he will not just be the head of his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and head of state. The executive presidency will also make him the head of government (currently nominally held by Prime Minister Binali Yildirim), as well as cementing his rule over the military and the police, which is a national force in Turkey. Erdogan already appoints a majority of the judges to the high courts, and if he scores a double victory in the two polls this Sunday, both the parliament and the executive branch will fall into his hands.

In other words, if he wins on Sunday, Erdogan will become Turkey's most powerful leader since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk established the country in 1923.

Here are four things to remember ahead of Sunday's vote:

■ 1. The race will be unfair

This will be Turkey's first truly unfair election campaign since the country became a multi-party democracy in 1950. Votes will be cast under the state of emergency, which was declared in the aftermath of a failed coup in 2016. Erdogan's government has extended the state of emergency seven times since then.

The government is also censoring online content, with pro-Erdogan businesses now controlling around 90 percent of all media in the country. Coverage is unilaterally stacked in Erdogan's favor. For instance, Turkey's publicly-funded TRT network gave Erdogan 31 hours and 25 minutes of airtime between May 1 and May 25. The candidate for the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), Muharrem Ince, got only 3 hours and 38 minutes, the IYI (Good) Party leader Meral Aksener 9 minutes, and the jailed pro-Kurdish Peoples Democracy Party's (HDP) candidate Selahattin Demirtas received 0 minutes.

■ 2. Turkey will remain deeply polarized

During his time as prime minister of Turkey from



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (L) and the leader of Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Devlet Bahçeli

If Erdogan wins on Sunday, he will become Turkey's most powerful leader since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk established the country in 1923.

2003-2014, and as president since, Erdogan has become increasingly conservative and populist. He has demonized and cracked down on various constituencies and minorities, ranging from Kurdish nationalists and social democrats to leftists and liberals, which are not likely to vote for him. This has helped Erdogan boost his right-wing, Islamist, and nationalist base.

Coupled with strong economic growth, Erdogan's electoral strategy has managed to deeply entrench polarization in Turkey. His conservative supporters, constituting about half of the country, have zealously rallied around him in his defense; the other half of the country, brutalized by Erdogan, profoundly resents him.

In an unfair race, Erdogan may indeed win the presidential elections on Sunday, or in the run-off to be held on July 8 between the top two candidates if no candidate acquires over 50 percent of the vote this Sunday. Erdogan will become




opponent, Gustavo Petro, a former rebel and former Bogotá mayor, garnered 42 percent of the vote. In conservative Colombia, this was quite a feat. It shows a new sense of freedom and a desire for peace after a war in which

more than 200,000 Colombians were killed.


Duque will need to govern from the center to help consolidate the gains of the peace pact as well as finish up negotiations with a smaller rebel group called the National Liberation Army (ELN). Voters are most concerned about corruption, the economy, and urban security. And they mostly accept the reintegration of former FARC rebels into society and into politics.

With its new peace, Colombia is now searching for unity. "No more divisions," Duque said after the election. "I will not govern with hatred." If he succeeds, it will help show that peace is far more than an absence of conflict.

(Source: The CSM)



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National Iranian Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First Publish/Seconed Publish)

Two-Stage(Semipressed)

TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	Subject of Tender	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
17,857	625,000,000	12,500,000,000	High pressure Hose for mud Drilling 5000 psi 2 1/2" ID, 30 Feet	3,165,724	Tender No.:FP/11-96/026 Indent No.: 01-22-9545308	1

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 National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address pasdaran Blev., Airport Sqagare, Ahvaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase its requirements from qualified and interested tenderers through Two-stage public tender (compressed) upon following terms and conditions:

A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
 The evaluation is based on article (J) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender doucments. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.

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 In order to receive the tender documents, **510,000 Rials** should be paid to account number 4001114004020491 in central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran under the title of “centralized income funds” of National Iranian Drilling Company and providing the original deposit receipt.

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 Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN
 Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurment department in due date and participates in tenderwill be known as tenderer from tender committee.

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تهران تایمز نویت اول ۹۷/۰۴/۰۲ نویت دوم ۹۷/۰۴/۰۳

The dystopia is here

By Daniel A. Olivas

When Donald Trump was announced the winner of the Electoral College — but not the popular vote — I was just finishing a book of short stories. They addressed many difficult issues, like poverty, bigotry and violence. But as the grandson of Mexican immigrants, I felt I had to write one last story, one that would confront this man who got himself elected on a platform of hate and a promise to wall off the country of my grandparents.

So I wrote "The Great Wall." In the dystopian future of the story, the wall is a golden, gaudy monstrosity decorated with bas-relief scenes from the president's life, from his childhood to his TV career to him signing executive orders.

But the real monstrosity of the story is the detention center in San Diego, Calif., just inside the wall where the children are kept until they are allowed to wave goodbye to their parents through cloudy plexiglass, before the parents are loaded into black buses and deported.

I wanted my story to serve as a cautionary tale of what our country could devolve into if Mr. Trump's



immigration policies were fully realized. But now this is our reality: Sons and daughters are being ripped from their parents' arms — in some cases, literally — and detention centers are filled with

frightened children.

In immigrant communities, the fear is palpable, with parents asking themselves if they should risk taking their children to school, or going to work

or reporting a crime, lest they become vulnerable to a sweep by immigration agents.

No one is safe. Just this week we learned of Jose Luis Garcia, a grandfather and authorized resident since the 1980s, who was handcuffed and taken by federal immigration officers while he watered his lawn in front of his home in Southern California.

We also learned of Elsa Johana Ortiz Enriquez of Guatemala, who traveled through Mexico and crossed the border into the United States with her 8-year-old son, Anthony, only to be arrested and then separated in the most horrifying of ways: After pleading guilty to unlawful entry, Ms. Ortiz was put on a plane back to Guatemala while her son was transferred to a shelter for migrant children.

If you live in a city like Los Angeles, the odds are that the victims of these policies are your neighbors and co-workers, the classmates of your children and the families who worship with you. You cannot pretend this is not happening here, now, and to people you know.

■ Trump's zero-tolerance policy

Some people in the Trump administration have

defended the "zero-tolerance" policy — which has separated some 2,000 children from their parents — by pointing to Scripture and blaming their political opponents. Mr. Trump himself is — worse yet — openly using the children's suffering as a bargaining chip to get funding to build his wall.

The "Democrats are forcing the breakup of families at the Border with their horrible and cruel legislative agenda," he tweeted, before demanding that they agree to an immigration bill that pays for the wall. He capped his tweet with a rallying cry apparently aimed at supporters of his immigration policies: "Go for it! WIN!"

A dystopia is an imagined, horrific place where people's humanity is replaced by fear. That's what I thought my story depicted — a place where my characters were stripped of their humanity and security, a place that was not yet real. I had hoped it would sound a warning about what our country could become if no one stood up to Mr. Trump. I am sickened to admit that — in its essential details — my dystopian tale has come true.

(Source: The NYT)

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'Private sector plays great role in development of Iranian space tech'

TECHNOLOGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Private sector has a great role in development of space-based technology in Iran, the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) director has announced, ILNA reported on Monday.

Morteza Barari made the remarks during a meeting with managers from the private sector active in space industry.

ISA and National Center for Space plans to attract investors and private sector to enhance space industry.



Morteza Barari (first from right) attends a meeting of managers from the private sector active in space industry on June 18, 2018

"Today, the emerging commercial space industry is prevailing in all parts of world. We aim to increase business security in space industry in order to develop its efficiency," Barari stated.

According to statistics, the commercial space sector accounts for an estimated \$262 billion of the annual global space economy and the private sector share is about 345 billion dollars, he added.

ISA has taken steps to end the monopoly of the government in space technology and the permission for communication satellite operating by the private sector companies is one of the plans.

ISA also supports startups active in this field in order to promote job creation and address challenges, he said.

The agency is a government organization. Iran became an orbital-launch-capable nation in 2009. The country is one of the 24 founding members of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which was set up in 1958.

Ohio wants to use camera drones to monitor highway traffic

Drone technology is continuing to find multiple uses beyond snapping fancy photographs from up high and shooting gorgeous tracking shots for filmmakers.

The latest initiative to hit our radar is taking place in Ohio, which will look into the idea of using the remotely controlled flying machines to monitor traffic conditions along a stretch of highway.

Such work is usually carried out by fixed ground-based cameras, but their viewing range is limited. Helicopters, too, can be called upon, but with pilot and fuel costs to consider, such aircraft can be hugely expensive compared to a diminutive, battery-powered drone.

The Ohio Department of Transportation's DriveOhio Division, which coordinates "smart mobility" initiatives, is working with Ohio State University's College of Engineering on a three-year, \$6-million project to learn more about how drones can be used to effectively monitor traffic conditions.

The research will take place along the Smart Mobility Corridor, a 35-mile stretch of U.S. Route 33 that already hosts a range of initiatives for connected roadway infrastructure.

The planned system would see data from drones sent to the Ohio Department of Transportation's Traffic Management Center, where it can be assessed and, if necessary, acted upon to keep traffic flowing. The ground-based cameras would continue to operate, and also be used to help build a broad picture of what's happening on the road.

The team, however, has plenty of prep work to be getting on with before it can launch its first drone over the highway. This includes building a safe and reliable platform that would allow the drones to be flown beyond the operator's line of sight, which, in most cases, current regulations forbid.

Ohio State professor and Aerospace Research Center director Jim Gregory promised the platform will be able to achieve its safety goals, saying, "Our collaborative work will pave the way for the ultimate vision of safe flight of unmanned aircraft systems throughout Ohio and beyond."

Although not part of the Ohio trial, drones could also be placed at multiple points along a highway, with each one hooked up to a power cord. This would enable them to fly around the clock, albeit from a fixed position. Such technology is already available and being used in a number of settings.

(Source: digitaltrends.com)

Socially safe: Things you should never share

Social networking means opening up and sharing information online with others, but there's some information you should never share online. Protecting yourself from sharing Too Much Information (TMI) can save you from identity theft and even protect your physical safety.

So let's start with the obvious ... never share your social security number (including even just the last four digits), your birth date, home address or home phone number (although sharing your business phone is ok). Of course, you should protect all of your passwords, PIN numbers, bank account and credit card information.

Never share the state where you were born as this information can be used to obtain your social security number and other identity information. Facebook, for example, allows you to restrict who can see your birthday or your hometown (often times the same as your city of birth.) But not every site has these options.

In those cases avoid the problem altogether by not entering information you don't want to share. If the sites you are using don't offer these kinds of protections, e-mail them and request these features. If enough of us make the request, they'll get the message.

(Source: networkworld.com)

Iran-Europe technological co-op greatly benefits both sides: VP

T → Sattari said Iran is very rich in natural resources, however, human resources have become important in recent years in the country, he said.

From 2005 to 2016, Iran made a great development in the field of science technology innovation (STI), improving its ranking in international science from 34 to 16, he stated.

In the year 2016, Iran, with publication of 51,187 articles in the Scopus database, acquired 16th world-wide place in International Science Ranking.

Iran has made a great progress in biotechnology, nanotechnology, renewable energy, cognitive science and stem cells, the vice president added.

"Regarding its improvement in science and technology, Iran eyes innovation-based economy in the near future."

"As a country with educated people, Iran has a great potentialities for entrepreneurship."

"There are over 47 million mobile internet users in Iran and a total of 33 million Iranians, aged between 20 to 40 years old, use smartphones, which provide a great market for emerging startups" he said.

Statistics by Iran's Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, published in September 2017, shows that there are over 47-332 million mobile internet users in the country.

Sattari said Iran has launched 66 innovation centers in universities and academic centers to improve entrepreneurship.

Sattari also pointed to establishment of 39 technology and science parks in Iran.

