



Navy to boost intelligence superiority in Oman Sea **2**



Stock market index rises 13.7% since March **4**



France win the 2018 World Cup **15**



“Yeva”, “Sunset Truck” win awards at