Pardis Technology Park hosts over 200 companies, some of them export technological products to European countries, he said.

A new business ecosystem is forming in Iran for startups which facilitate investment and financial issues, he said.

Over 3,500 technology-based compa-



Iran's vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari makes speech at the Iran-Europe Cooperation Conference on June 21 in Brussels, Belgium

Iran is ready to open up effective channels and establish infrastructures to facilitate financial transactions with European countries

nies are identified over the past six years in the country which are supported by the government, he said.

The companies have an annual 12 billion dollar turnover and create about 300,000 job opportunities in Iran, the official explained.

He named the Iranian video sharing service Aparat, the Iranian Android marketplace

Cafe Bazaar, the biggest ecommerce startup in Iran Digikala, the Iranian ride-hailing company Snapp and Asan Pardakht AKA AP (pronounced as UP), and Iran's mobile payment company as leading successful Iranian startups.

With the theme of New Horizon, the conference focused on different issues

like economic development, startup improvement and internationalization of knowledge-based companies.

Startup scene in Iran, finance & financial technology investment and marketing as well as venture capital funds in Iran featured in the talks on the sidelines of the event.

Iranian Space Agency seeks further co-op with APSCO



TECHNOLOGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran insists on expanding cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO), Iranian Space Agency (ISA) chief Morteza Barari said during a meeting with APSCO Secretary General Li Xinjun on Thursday, ISA website reported.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 61st Committee of the United Nations on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), which started on June 20 and lasts until June 29 in Vienna, Austria.

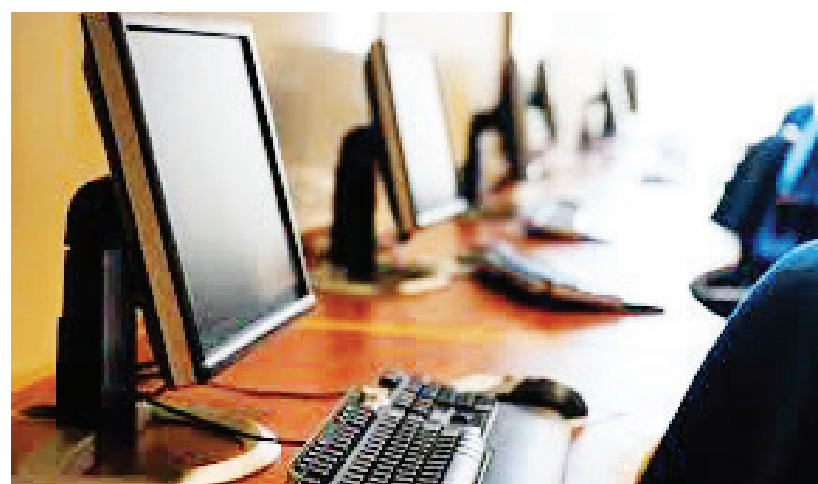
During the meeting, Barari pointed to active role of Iran in several APSCO projects like Small Student Satellite (SSS), Small Multi-Mission Satellite (SMMS) and Asia-Pacific Ground-based Optical Space

Object Observation System (APOSOS).

APSCO is an inter-governmental organization dedicated to promote and strengthen the development of collaborative space programs among its member states by establishing the basis for cooperation in peaceful applications of space science and technology. It is headquartered in Beijing, People's Republic of China.

The mission of COPUOS is to review the scope of international cooperation in peaceful uses of outer space, to devise programs in this field to be undertaken under United Nations auspices, to encourage continued research and the dissemination of information on outer space matters, and to study legal problems arising from the exploration of outer space.

ICT Faculty to provide free courses for job seekers



TECHNOLOGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's Faculty of Applied Science in Telecommunication, known as ICT Faculty, provides free ICT courses for job seekers.

The faculty aims to increase ICT skill and improve educational infrastructures for 90,000 ICT-related jobs, the dean of the faculty Vahid Yazdaniyan told Mehr on Wednesday.

The one-year course is supported by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, he said.

The ministry plans to create ICT-related jobs in all provinces across the country, he added.

Considering the emergence of startups and knowledge-based companies in the field of ICT, there is a great potential for job creation, he said.

He also explained about sustainable job creation plan (known by its Persian acronym Takapu), which is held by the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare.

The plan surveys market and infrastructure potentials for each field of employment in different regions of Iran.

"According to Takapu plan, the ICT job creation in all Iranian provinces has competitive advantage, however, its priority is different in each region," he said.

A point checklist for your startup

So you want to start a business – congratulations! Once you get over the initial excitement, it's time to break down the process of launching your startup into manageable chunks.

You might get overwhelmed with the sheer number of items on your to-do list. But not to worry; I've broken down this startup checklist into the primary tasks you need to do now, and those that you can defer until later.

Do the following tasks either before launch or during the early days of your startup.

■ Determine viability

Be brutally honest. Your startup needs to be something you can make a profit doing or delivering. Ask yourself: would you buy it? Run the numbers: will customers pay enough so that you can cover costs and make a profit?

The legalvision website provide some following questions for when assessing your cost structure and revenue stream:

- How will you pay fixed operational costs and variable expenses until you generate cash flow from sales?
- How much working capital do you need?



- What is your customer acquisition cost?
- How many sales do you need to make to break even?
- When will you break even?
- What is the cost of goods or services sold, per item?
- What is the lifetime value of a customer?
- When will an investor get a return on their investment?
- What is your contribution margin?
- What is your exit strategy?

(Source: smallbiztrends.com)

Angel investor: A right choice for your small business?

An angel investor is a person who invests in a business venture, providing capital for start-up or expansion. Angel investors are typically individuals who have spare cash available and are looking for a higher rate of return than would be given by more traditional investments.

An angel investment is a form of equity financing—the investor supplies funding in exchange for taking an equity position in the company.

The big advantage is that financing from angel investments is much less risky than debt financing. Unlike a loan, invested capital does not have to be paid back in the event of business failure.

The primary disadvantage of using angel investors is the loss of complete control as a part owner. Your angel investor will have a say in how the business is run and will also receive a portion of the profits when the business is sold.

■ Sources of Angel Investors

- Family and friends – this is by far the most common source of funding for business startups. Given the high rate of failure, it is also risky in terms of the possible impact on family/friend relationships.
- Wealthy individuals – another good source are successful business people,



doctors, lawyers, and others that have a high net worth and are willing to invest up to (typically) \$500,000 in return for equity.

● Groups – angels are increasingly operating as part of an angel syndicate (a group of angel investors), which raises their potential investment level accordingly.

● Crowdfunding – a form of an online investing group, crowdfunding involves raising funding by having large groups of individuals invest amounts as small as \$1,000.

(Source: thebalancesmb.com)

Solar tower exposes materials to intense heat to test thermal response

Sandia National Laboratories is using its solar tower to help assess the impact of extreme temperature changes on materials.

The tests, now in their second year, take advantage of the ability of Sandia's National Solar Thermal Test Facility to simulate a very rapid increase in temperature followed by an equally rapid decrease. The testing is for the Air Force and will continue for at least another year.

Researchers put a 4-by-4-inch sample of composite material, called a coupon, into a test chamber, then expose it to a burst of intense heat. Different coupons are made of different types of materials.

Specialty ovens can reach the temperatures needed, but ovens can't heat up or cool down rapidly. "And it's hard to just stick a coupon in real fast and then take it out," test engineer Josh Christian said. "Our facility is really good at providing a fast ramp rate for these heating curves, and we also can produce a trailing curve by moving our mirrors in such a way to remove the heat from the sample."

■ Changing heat levels

The coupon is placed flush to a wall of a test chamber, basically a box, facing a quartz window that allows in the heat produced by the mirrors. The tests, which use about a quarter of the heliostat field, can change heat levels as needed.

Initially, sliding shutters in front of the window are closed. The solar tower team



focuses reflected light from the heliostats onto a calibration panel and uses a heat flux gauge to measure the power that will hit the

sample. Then they move that reflected light onto the shutters.

When ready, the shutters slide open and

Researchers put a 4-by-4-inch sample of composite material, called a coupon, into a test chamber, then expose it to a burst of intense heat. Different coupons are made of different types of materials.

close very quickly to produce the heating curves needed on the sample.

At the same time, a wind tunnel with a blower on one end forces air across the sample, simulating convective cooling. Convective cooling impacts the heating rate since with convective cooling, materials survive longer under intense heat.

Before and after a test, another Sandia team checks the sample with a 3D scanner, which determines whether the heat produced bubbles or texture changes in the material, Christian said.

■ Light reflected from the surface

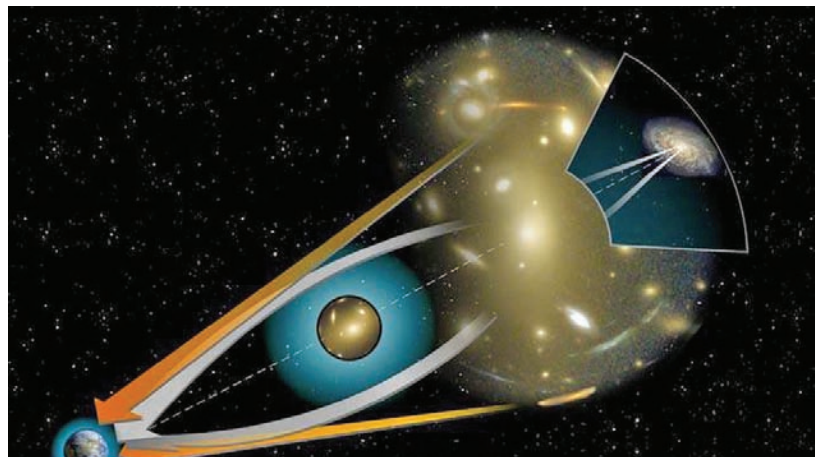
Still another group of Sandia researchers takes reflectivity measurements -- how much light is reflected from the surface. For example, if a sample absorbs 90 percent of the light and reflects 10 percent, then 10 percent of the light did not heat it. Josh said that's important because in real life, materials with a high reflective value heat up slower.

A third team uses nondestructive methods to look inside the sample after a test, checking for changes below the surface, which is particularly important for complex structures made of several different materials.

Tests go on year-round, but the Air Force program does not test every day since the solar tower also does tests for other programs. Last summer, for example, Christian estimated 30 to 40 days were devoted to the project.

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

Scientists confirm general relativity works with distant galaxy



This study supports our current understanding of gravity and provides more evidence for the existence of dark matter and dark energy — two mysterious concepts that scientists know about only indirectly by observing their effects on cosmic objects.

Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity, published in 1916, explains how gravity is the result of a concept known as the fabric of space-time. Simply put, the theory predicts how much the mass of an object — in this case, a galaxy — curves space-time.

Since the theory was first published, it has been tested a number of times within our Solar System. But this new study, conducted by an international team of astronomers led by Thomas Collett of the Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation at the University of Portsmouth in the UK, is the first precise test of general relativity on a large astronomical scale, the researchers said.

Using data from NASA's Hubble Space Telescope and the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile, the research team found that gravity behaves the same way in a faraway galaxy as it does in our Solar System — just as Einstein's theory predicts.

The researchers tested the assumption that the "same laws of physics we see working here on Earth are true anywhere else," Terry Oswalt, an astronomer and chair of physical sciences at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida, said in an email to space.com.

Verifying general relativity "at all possible scales (especially the largest scale) is fundamentally important to physics as a whole, and to cosmology in particular," added Oswalt, who was not involved in the new study.

■ Galaxy clusters

Dark matter appears to be spread across the cosmos in a network-like pattern, with galaxy clusters forming at the nodes where fibers intersect. By verifying that gravity acts the same both inside and outside our Solar System, researchers provide additional evidence for the existence of dark matter and dark energy.

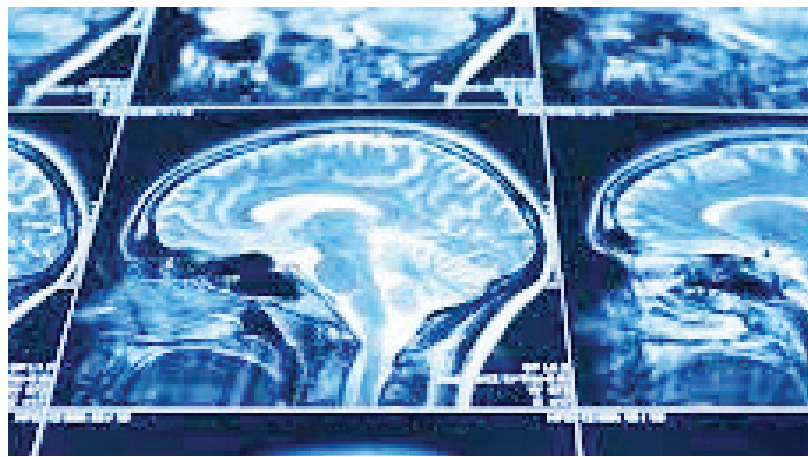
The standard model is a theory which describes how fundamental forces and particles in the universe work and behave together, and it aims to explain our observations and experiments. However, our lack of understanding and explanation of dark matter and dark energy, the "two biggest mysteries in cosmology today," according to Oswalt, lead some to question the standard model.

"I doubt astronomers will be giving up the standard model of cosmology anytime soon," Oswalt said. So, instead of abandoning the standard model, researchers look to "make the models more precisely explain the observed data," he added.

In the standard model, dark matter is required to explain how fast stars orbit around galaxies and dark energy is required to explain why the universe is expanding faster, according to Collett.

(Source: space.com)

Researchers just discovered how water gets from blood into the brain



Scientists have identified the means by which water in our blood supply crosses over to the brain, where it becomes the cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds and protects one of our most precious organs.

Every day, about half a liter of water is transported from our blood in this way, but while researchers knew a thin tissue in the brain called the choroid plexus was involved in this process, they didn't understand how so much cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) could be produced. Now, we may finally have the answer.

"It is brand-new knowledge on a very important physiological process involving by far the most complex organ in the human body," says neuroscientist Nanna MacAulay from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

It used to be thought that osmosis and associated forces regulated how water passed into the brain to produce cerebrospinal fluid, but as MacAulay's team explains, a number of existing studies have helped demonstrate that "osmotic water transport does not suffice to sustain the rates of CSF production consistently observed in mammals".

■ Osmotic water transport

To investigate what mechanism could be driving the phenomenon, MacAulay and fellow researchers studied a mouse model where the conditions required for osmotic water transport were absent.

By inhibiting osmotic water transporters in the brains of live mice, the team found a previously unknown ion transporter called the NKCC1 co-transporter; it turned out to be responsible for approximately half of CSF production.

If the same molecular channel can

be manipulated in humans, it could provide a revolutionary way of accessing and controlling the water system of the brain, easing pressure without resorting to invasive surgical operations — such as drilling holes in the cranium to drain fluid, and even removing pieces of the skull.

"If we are able to target this ion and water transporter with medicine, it would affect a number of disorders involving increased intracranial pressure, including brain hemorrhage, blood clots in the brain, and hydrocephalus," MacAulay says.

Of course, it's always impossible to guarantee that the results seen in animal studies will be replicated in research with human patients, but here the team is hopeful, mainly because the protein structure of the choroid plexus is similar.

■ Treating brain pathologies

If they're right, it could result in what the researchers describe as a "paradigm shift in the field", giving us a therapeutic target to treat brain pathologies involving increased pressure in events such as strokes, along with other serious cases where patients currently have few (or zero) non-invasive options.

"Of course, it would be groundbreaking if we were able to use this mechanism as a target for medical treatment and turn down the in-flow of water to the brain to reduce intracranial pressure," MacAulay says.

"At worst, the patient may suffer permanent damage and even die as a result of increased pressure. Therefore, this basic mechanism is an important find to us."

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Researchers achieve unprecedented control of polymer grids

Synthetic polymers are ubiquitous — nylon, polyester, Teflon and epoxy, to name just a few — and these polymers are all long, linear structures that tangle into imprecise structures. Chemists have long dreamed of making polymers with two-dimensional, grid-like structures, but this goal has proven challenging.

The first examples of such structures, now known as covalent organic frameworks (COFs), were discovered in 2005, but their quality has been poor and preparation methods are uncontrolled. Now a Northwestern University research team is the first to produce high-quality versions of these materials, demonstrate their superior properties and control their growth.

The researchers developed a two-step growth process that produces organic polymers with crystalline, two-dimensional structures. The precision of the material's structure and the empty space its hexagonal pores provide will allow scientists to design new materials with desirable properties.

Even low-quality COFs have shown preliminary promise for water purification, storing electricity, body armor and other tough composite materials. Once developed further, higher-quality samples of these materials will enable these applications to be explored more fully.

"These covalent-organic frameworks fill a century-long gap in polymer science," said William Dichtel, an expert in organic and polymer chemistry who led the study. "Most plastics are long, linear structures that tangle up like spaghetti. We have made ordered two-dimensional polymers where the building blocks are arranged in a perfect grid of repeating hexagons. This gives us precise control of the structure and its properties."

In the two-step process, the scientists first grow small particle "seeds" to which they slowly add more of the building blocks, under carefully controlled conditions. The slow addition causes the building blocks to add to the seeds instead of creating new seeds. The result is larger, high-quality particles made up of large, hexagonal sheets instead of a bunch of aggregated crystals.

(Source: phys.org)

A rising bedrock could be the key to saving the ice in west Antarctica: study

Although there is a growing concern that the West Antarctica ice sheet will eventually collapse, a new study has some good news about the situation.

In West Antarctica, part of the bedrock underneath the ice sheet is moving at a fast rate. Scientists say that this could increase the stability of the ice sheet.

The Amundsen Sea Embayment in West Antarctica is where the Pine Island and Thwaites Glaciers are located. Due to the warm waters, the glaciers are quickly melting. Scientists have been concerned that this could raise global sea levels by many feet. Previously, the thought was that the ice sheet in Antarctica would remain stable for many centuries. The news of the rapid loss off the ice sheet proves that theory wrong.

The bedrock underneath the ice sheet might be what saves the day. The bedrock is rising at an average rate of 1.6 inches each year. This could counter the loss from the ice sheet to balance it all out. Over the next century, the increase is projected to be 2.5 to 3.5 times more rapid.

Ohio State University Professor Terry Wilson led a group of researchers in this study. They attached six GPS stations to the bedrock in Antarctica. Using a series of computer models, the researchers measured how the area is rising despite the rapid loss of the ice sheet.

The researchers hope that this study will help scientists understand more about Earth's bedrock, the status of the ice in West Antarctica, and how melting ice can impact the entire planet. The findings also shed light on the importance of enhancing ice models to accurately predict what will happen. The data could also be used to help scientists measure ice loss at a more precise rate.

(Source: Tech Times)

This speedy genetic tool might soon let scientists create new genes 'overnight'

Two graduate students developed a method for synthesizing DNA that could make it much faster, cheaper and easier for biologists to create synthetic DNA sequences.



Right now, if you want to create a new gene — maybe to make a tomato plant more bug resistant or to add a modification to your army of supersoldier goats — the process is slow and expensive. Bases, the building blocks of genetic code, get added one at a time to a growing strand of DNA. The process sometimes fails, and it always runs out of juice once a sequence reaches just 200 bases (a very short patch of code in genetic terms), according to a statement from the researchers.

Want to go longer? Better to write lots of different bits of genetic code and then stitch them all together using enzymes — chemicals that living things produce to help along the chemical reactions in their bodies — even knowing how likely that is to fail. The new method could eliminate many of those problems.

The old method for synthesizing DNA dates to the 1970s. It's a slow, cumbersome process that slows down genetics labs even as new technologies, like CRISPR, speed up other parts of the gene-editing process.

This new method, developed at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, takes a brute force approach: Enzymes physically bind each new bit of DNA to the sequence, before getting shorn off the sequence and discarded. This is a process that could in principle go on forever, without an arbitrary cut-off at 200 bases.

It does use up a lot of enzymes, the researchers said in their statement. But, fortunately, enzymes are cheap. The researchers said they initially had some trouble convincing other biologists that the idea would work, though, because researchers just aren't accustomed using enzymes to directly bind DNA together.

(Source: Live Science)

Fishermen Put under Insurance Coverage of SARMAD Insurance Co.

For the first time, country's fishermen were put under reinsurance coverage of SARMAD Insurance Company, Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

For this purpose, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked yesterday between SARMAD Insurance Company and Nationwide Fishermen Trade Union in the presence of Dr. Mojtaba Kateb Chairman of the Board of Directors of SARMAD Insurance Company, Dr. Shapour Kakoulaki Deputy CEO of Iranian Fisheries Organization for Fishing Affairs and Yaghoub Doji CEO and Member of the Board of Directors of Iranian Fishermen Trade Union.

Under the contract, in addition to treatment, life and incident insurance coverage, fishermen will be put under the reinsurance services in the field of liability



and vessels belongs to the fishermen and owners of vessels, the report added.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of SARMAD Insurance Company Mojtaba was the first speaker who said, "support of Iranian Fisheries Organization on the treatment reinsurance indicates the tendency of this organization to solve problems facing fishermen."

SARMAD Insurance Company has thrown its heavyweight on the fishermen wholeheartedly. For this purpose, SARMAD Insurance Company will spare no efforts to insure fishermen under its insurance coverage."

So far, fishermen in seven provinces in the country including Sistan Baluchestan, Hormozgan, Bushehr, Golestan, Mazandaran, Gilan and Khuzestan have been put under reinsurance coverage, he maintained.

He reiterated, "

Cabinet disapproves production of carbureted motorcycles

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — While the ministries of industry and interior have demanded the cabinet to reconsider its decision to ban the production of carbureted motorcycles and allow issuance of license plates, the cabinet of ministers rejected the proposal on June 17, ISNA reported on Friday.

The national working group for air pollution mitigation, affiliated to the Department of Environment (DOE), made a proposal to bring production of the pollutant carbureted-engine motorcycles to a halt some two years ago. The cabinet approved the proposal in June 22, 2016 which went into effect as of September 2016.

However, in a letter written jointly by Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli and Industry Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari, the two have appealed to the First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri to revise the decision and allow 10,000 motorcycles to be given license plates.

“The cabinet of ministers didn’t vote for resuming the production of the carbureted-engine motorcycles and has dropped the subject,” deputy environment chief Masoud Tajrishi said.

Resuming the production of carbureted-motorcycles and issuing license for carburetor motorcycles is against the law, Tehran city councilor Zahra Sadr-Azam Nouri has said.

According to the proposal approved by the cabinet since 2016, no license plate for carbureted-engine motorcycle should be issued, she said.

Referring to the fact that the interior and industry ministers’ request was against the law, she said it seems that supporting the private sector and manufacturers as well as employment and income generation is prioritized over public health.

“Each carburetor motorcycle causes four times more pollution than a car,” Sadr-Azam Nouri stated, adding that today Tehran is suffering from air pollution caused by vehicles which leads to severe problems and diseases.

“We call on the government, ministries of interior and industry, mining and trade to pay more attention to the public health, and we urge the minister of health to prioritize public health” she concluded.

According to a report by the World Bank, motorcycles are the second largest contributor to PM in the capital, even before cars which greatly outnumber them. There are less than 1 million motorcycles in Tehran which contribute to about 12 percent of the total mobile PM emissions. On the other hand with a total fleet of 3.37 million, or 80 percent of all vehicles, cars only account for about 3 percent of the city’s mobile PM pollution.

One of the main reasons behind their high contribution to emissions is that a large part of the fuel consumed in motorcycles burns incompletely. The Tehran motorcycle fleet consists mostly of carburetor-equipped motorcycles which are typically less fuel efficient and emit more emissions compared to newer, fuel injection technology.

Mayor seeks govt., parliament’s financial support to manage Tehran

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Mayor Mohammad Ali Afshani has urged the Rouhani administration and Majlis (parliament) to mobilize more financial support for urban management in the capital, IRNA reported on Thursday.

“Urban management in the capital is very much expensive and the administration and legislative body should provide the municipality with financial support,” Afshani suggested.

The administration should pay some of the expenses for equipment and development of the Tehran subway, he said, adding that increasing the budget for the subway would help complete some of the projects.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Afshani highlighted that the municipality would keep on issuing construction permits in the city; however, he stated that the municipality disapproves construction of towering buildings in the capital.

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Presentation - Deferring Questions

Mr. Ford: Now, as we have already discussed there is a huge **untapped** market out there both in Asia, in other **developing markets**, and in the more **mature markets** for us to push into. Now of course, this represents an enormous challenge with enormous rewards for the winners, but for any new product we need a great **marketing message** and marketing campaign. Mr. Ford: It needs to be directed and focused at our target consumer, and needs to be pitched at exactly the right level. The question we must first address is of course, who is our target consumer and secondly what do they expect from the next generation Alpha lap-top?

Mr. Ford: Let’s first of all **tackle** the first question. Our target consumer for the x420 is the middle class, **white collar** worker with an above average income. However, as we mentioned before the total number of computer owners is expanding rapidly and we need to broaden our audience for this product.

Mr. Ford: For example, the x420 is also ideally suited to the younger student sector, who might use laptops both for study and gaming. There is no doubt that.

Audience member: Mr. Ford, if I could just interrupt a moment. You say that the computer is suitable for students, but don’t you think the price of the x420 is just too much for most students?

Mr. Ford: Well, that’s a fair point. If you don’t mind, I’d like to tackle your question a little bit later in the **Q and A** section. Is that okay?

Audience member: Yes, sure.

■ **Key vocabulary**
untapped: available but not used
developing market: markets that are in growth
mature markets: developed market
marketing message: the information of the sale of a product
tackle: deal with something difficult
white collar: a person that works in an office
Q and A: question and answer
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
consumerism: the increasing consumption of goods; a movement that emphasizes quality and consumer awareness
bottom of pyramid: those people who earn around \$1 USD/day, the majority of the world’s people belong to this consumer segment
out of reach: something that cannot be obtained
wallet friendly: an inexpensive product; anything that saves you money

Environmentalists strive to save ranger from death row

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Environmentalists are soliciting contributions from the public in an attempt to save Iranian ranger, Vatan Norouzi, from death row.

Norouzi, a ranger in Fras province, was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter four years ago after he got involved in an armed conflict with a poacher, Mahmoud Behzadi.

Norouzi, father of two, was sentenced to death (also known as qisas in Islamic law) by the court.

In the case of murder, qisas means the right of a murder victim’s nearest relative (legal guardian) to, if the court approves, take the life of the killer. However, the law also allows aggrieved parties to receive monetary compensation (blood money) instead of qisas.

With the help of environmental officials and activists the victim’s family agreed to receive 7.5 billion rials (nearly \$180,000) instead of qisas, Ahmad Bahri, a ranger, has said.

So far the Department of Environment has paid 2.1 billion rials (nearly \$50,000) to the victim’s family and environmentalists are soliciting donations from the public and environment lovers to help free ranger Norouzi, Bahri added; however, he didn’t provide any further information on the amount of contributions collected so far.

Bahri also commented on the bill to support rangers drafted by the Department of Environment in July 2016, which is still being hammered out in Majlis [Iranian Parliament].

“If the bill is approved by the Majlis the



Rangers who risk their lives protecting the environment and wildlife sometimes fall victims by getting into fight with poachers and may either suffer severe wounds, get killed, or charged with involuntary manslaughter.

rangers will not be convicted of such crimes as much and even when they are found

guilty the Department of Environment will be legally bound to compensate for

Fire in forests in northeastern Iran extinguished

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — A fire which swept through some three hectares of forests in northeastern Iran has been put out successfully, an official at the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization has said.

The fire broke out in the protected areas of North Khorasan Province, IRNA quoted Hassan Vahid as saying.

Rescuers from provincial department of environment and natural resources organization as well as the locals helped to put out the fire, Vahid stated.

Some three hectares of forests, which mainly consisted of various tree species, including Maple (Acer pseudoplatanus), Hawthorn, Christs thorn (Paliurus spina-christi), and Coto-neaster and Rosa canina, burnt in fire, he lamented.

He said as soon as summer begins, wildfires start increasing.

Vahid went on to say that some 180,000 hectares of the forests in the province are among the most prone areas to wildfire.

Earlier in April, Qasem Sabz’ali, commander of the forest protection unit of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization, said some 15,000 hectares of forests burn in wildfires annually in Iran that 95 percent of them are caused by humans, ISNA reported.

According to Richards Tree Service website, a 10-year average of U.S. forest fires indicates that lightning-started fires burned 2.1 million acres, and human-started fires burned 1.9 million acres. Despite the potentially less destructive nature of



human-started forest fires, they’re still far too prevalent. Researchers say that there are almost 10 times more human-caused forest fires than lightning-caused forest fires. During a 10-year average, 88% of U.S. forest fires are human-caused, while the remaining 12% are lightning-caused.

■ **Tips to prevent forest fire**
You can adopt the following measures to prevent wildfires. Never leave a fire unattended: This is the most important rule when it comes to preventing forest fires. If you’ve

started a campfire, bonfire or burn pile, someone must monitor the fire at all times.

Be cautious with heat and fire: If you have a fire going, it’s important to be cautious handling the fire. If you’re using a stick or poker to move the combustibles around, do so cautiously.

Factor in the wind: If you’re experiencing strong winds, you might want to wait to start your fire another time. Winds can blow hot combustibles around, which can act as the heat source for nearby brush and vegetation.

Have a fire extinguishing solution: If you’re lighting a campfire or doing a burn, make sure to have a fire extinguisher or a full 5-gallon bucket of water available.

Attend the fire until it’s fully out: It’s critical to stay with the fire and watch it until you know for sure it’s completely extinguished. If the fire remains hot, it can still ignite nearby dried leaves or wood.

Use no-burn options: While you can’t argue the beauty of a natural campfire, protecting our forests is still more important. Consider using no-burn options like battery-powered candles and other flameless products.

Clear your burn pile area: If you’re starting a burn pile after receiving the appropriate permits, then be sure to manage the fire responsibly. Remove any potentially combustible debris such as piles of leaves, grass, wood or other dried out materials.

Call emergency services: If a fire has gotten out of control, you must call the emergency services immediately.

Helicopter emergency medical service provider in Iran to transport, transfuse blood



SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS) provider in Iran plans to transport and transfuse blood on the scene, Emergency Medical Services director Pir Hossein Kulivand has said.

Since some 8 percent of the deaths in road crashes often result from major internal hemorrhage or severe blood loss it is necessary for helicopter emergency medical services maintain an independent supply of blood for use during transport, Tasnim news agency quoted Kulivand as saying on Friday.

By purchasing new helicopters the number of helicopter emergency medical service providers have reached 40 in the country, he said.


Air ambulance medics arriving at the scene of an emergency in many cases find a patient who has lost a dangerous amount of blood, making every second count between arrival, diagnosis and treatment.

It is typical for medics to either use a saline solution to replace the volume lost—although this does not replace the oxygen-carrying ability of the shed blood— wait for blood supplies to be transported from local hospitals by police or ground ambulances, or transfer the patient to the nearest hospital.


But they all are a time-consuming methodology, potentially complicated by a lack of blood supplies at hospitals, or any number of possible hindrances, from heavy traffic to impassable terrain. However, this is starting to change.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Kulivand noted that none of the helicopter emergency medical services are equipped with night vision technology, however, adding advanced helicopters with night vision technology to the fleet is high on agenda.

First Announcement



N.I.O.C
1397.1284



National Iranian
Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First Publish/Seconed Publish)						
One-Stage(compressed)						
TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	Subject of Tender	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
7,370	367,000,000	7,333,100,000	Tyers	3,165,696	Tender No.:FP/09-97/015 Indent No.:01-22-9647687	1

Brief discription of subject:
National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address pasdaran Blev., Airport Saqare, Ahvaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase its requirements from qualified and interested tenderers through one-stage public tender (compressed) upon following terms and conditions:

A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
The evaluation is based on article (J) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender doucments. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.

B) Preparation of tender documents:
Purchasing of documents:
In order to receive the tender documents, **510,000 Rials** should be paid to account number 4001114004020491 in central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran under the title of “centralized income funds” of National Iranian Drilling Company and providing the original deposit receipt.

Reciving of documents:
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN
Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurment department in due date and participates in tendervill be known as tenderer from tender committee.

C) Delivery of envelopes of bids and call quality evaluating:
Tenderers shall submit simultaneously envelopes of bids including bank guarantees(A), financial offer(C) and stamped and signed of tender documents(B) along with qualificaion worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 40 days from last day of document recived deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1thfloor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN.

Notice: The deadline for the refusal of bidders participation in the the tender is the last day of determined for submission of bids.

D) Tender Guarantee:
Type of guarantee:
A)Bank guarantees or guarantes issued by non-bank institutions that have activites licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to the account number 4001114006376636 under the title of “centralized guarantee funds” of National Iranian Drilling Company to the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.
More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on WWW.NIDC.IR
News Channel of NIDC : [@nidc_ir](https://www.instagram.com/nidc_ir)
Foreign Procurement Dept
National Iranian Drilling Company
تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۷/۰۴/۰۲ نوبت دوم ۹۷/۰۴/۰۳

Syrian government forces besiege U.S. base in al-Tanf

Syrian government forces have reportedly encircled a U.S. military base at the al-Tanf border crossing with Jordan, after recapturing large parts of the Badiya region from ISIL (Daesh).

As part of an anti-terror operation that was launched from the Hamimeh region in southern Aleppo and the second and third oil pumping stations in Badiya a few days ago, Syrian forces and allied popular fighters liberated an area that ran 45 kilometers wide and 60 kilometers deep towards the border with Iraq. The area includes the city of Abu Kamal and U.S. base of al-Tanf, sources on the field reported Friday.

The U.S. is believed to be regularly training terrorists at the base.

Washington described the area, which lies at the ultra-strategic intersection of the Syrian, Iraqi, and Jordanian borders, as its "red line."

The U.S. has unilaterally declared a 55-kilometer red zone around the base, and threatened to target Syrian forces within the area.

The cordoned off area also contains the Rukban refugee camp, which according to Syrian and Russian officials is home to terrorists, including those of al-Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat Fateh al-Sham.

Tensions have been running high between American and Syrian forces in the region following several U.S. airstrikes on positions of pro-government forces.

The National Defense Forces, a popular militia supporting the Syrian government, announced Friday that U.S.-led warplanes had bombed the Syrian army's outpost in the village of al-Halba, 70 kilometers away from the ancient city of Palmyra (Tadmur) in Homs province.

"The combat planes belonging to the coalition led by the United States, attacked the army position in Jabal Ghurab, some 150 kilometers east of Palmyra near the border with Iraq," a Syrian Arab Army commander told Russia's Sputnik.



"One serviceman was killed and several others wounded," the unnamed official added. According to the field commander, the attack was allegedly carried out when the army responded to U.S.-led coalition's attack on Syrian troops.

The Pentagon, however, denied the casualties and said that a U.S.-backed anti-government militant group stationed in the al-Tanf base had engaged an "unidentified hostile force" outside a "deconfliction zone" around the base, forcing it to retreat.

The recent anti-terror operations in Homs, Dayr al-Zawr and the suburbs of the capital Damascus have seen over 4,500 square kilometers of the Syrian Desert being freed from the clutches of Daesh and other Takfiri terrorist groups.

The Syrian forces had earlier surrounded Daesh in Badiya region and forced the terrorists to retreat. The terror group has lost much of the areas it previously controlled in Syria and is now holding pockets of land

in some desert regions.

■ U.S.-led airstrikes leave 8 civilians dead in eastern Syria

Meanwhile, at least eight civilians have lost their lives and several others sustained injuries when the U.S.-led coalition purportedly fighting the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group carried out a string of airstrikes against Syria's eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

Local sources, requesting anonymity, told Syria's official news agency SANA the airborne assaults targeted residential buildings in the al-Shaafah town on Thursday evening.

The sources further noted that the airstrikes caused great destruction in targeted areas, forcing many families to leave their homes in the village to escape the heavy bombardment of the U.S.-led coalition military aircraft.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be Daesh targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the

Damascus government or a UN mandate.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of achieving its declared goal of destroying Daesh.

Syria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, in two separate letters addressed to United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the rotating President of the UN Security Council Vasily Nebenzya on June 5, condemned the continuing attacks by the U.S.-led coalition against innocent Syrians, and its assaults on the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the conflict-plagued Arab country.

The letters further noted that the "illegal" U.S.-led coalition continues to perpetrate massacres against Syrian civilians, leaving scores of people, including elderly people, women and children, dead over the past few days and destroying homes as well as civilian properties and infrastructure in targeted villages.

The Syrian foreign ministry added that the U.S.-led coalition is devoid of any international legitimacy, and was bombed people in the provinces of Hasakah, Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr after they did not agree to support U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) militants.

"The United States has organized these militants in a bid to target the positions of the Syrian army, and recapture areas liberated by the Syrian army soldiers and their allies from the menace of terrorism," the letters pointed out.

They noted, "The United States has on occasions offered direct support to Daesh Takfiri terrorist group – the latest of which was on May 24 when U.S.-led fighter aircraft struck Syrian army military sites between Albu Kamal border town and Hmeimim Air Base less than 24 hours after government forces thwarted Daesh assaults on its positions."

(Source: agencies)

Why Hudaydah, is overwhelming question

The United Arab Emirates had set a deadline for the Houthi Ansarullah resistance to pull out of the city. They have been storming the southern part of Hudaydah's airport, alleging that the Houthis are using it to smuggle arms. The UAE's assault is said to be the largest military campaign, and thus its catastrophic repercussions could lead to the murder of nearly 250,000 civilians, due to the intense airstrikes.

The current assault on Yemen is not purely an Emirati military campaign, it is a global war, which seems no different from the one that has been waged against Syria. Several Arabs and Western countries including France and the U.S. back the coalition, in addition to the Egyptian Navy, mercenaries from Sudan and several other African countries. Advanced warships and Apache aircrafts are intensely bombarding civilian structures. Dozens of satellite TV channels are covering the battle and various sophisticated intelligence agencies are there too. However, all the theoretical military calculations and fabrications have failed in Hudaydah, the historical city that has defeated the Ottomans and the Egyptians in 1962.

The capitalist hegemony-imperialism aims at enslaving and subjugating the Yemenis. It is the well-known American unfettered capitalism; hidden under the flag of counter-terrorism, national security, democracy building and many other slogans that sovereign nations have fallen prey to, over the five past decades. However, the case in Yemen is thoroughly different; for Yemen and the Yemenis are a legendary case. Historically speaking, this great nation have registered a bright heroic history of determination, perseverance, resistance and triumphant.

Yemen, and this is not an emotional prediction, will put an end to the Wahhabist conspiracy, which was founded through bloodshed and oppression, by the British, in the 18th century, to control the Arabs Peninsula and the Persian Gulf, particularly the coastal line and the holy lands of Mecca and Hejaz. Yemenis are determined to confront the foreign invaders since never once was the Yemeni nation tamed. They are the same example of the Lebanese resistance of Hezbollah as they have been globally attacked and plot against, through all the possible means, yet they are frequently celebrating victories after victories and putting the imperialist dirty plots and faces into the dirt.

The Yemenis, the Lebanese, the Iraqis and the Iranians have a firm solid doctrine of martyrdom. Nor do they fear the enemies, neither do they rely on advanced arms. Their slogan is "NEVER TO HUMILIATION." Fortunately enough, the imperialist powers do not bother themselves to review history, they ignore who are the students of Karbala School of victory. 14 hundred centuries ago, their spiritual Leader; Imam Hussein who had an army of only 70 devotees and his sister, Sayedah Zainab, have all refused to be subjugated by the despotism of that time, and achieved a phenomenal historical victory that echoes until today. They were under the same blockade of Hudaydah, they were not allowed to access water, their infants were slaughtered, their followers were conspired against, yet they were not defeated. Beyond doubt, righteous and oppressed people can never be defeated as the Syria and Gaza's example are very fresh and vivid on this matter.

The Yemeni brutal, genocidal and bloody war has reflected how resistance and bravery are the only means to maintain your right of free will. The West and its hypocrite mainstream media must perceive that the Yemeni Huthis Resistance are Yemenis, purely Yemenis and they are courageously fighting the imperialists. Their misapprehensions and labels, such as Iran-backed Shiite rebels will not affect the mobility and persistence of the pluralist and multi-coloured resistance of the Yemenis patriots, whose allegiance is primarily to their homeland. Consequently, the hostile coalition's cluster munitions and restrictions on import will obviously worsen the dire humanitarian situation, but never put the determination of the resistance down.

‘Dozens of Saudi troopers, mercs slain in western Yemen’ Houthis still in control of Hudaydah airport

➡ He further stated that the operations were carried out following a series of surveillance and monitoring the movements of Saudi invaders and their agents.

The development came just a day after Yemen's air defense system had shot down an enemy spy drone in the northwestern Sa'ada province.

The Yemeni Ministry of Human Rights announced in a statement on March 25 that the Saudi-led war had left 600,000 civilians dead and injured since March 2015.

The United Nations says a record 22.2 million Yemenis are in need of food aid, including 8.4 million threatened by severe hunger.

A high-ranking UN aid official recently warned against the "catastrophic" living conditions in Yemen, stating that there was a growing risk of famine and cholera there.

"People's lives have continued unraveling. Conflict has escalated since November driving an estimated 100,000 people from their homes," John Ging, UN director of aid operations, told the UN Security Council on February 27.

Ging said cholera had infected 1.1 million people in Yemen since last April, and a new outbreak of diphtheria had occurred in the war-ravaged Arab country since 1982.

■ Amnesty accuses Saudi-backed forces of 'possible war crimes' in Yemen

Amnesty International says Saudi Arabian-backed militants could be committing war crimes in Yemen by interfering with the flow of humanitarian supplies into the impoverished country.

The UK-based human rights body said in a statement on its website that the militants stop the aid-laden ships to inspect their cargoes even though it is the United Nations which is mandated to do so.

They divert the ships to the Yemeni ports which are controlled by a Saudi-led coalition of invaders whom they work for, or delay them for further inspection sometimes for a month or more, the organization added.

"The times that these inspections are taking are effectively obstructing the flow of humanitarian aid and essential goods. And that is why, in our analysis, we have found that this could amount to collective punishment," the statement quoted Lynn Maalouf, the Middle East research director at the Amnesty, as saying.

The coalition has been waging a war on the Arab world's already most impoverished country to restore its former Saudi-allied officials. Yemen's Health Ministry says more than 600,000 people have either been killed or injured during the three-year-old invasion.

■ Houthis still in control of Hudaydah airport

Yemeni officials say the airport in the strategic port city of Hudaydah is still under the control of the Houthi Ansarullah movement, rejecting reports that the facility had fallen to the hands of Saudi-backed forces.

Yemen's army spokesman Brigadier General Sharaf Luqman on Thursday dismissed claims that the invaders had gained ground in Hudaydah as he showed photos of enemy armored vehicles blown up in the city.

He also hailed the Yemeni fighters' achievements in the country's western coast as a "miracle."

The Yemeni fighters, Luqman said, have been fighting against Daesh and al-Qaeda militants in Hudaydah's al-Durayhimi district, and have surrounded all Saudi-backed forces and mercenaries in the al-Jah neighborhood.

The mercenaries have two choices, either to surrender or die, he pointed out.



His remarks came after Saudi commander Brigadier Abdul Salam al-Shehi claimed on Wednesday that the Hudaydah airport had been "completely cleared" and was "under control" of his forces.

Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam stressed that the aggressors had been defeated in Yemen's western coast despite possessing numerous weapons and enjoying financial and media support.

He further described the invaders' battle as "a mass suicide," saying the offensive is aimed at killing Yemenis and end their sovereignty.

The Yemeni people will not give in to any pressure, Abdulsalam said, emphasizing that Houthi fighters had foiled the enemies' "foolish" plots with a swift attack.

Separately, Mohammad al-Bukhaiti, a top figure in the Houthi movement's Supreme Political Council, released a video from the Hudaydah airport that purportedly showed claims of the Saudi-backed forces' presence there were false.

The enemies have suffered heavy blows and been forced to retreat eight kilometers off the airport, he added.

In the al-Durayhimi district, Bukhaiti said, 20 armored vehicles belonging to the Saudi-backed forces had been destroyed and 10 more seized. Yemeni drones had also destroyed six armored vehicles.

The Hudaydah airport lies just eight kilometers from the city's port, through which three-quarters of Yemen's imports pass, providing a lifeline for millions of people.

■ Yemenis down spy drone, Emirati reconnaissance plane

On Thursday, Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported that Yemen's air defense system had shot down an enemy spy drone in the northwestern Sa'ada province.

Also on Thursday, Yemeni sources said an Emirati reconnaissance plane was shot down near Saudi Arabia's southwestern Jizan region, killing the crew.


They added that the plane was returning to its base after carrying out an aerial operation in Yemen's western coast.

The media bureau of Yemen's Operations Command quoted Yemeni military sources as saying that the Emirati jet, which had two pilots, was brought down by Yemeni air defense system.


Backed by Saudi-led airstrikes, Emirate forces and militants loyal to the former Yemeni government launched the Hudaydah assault on June 13 despite warnings that it would compound the impoverished nation's humanitarian crisis.

The Houthis and allied armed forces, however, have managed to inflict heavy losses on the invaders.

First Announcement



N.I.O.C
1397.1293



National Iranian Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First Publish/Seconed Publish)- Retender						
One-Stage(compressed)						
TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	Subject of Tender	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
18,795	933,000,000	18,656,564,337	PARTS FOR NATIONAL HOOK MODEL HA-500	3,165,644	Tender No.: FP/17-96/052 Indent No.: 48-22-9622039	1

Brief discription of subject:
National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address pasdaran Blev., Airport Saqare, Ahvaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase its requirements from qualified and interested tenderers through one-stage public tender (compressed) upon following terms and conditions:

A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
The evaluation is based on article (J) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender documts. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.

B) Preparation of tender documents:
Purchasing of documents:
In order to receive the tender documents, **510,000 Rials** should be paid to account number 4001114004020491 in central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran under the title of "centralized income funds" of National Iranian Drilling Company and providing the original deposit receipt.

Reciving of documents:
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Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurement department in due date and participates in tenderwill be known as tenderer from tender committee.

C) Delivery of envelopes of bids and call quality evaluating:
Tenderers shall submit simultaneously envelopes of bids including bank guarantees(A), financial offer(C) and stamped and signed of tender documents(B) along with qualification worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 35 days from last day of document recived deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1thfloor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN.
Notice: The deadline for the refusal of bidders participation in the the tender is the last day of determined for submission of bids.

D) Tender Guarantee:
Type of guarantee:
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B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to the account number 4001114006376636 under the title of "centralized guarantee funds" of National Iranian Drilling Company to the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.
More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR
News Channel of NIDC : @nidc_pr
Foreign Procurement Dept
National Iranian Drilling Company

تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۷/۰۴/۰۲ نوبت دوم ۹۷/۰۴/۰۳

Djokovic says not among favorites at Wimbledon, backs Federer

Novak Djokovic does not consider himself among the favorites at next month's Wimbledon and shares the popular view that defending champion Roger Federer is likely to win a record ninth trophy at the All England Club.

The Serbian, who is making a comeback from a long-term elbow injury, claimed his first victory over a top-10 opponent since last May at Queen's Club on Thursday as he thrashed Grigor Dimitrov to reach the quarter-finals.

The 12-times grand slam champion won the most recent of his three Wimbledon titles in 2015 and believes it is too soon to think about a fourth trophy at the elite tournament.

"Let's not get too ahead of ourselves too early. I'm definitely not one of the favorites for Wimbledon," Djokovic told British media.

"Roger is the clear favorite without a doubt. (Rafa) Nadal maybe hasn't played well at Wimbledon by his standards, but he's won it several times. He's definitely one of the candidates to win the title."

World number two Nadal, who last won the Wimbledon title in 2010, will enter All England Club without any competitive matches on grass this year after the Spaniard withdrew from the Fever-Tree Championships.

Djokovic also backed two-time Wimbledon champion Andy Murray, who returned from a year-long injury layoff at Queen's Club but fell to a hard-fought defeat by Australian Nick Kyrgios, to make an impact.

"Andy (Murray) and myself if we play well (can be contenders). We dropped in the rankings, but Andy played really well against Nick Kyrgios here," Djokovic added.

"He has home support, things can go in a good direction if he plays well at Wimbledon."

(Source: Euronews)

Reporters tweet NBA draft picks, defying embargo request

As NBA front-office executives made high-pressure decisions in Thursday's draft, another compelling drama unfolded in front of fans on social media. ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski and Yahoo Sports' Shams Charania defied a reported request by the league to restrict real-time online coverage of the draft.

The NBA asked its media partners including ESPN, Turner Sports and Yahoo not to tweet draft picks ahead of the televised broadcast, according to the media website Awful Announcing. The NFL has pushed a similar policy in recent years to prevent Twitter and other sites from undercutting TV coverage.

Despite the request, Wojnarowski and Charania went ahead with their reporting, routinely breaking news about the next pick before TV could keep up. They kept quiet for the first few picks, but both jumped in at No. 4 after Marc Stein of the New York Times reported the first three selections ahead of the broadcast coverage.

Wojnarowski cleverly tried to find loopholes as he reported each pick. Rather than directly announcing each selection, he said teams were "focused on," "zeroing in on," or "fixated on" specific players.

"Source: Utah Jazz have no plans to pass on Grayson Allen with the 21st pick," Wojnarowski tweeted with another spoiler alert.

Others included: "Source: The Lakers are unlikely to resist Mo Wagner with the 25th pick," and, "Source: Boston is tantalized by Robert Williams with the 27th pick."

The reaction online was overwhelmingly positive as Wojnarowski, who has more than 2 million Twitter followers, appeared to challenge authority.

Charania was more direct in naming the next pick. Sometimes, only a few seconds separated his scoops from Wojnarowski's.

(Source: Reuters)

Hamilton gets new engine but Mercedes won't say which one

Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton and other drivers using Mercedes power units started French Grand Prix practice with new engines on Friday but the German manufacturer kept a lid on the details.

The latest specification engine had been due for introduction in Canada two weekends ago but that was postponed at short notice due to concerns about an unspecified "quality issue".

That left four times world champion Hamilton, now a point behind Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel after seven races, at a disadvantage to rivals who had engine upgrades for the race in Montreal.

With drivers allowed only three engines a season before penalties are applied, Hamilton and Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas were always going to get fresh ones having completed the lifespan of the ones they started the season with.

The question was whether it would be the planned upgrade or the same specification as the previous one, which would mean being locked into that for the next seven races.

"All six Mercedes-Benz powered cars have been fitted with fresh Turbocharger, MGU-H and internal combustion engine at this event," a Mercedes team spokesman said.

"More info to follow about specification after FP2 (second practice)."

The other Mercedes-powered cars are those of Force India's Mexican Sergio Perez and Frenchman Esteban Ocon as well as Williams' Russian Sergey Sirotkin and Canadian Lance Stroll.

Hamilton shrugged off concerns about the engine when asked on Thursday.

"The fresher engine this weekend will be great as it will have more power than the one I used at the last race," the Briton told reporters.

"I trust the team, and if we have to use the older-specification engine, I am not worried."

(Source: Goal)

Stressed Messi enduring a World Cup of nightmares



As an excited Diego Maradona twirled his shirt from the stands and thousands of Argentina fans bayed before kickoff against Croatia, Lionel Messi was seen rubbing his forehead in stress.

He managed just 20 touches in the first half, the fewest of any Argentina player, and trudged off uncomfortably.

Yet worse was to follow in Thursday's second half of horror at Nizhny Novgorod as Croatia destroyed Messi's team with three goals for Argentina's worst group stage defeat in 60 years.

About to turn 31 at the weekend, the Barcelona genius left the pitch looking lonely and broken after a game that may have ended his chances of ever winning a World Cup.

Maradona, the 1986 World Cup winner whom Argentines constantly compare him to, went from waving a No. 10 Messi shirt to wiping tears out of his eyes, slumped in his seat.

On social media, and among fans, the big debates over Messi - Is he as great as Maradona? Is he better than Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo? - flared up fast and savagely.

"I'm ashamed of this shirt. Right now, I want to burn it. Where was Messi? Where were Argentina?" said Renzo

Alvarez, 47, shouting angrily among a group of angry fans, all wearing Messi shirts and some sporting masks of his face.

"We have come all this way, spent thousands of dollars we can ill afford, cheered them to the rafters, and they show no heart, no balls, for the nation. I simply can't believe it."

Messi memes quickly sprung up on the internet.

"Missing: Have you seen this man? Last seen, Nizhny Novgorod Stadium, Russia," read one mockup of a Wild West poster with Messi's bearded image.

.....Going home early?

Playing at his fourth World Cup, with the heartbreak of a 1-0 defeat against Germany in the 2014 final still raw, Messi and Argentina now face the shocking prospect of going out in the first stage unless remaining Group D results go their way.

He has already resigned from international football once - after missing a penalty during a shootout against Chile in the 2016 Copa America final - but was persuaded back by pleas from fans, family, teammates and Maradona.

But given he will turn 35 at the next World Cup, and is clearly creaking under the weight of expectation, most expect Messi to quit the international stage some time after Russia.



“Feel the power of dream at 2018 World Cup”

On Thursday night, he was upstaged by Luka Modric, Croatia's man-of-the-match playmaker and 32-year-old captain who played with joie de vivre and scored a stunning goal.

By contrast, Messi barely figured, marked out of the game by an ultra-disciplined Croatia, unable to get a shot on goal, and only managing to thread telling passes on two or three occasions. As against Iceland in Argentina's opening draw, when he missed a penalty, Messi trudged off silent and thunder-faced.

"Leo is our heart and soul, but we couldn't find him with the ball," said manager Jorge Sampaoli, urging fans to turn their ire on him and not on Messi.

Though it was Modric who showed him up on Thursday, the comparison that most hurts Messi is with his great La Liga rival Ronaldo. The Portuguese great has already won a major international trophy at the 2016 Euros and has begun his latest World Cup campaign at a canter with four goals in two games.

Unless something extraordinary happens, Messi may soon be watching Ronaldo from outside Russia.

(Source: Reuters)

Media criticism of my lifestyle is ‘unbelievable’ - Sterling



England and Manchester City playmaker Raheem Sterling is baffled by the constant criticism of his lifestyle by a section of the media which convinces the 23-year-old that "they hate what they don't even know."

Sterling, who started England's opening World Cup win over Tunisia in Group G on Monday, has received negative media coverage over his allegedly "lavish" spending habits, including when he bought his mother a house in 2016.

The former Liverpool forward was most recently criticised for a tattoo of a gun on his leg, which was a symbol to mark the death of his father at a young age but was misconstrued by the media and led to an uproar.

"You know, it's sad that I even have to say this, but I'm going to say it anyway," Sterling wrote in a column for The Players' Tribune.

"There's a perception in certain parts of the media that I love 'bling.' I love diamonds. I love to show off. I really don't

understand where that comes from.

"Especially when I bought my mum a house, it was unbelievable what some people were writing. I think it's really sad that people do that. They hate what they don't even know."

In the lengthy article, Sterling outlines his struggles growing up, including cleaning hotel bathrooms with his mother at the age of six, and the sacrifices his family made to support his dream.

"If you grew up the same way I grew up, don't listen to what certain tabloids want to tell you," he added.

"They just want to steal your joy. They just want to pull you down. I'm telling you right now, England is still a place where a naughty boy who comes from nothing can live his dream."

Sterling is expected to feature in England's second group game against Panama on Sunday before Gareth Southgate's side face off against Belgium in the final group match.

(Source: Mirror)

Sergio Aguero hits out at Argentina coach after shock defeat to Croatia



Sergio Aguero has been forced to clarify a remark that appeared to expose a rift between Argentina players and coach Jorge Sampaoli. The two-times World Cup winners are on the brink of exiting the tournament after their disastrous 3-0 defeat by Croatia last night, with Sampaoli saying "the players did not understand the project".

Asked about Sampaoli's comments in a post-match interview, Aguero said: "He can say what he likes." Later, the Manchester City striker rowed back on his comments, saying he had spoken "without knowing exactly the context of the question", but Aguero's initial words suggest all is not well in the Argentina camp.

Argentina's fate in this tournament is now no longer in their hands, with Croatia already qualified for the knock-out stage and Nigeria and Iceland meeting today. Argentina were hoping for a draw in that game, which would allow them to qualify by beating Nigeria in their final match — as long as Croatia win or draw against Iceland.

Midfielder Javier Mascherano said:

"There is still a game left, and this is not the time to be talking about other things. After our final game — which we hope will not be the next one — we can discuss other things but now is not the moment."

Croatia took the lead shortly after half-time, when Ante Rebic seized on a botched clearance by goalkeeper Willy Caballero to volley his team ahead. Luka Modric and Ivan Rakitic added goals late in the second half, as Argentina fell apart.

Mascherano added: "It was difficult for us to recover from the goal and then everything went wrong. We stopped doing the things we had been going before the first goal."

Sampaoli enjoyed impressive spells in charge of Chile and Sevilla but has had little joy with his own country. It is hard to imagine him keeping his job if Argentina fail to reach the last 16.

"The loss is my responsibility," he said. "I am the only one responsible for making the decisions."

(Source: Independent)

Victims of an old failing, Peru and their fans will be missed

Peru's entertaining team and their colorful army of joyous fans will be sorely missed at the World Cup after the South Americans fell victim to their old failing in front of goal.

Despite having 52 percent of possession against Denmark and 56 percent against France, Peru lost both games by a single goal after failing to turn their neat approach work into real chances.

Rarely can a team have played so well at a World Cup and yet gone out after two games without scoring.

It was a bitter outcome for thousands of Peruvian fans, many of whom made long journeys to witness return of their team to the World Cup stage after a 36-year absence. Some sold their houses and cars or even gave up their jobs to make the trip.

In the end, Peru's downfall was caused by the same age-old problem which kept them away from the World Cup for so long.

The Andean nation has always produced naturally talented players and has a proud tradition of "treating the ball well", as coach Ricardo Gareca puts it.

But they are always a touch too many in front of goal, exasperating their followers who often quote the late Real Madrid great Alfredo Di Stefano to describe their team's performance: "We played better than ever, and lost as usual."

Peru's repeated failure to qualify for the World Cup created a vicious circle with more pressure on the team and a vociferous and sensationalist media adding to the tension with reports of players partying on the eve of important games.

Some coaches responded by ditching their traditional style for blanket defence but that made things worse and they reached a low point by finishing bottom of the ten-team South American qualifying group for the 2010 World Cup.

Peruvians lost pride in their team to the point where nobody wanted to buy their iconic shirt — white with a red diagonal stripe — which has become such a common sight on the streets of Russia.

Gareca, appointed three years ago, managed to turn that around with modern training methods, with a special emphasis on psychology.

He produced a team where the whole was far greater

than the sum of its parts.

Only one member of the 23-man squad, Watford's Andre Carrillo, is based with a club in the so-called big five European leagues.

Four others are based in Europe — in Russia, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Portugal — with two in the United States while the others play in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and Peru itself.

Gareca might have been forgiven for adopting a defensive approach, yet he insisted that Peru respect their heritage and face their opponents as equals.

Gareca said after Thursday's game that he saw a bright future.

"There is a commitment of the directors of the federation and also of the country, at an institutional level," he said.

"Peru needs to realize that it has enormous potential. This has been an incredible experience. Looking towards the future, Peru are a team which, if they receive the backing they need, can improve a great deal...This has made us stronger."

(Source: Eurosport)



“80 Million People,
One Nation, One Heartbeat”

MOSCOW – Iranian legend Mehdi Mahdavia says Team Melli have potential to beat Portugal to book a place in the 2018 World Cup next stage for the first time. Despite their defeat against La Roja, Iran’s fate is still in their own hands. Whatever happens in Spain’s final group match against Morocco, the Iranians know that a win over Portugal will see them into the round of 16. “Team Melli have defeated Morocco in their important match and we can advance to the next stage with a win over Portugal. Why not? It’s a difficult task to do but we played well against Spain and have the potential to

Mahdavia optimistic about Iran’s win over Portugal



Tehran Times/ Mohammad Reza Abbasi

defeat Portugal,” Mahdavia told Tehran Times. Speaking about Iran’s defensive tactics against Spain, Ex-Team Melli winger said, “We defended with nine players against Spain in the first half but after we conceded the goal, we changed our tactic and created some scoring chances. It shows Iran have the potential to break through,” he added. Mahdavia also defended Sardar Azmoun, who is under pressure for poor performance against Morocco and Spain. Azmoun had minimal impact, largely marked out of

the game by well-drilled Spain. “Criticism is normal in football but we have to see what Carlos Queiroz has wanted him in these matches,” Mahdavia said. Mahdavia, who was selected as the Hamburger SV Team of the Century in 2012, also praised Cristiano Ronaldo and said Iranian defenders have to be aware of the player’s threat on Monday. “Messi is a genius but he won’t change anything individually. I think we can frustrate Ronaldo and Portugal with a great teamwork,” Mahdavia added.

Iran’s Carlos Queiroz to Spain: We didn’t fake injuries -- ask Sergio Ramos



Iran coach Carlos Queiroz has denied his players faked getting hurt during their defeat to Spain on Wednesday and seemingly

criticised the conduct of Sergio Ramos for his Champions League final tussle that injured Mohamed Salah.

Spain players complained throughout the game, which they won 1-0, about Iran’s perceived time-wasting tactics. On one occasion, in the 39th minute, Diego Costa objected after Iran goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand began jumping in pain, insisting to the referee that Costa had stamped on his foot. “I deny my players wasted time,” Queiroz told Onda Cero radio after the game. “My players suffered strong challenges and needed assistance. We lost two or three players because of the harshness of the game. We had four counter-attacks that Spain stopped with fouls and the referee didn’t do anything, not even a yellow card. Two players are out [injured] for our next game. That’s the reality.” Dani Carvajal told AS after the game that while he has no problem with defending deeply and committing fouls, “Iran’s time-wasting, pretending to be injured or hurt -- to me, that’s not football, it’s disloyal.” And Queiroz responded to Carvajal’s

claim by invoking the shoulder injury to Salah, who missed Egypt’s opening game against Uruguay, and insinuating that Ramos hurt him purposely. “I recommend that Carvajal put his eyes on his club teammate and friend, who threw the Egyptian player out of the World Cup,” Queiroz said. “If he criticises Iran players, it would be good for him to also look at his teammates.” Still, Queiroz said he believes Spain “are candidates to win the World Cup” after their performance on Wednesday. “They have sensational players,” Queiroz said. “We thank Spain for all that we have learned. This was a unique opportunity for my players to learn about international football. “The aim of Iran was to improve and Spain have allowed us to do that.” Spain will play their final Group B game against Morocco, and Iran will wrap up the stage against Portugal, on Monday. (Source: espn.com)

Queiroz: We are still alive and still dreaming

Islamic Republic of Iran head coach Carlos Queiroz remains optimistic of his team’s chances despite suffering a 1-0 defeat to Spain in a 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia Group B tie on Wednesday. Team Melli currently sit third in the Group B standings, just one point below Portugal and Spain who are on four points, setting up a decisive final group stage match up with the Portuguese on June 25 at the Mordovia Arena. “We showed that we were ready to suffer and ready to compete,” Queiroz said. “I felt we deserved a better result. There’s no doubt Spain play wonderful, stylish football but I thought we deserved more for the way we played.” The Spaniards were unable to break the Iranian



defence in the first half, and a lucky Diego Costa goal in the 54th minute broke the deadlock. Iran endured further heartbreak after Saeid Ezatolahi’s goal was disallowed for offside. The 65-year-old former Real Madrid coach said Iran are still in contention for a place in the Knockout Stage and will give it their all against Cristiano Ronaldo-led Portugal, the reigning European champions. “If you think of it like tennis, we had one match point today and we will have another against Portugal. “Everything is still open. We are still alive and still dreaming. “We left the pitch 1-0 down, but we won respect. I’m sure the fans are proud of our team,” said Queiroz. (Source: the-afc.com)

Iran’s Ezatolahi ready to take his chances against Portugal

By Michael Church

KAZAN, Russia (Reuters) — Saeid Ezatolahi will attempt to put aside the disappointment of seeing his potential equalizer against Spain ruled out for offside when Iran go for a win against Portugal that would fire them into the knockout phase of the World Cup for a first time. Spain took all three points at Kazan Arena on Wednesday thanks to a fortuitous Diego Costa goal to leave Carlos Queiroz’s side needing to beat his countrymen in their final group match in Saransk on Monday to advance to the Round of 16. “Our full concentration is now on Portugal and we have a very hard task ahead of us, but we are determined to get this win,” said the midfielder, who missed Iran’s win over Morocco in their opening game due to suspension. “We will be working hard to get this win and to qualify for the next round. “The result against Spain could’ve been better for us, we deserved more but this is why we call it the beautiful game. Sometimes the ball just doesn’t go in the goal. “But we performed brilliantly for such

a young team and with such a great coach and we were able to pay back his trust and determination and his hard work. “A lot of people enjoyed this and we did everything with all of our hearts.” Iran adopted an ultra-defensive approach until Costa finally broke their stubborn resistance nine minutes into the second half when he deflected Raman Rezaeian’s attempted clearance beyond goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand with his knee. The goal prompted the Iranians to open up and Queiroz’s team caused the 2010 world champions plenty of problems as they sought an equalizer. Ezatolahi thought he had leveled the scores when he swept the ball home after the Spanish defense failed to clear Rezaeian’s free kick, only for referee Andres Cunha to rule the goal out after consultation with VAR officials. “I thought it was a goal and for that fraction of a second I was thinking about all the hard work that I had done and, because in the first game I was suspended, I was under a lot of pressure,” the 21-year-old said. “God helped me to play well but unfortunately we couldn’t score, the goal didn’t count.



“Now we are a little bit sad but we will continue to work hard for the next game to make our fans happy.” (Source: Reuters)

Ayatollah Khamenei hails Iran’s magnificent performance against Spain

S P O R T S TEHRAN — The head of the Office of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution contacted the Iranian national team in Russia and the team managers to praise their great performance. The Iranian football federation, announced the delivered message as follows: “You played magnificently last night (late Wednesday): May God grant you optimum power.”

Iran futsal still sixth in world rankings

TASNIM — The Iranian national futsal team remained unchanged in the latest world rankings. The Iranian team sits sixth place with 1654 points. Brazil remains top in the world with 1935 points. Spain (1807) and Russia (1700) are second and third respectively. Portugal (1696) and Argentina (1667) sit fourth and fifth places above Iran. Asian teams Japan and Thailand are 16th and 18th with 1358 and 1285 points, respectively in the ranking. Iran finished at third place at the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016 after a 4-3 penalty shootout win over Portugal following a 2-2 draw. Iran also won the title of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Futsal Championship for the 12th time in February and claimed the title in the Asian Indoor Games in September.

Dani Carvajal Hits Out at Carlos Queiroz’s Tactics

TASNIM — Real Madrid right-back Dani Carvajal felt Iran’s defensive tactics were over the top, and also hit out at what he perceived to be excessive play-acting. Spain edged past Iran in Group B of the 2018 World Cup thanks to a goal from Diego Costa at the Kazan Arena. “The team sits back and that is a tactical strategy that is part of the game,” the 26-year-old said, as quoted by FourFourTwo. “But the injuries are simulated. This is not football, it is disloyal, but everyone there with their conscience.” Carvajal also said he hopes the rest of the opposition Spain face in the tournament will be a bit more ambitious. “It has been hard for us to open the door. But we kept the clean sheet despite the chances they have had – they are three very important points. “We are a team that plays direct, open, and I hope we do not have rivals that put many players in their area,” he concluded.



Iran’s Morteza Sharifi Linked with Italy’s Latina

TASNIM — Iranian national volleyball team outside spiker Morteza Sharifi has been linked with a move to Italian team Top Volley Latina. Sharifi has stolen the show during the 2018 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) with Team Melli. Top Volley Latina is a professional volleyball team based in Latina, Italy. The club plays in Serie A1 of the Italian Volleyball League. It is going to sign the 19-year-old Iranian player on a two-year contract. Erik Shoji, Nicolas Le Goff, Cristian Savani and Gabriele Maruotti are members of the Italian team. The Italian Male Volleyball League is structured in several levels of importance; the highest of them is Serie A1. Since early 1980s, many among the best volleyball players in the world play in Serie A1 and the overall level of competition is considerably high.

Sadegh Moharrami arriving in Zagreb to undergo medical exam

PLDC – Persepolis winger Sadegh Moharrami traveled to Zagreb, capital of Croatia, Wednesday night to undergo medical examination of Dinamo Zagreb football team. The 22-year-old midfielder, who started his playing career at Malavan in 2012, played a pivotal role in the previous two years helping the Reds to win Iran Professional League back-to-back title. He bade farewell to the Persepolis fans at the end of the last season and is going to continue his career in Zagreb. Moharrami’s departure will be a huge blow for Persepolis since the Iranian team is not allowed to sign new player in the summer transfer window. GNK Dinamo Zagreb or simply Dinamo Zagreb is a professional Croatian football club based in Zagreb. The club was founded in 1945. They play their home matches at Stadion Maksimir. They are the most successful club in Croatian football, having won 19 Croatian Football League titles, 14 Croatian Football Cups and four Croatian Football Super Cups



Artists cite concern on environmental issues at “Habitat”

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN – A group of Iranian artists share environmental concerns in “Habitat”, an exhibition underway at Tehran’s Vista Gallery.

Curator Setareh Hosseini chose Samira Aslankhani, Mahnaz Pasikhani, Ebrahim Hassanzadeh Dizaji, Atefeh Khas, Maryam Zargar, Leila Refahi, Reyhaneh Savari, Maryam Toluei, Saba Arabshahi, Mohammad-Ali Adili, Mina Abdus, Esmat Alirezaei, Parvaneh Qesmati Motlagh, Leila Gudarzi and Ali Nurpur to work on the “Habitat” project.

“The artworks, including a collection of paintings and two sculptures, depict the artists’ studies and reflect the negative and partly positive effects of environmental issues such as the global warming, air pollution, urban sprawl, waste disposal, water pollution, climate change and many more,” Hosseini told the Tehran Times.

“The lethal effect of dust particles on the skin causing a type of skin cancer is portrayed in one painting, while another painting highlights the negative effect of pollution causing Alzheimer’s,” she said.

A number of artworks also reflect the repercussions that the air pollution has had for the lives of future generations.

“Today environmental pollution is a global issue, it is not just limited to Iran, and many artists feel a responsibility to mirror the problem in the best way that they can,” said Hosseini who is a graphic designer who teaches at Suresh University in Tehran.

“However, I believe we can disseminate information more widely through media. We as artists cannot do more than display works in a gallery with its limitations and particular visitors. Larger organizations should take action and inform people, and art can only help,” she added.

She continued, “We all know that art is a global language, and environmental action is a new concern in the world. However, it must not be just relegated to a confined space like a gallery.”

For example, she said that the municipality can bring together artists who have concentrated on environmental action and



People visit the “Habitat” exhibition at Tehran’s Vista Gallery on June 17, 2018. (Honaronline/Maryam Ramezanlu)

promote this topic across the city.

She pointed to Tehran Municipality’s project “A Gallery as Large as a City” that displayed copies of works from famous artists on billboards across the city in spring 2016 and said similar actions can raise public awareness of environmental issues.

“Other minor activities like publishing posters on environmental issues, to include ensuring the long-term health and well-being of all earth’s inhabitants, can also be helpful,” she said.

The exhibit also considers the positive factors in the environment.

“For example, the positive effect of the microbes on the body has been studied and painted by one of the artists. The artist studied a specific type of microbe for seven or eight

months in a laboratory, and later the microbe and its positive effects were represented in a series of paintings on show,” Hosseini said.

Elsewhere, she stressed that, although the environmental action is a new trend in the world, it could be more influential when studies and research works are added.

“A drawing of animals does not necessarily make it an environmental artwork. If the artist has not carried out research or has not studied it, the artwork cannot be realistic. In this exhibit, all the individual artists who were selected have done their studies that were actually in line with all their works. Some of them were invited later and joined us later, but they all had their own concerns and had conducted academic studies in advance,” she explained.

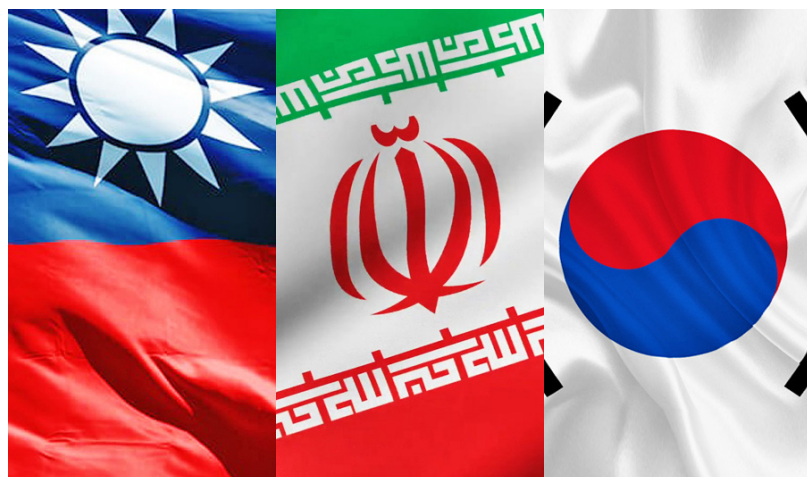
She said that the exhibition concentrates on Iran’s environment and the artists have created the artworks based on their own personal concerns.

Hosseini next said that she is planning to continue with additional exhibits on the same topic but on a larger scale.

“We mainly process the feedback on the exhibition in our country. We believe we need to be influential in our own country first. We must try to make more efforts in our country. Joining environmental concerns and studies together is difficult. However, this exhibit should help find ways to provide education about these activities,” she concluded.

The showcase will run until June 25 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

Iran, Korea, Taiwan sign MOUs on book fair



A R T TEHRAN – The desk Iran Cultural Fairs Institute (ICFI) has signed memorandums of understanding with the Seoul International Book Fair (SIBF) and Taipei International Book Exhibition (TIBE).

The MOUs were inked at the Seoul book fair, which is currently underway in the South Korean capital, the ICFI announced on Thursday.

Based on the MOU between ICFI and SIBF, Iran and Korea provide a pavilion for each country for three years at the Tehran International Book Fair and Seoul book fair.

Both countries have also agreed to facilitate their publishers’ participation in the book fairs.

Iran also agreed to assess the issue

of Seoul as a special guest of the Tehran book fair and the Koreans agreed to survey Iran’s request that Korea host Iran as a special guest country at the SIBF.

Based on the MOU signed between an ICFI representative and TIBE Chairman James C. M. Chao at the Seoul book fair, for a period of three years, both sides undertook to provide appropriate facilities for publishers from the two countries to participate in the Taipei book exhibition and Tehran book fair.

At the meeting, Chao expressed his hope that the MOU would provide the ground for the expansion of cultural relations between Iran and Taiwan.

Dozens of Iranian publishing houses are displaying their latest offerings at the Seoul International Book Fair, which will run until June 24.

Managers of Iranian orchestras meet Tatarstan president in Kazan



Iranian cultural delegation meets Tatarstan President Rustam Minnikhanov and cultural officials of the republic in Kazan on June 21, 2018. (Rudaki Foundation)

A R T TEHRAN – Managers of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra and National Orchestra met Tatarstan President Rustam Minnikhanov in Kazan on Thursday, Iran’s Rudaki Foundation announced on Friday.

A selection of musicians from the Tehran Symphony Orchestra and National Orchestra performed three concerts in Saint Petersburg, Moscow and Kazan in Russia last week.

Minnikhanov expressed his thanks to the officials for organizing the Kazan performance and said that cultural relations between Iran and Russia have been progressing.

“I appreciate the performance by the

Iranian musicians in Kazan and I hope this cultural exchange will continue in the future. It’s a good event that the sports and music of Iran have been introduced to the people of Kazan during the 2018 World Cup in Russia. We must take this into consideration and reinforce bilateral relations,” he said.

“Iran enjoys a rich culture and history, which are of great interest for our people, and we would like to learn more about the country of Iran,” he added.

Iranian Ambassador Mehdi Sanai, Rudaki Foundation director Ali-Akbar Safipur and Tehran Symphony Orchestra conductor Shahradd Rohani were present at the meeting.

Richard Clayderman arrives in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN – World-famous French pianist Richard Clayderman arrived in Tehran on Thursday, Royal Honar, the Iranian institute that is the coordinator of Clayderman’s upcoming performances, has announced.

Clayderman’s first concert was performed at the Grand Hall of the Interior Ministry in Tehran last night. His other performances will be held from June 27 to 29.

In the video released by Royal Honar on June 12, the pianist spoke about his love and interest in performing live in Iran.

“I would like to say that I am so happy to visit your great and beautiful country for the first time,” he said and added, “It was my wish for over 20 years to perform for



French pianist Richard Clayderman in an undated photo.

you and finally this wish will come true.” Clayderman is scheduled to perform “O Iran” based on a composition by Iranian musician Ruhollah Khaleqi.

Iranian Istgah Orchestra by conductor Mehdi Noruzi will accompany Clayderman in his performances.

Belgium beach plays host to Hollywood sand sculptures

OSTEND, Belgium (Reuters) — On a Belgium beach, an artist adds the final touches to an imposing sand sculpture of the Incredible Hulk and his bristling muscles ahead of the opening of the world’s biggest festival of its kind.

There are more than 150 sand sculptures relating to Disney, Pixar, Marvel and Star Wars films on the beach in Ostend for the Sand Magic festival which opens on Saturday and runs until September — providing the artworks survive the weather.

Recognized by the Guinness Book of Records as the world’s biggest sand sculpture festival, 34 international artists have spent four weeks creating the pieces using around 6,000 tonnes of sand.



A sand carver works on a sculpture during the Sand Sculpture Festival “Disney Sand Magic” in Ostend, Belgium June 21, 2018. (Reuters/Yves Herman)

Some of the sculptures are several meters high. Among the depictions are works featuring Daffy Duck, Yoda and Bruce, the grinning great white shark from “Finding Nemo”.

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WHAT’S IN ART GALLERIES



■ An exhibition photos by Ghazaleh Sedaqat is currently underway at Atbin Gallery.

The exhibit titled “Patrimony” will run until July 3 at the gallery located at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.



■ Arte Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of photos by Alireza Elahi.

The exhibit named “Koker” will continue until July 1 at the gallery that can be found at No. 3, 2nd St. off Golestan St., off Alikhani Blvd.



■ Ei Gallery is displaying works a group of veteran photographers such as Mahmud Kalari, Jafar Panahi, Jasem Ghazbanpur, Ebrahim Haqiqi, Afshin Bakhtiar, Seifollah Smadian, Satiar Emami, and Maryam Zandi in an exhibition entitled “Single Tree”.

The exhibition, which has been organized to commemorate the second anniversary of auteur Abbas Kiarostami’s death, will run until July 6 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebbeh St., off Mahdiah St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.

Drawing



■ A large group of artists, including Zahra Jafarpur, Ali Sabunchi, Omid Shayan, Mojdeh Suri, Mona Aziz, and Dana Dehqan are displaying their latest works in an exhibition at Laleh Gallery.

The exhibit runs until July 3 at the gallery located on Fatemi St., near Laleh Park.

Textile art



■ A collection of textile artworks by Hamideh Masumi, Zohreh Saeidipur, Faezeh Chahardoli, Fatemeh Jalali and Kamand Kavand is on display in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery.

The exhibition entitled “Half X Half” runs until July 1 at the gallery that can be found at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.

Painting



■ Haft Samar Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Kaveh Namegh.

The exhibit runs until June 27 at the gallery that can be found at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motehari Ave.



■ Minu Vaseqi is hanging her latest collection in an exhibition entitled “Infinite” at Aria Gallery.

The exhibit runs until June 6 at the gallery located at 10 Zarrin Alley, near Beheshti St., Vali-e Asr Ave.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Sina Naziri-Hosseinpour is underway at Saye Gallery.

The exhibition name “Anachronism” will run until June 27 at the gallery located at No. 21, 13th Alley, Sanai St. of Karim Khan Ave.



■ Seyhun Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Mansur Nosrtanezami.

The exhibition will run until July 4 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.



■ Portraits by Alireza Ruhbakhsh are on display in an exhibition at Sheis Gallery.

The exhibit will run until June 27 at the gallery located at Shirzad Alley, near Daneshju Park.



■ Paintings by Mina Sabzi is currently on display in an exhibition at Golestan Gallery.

The exhibit runs until June 27 at the gallery located at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.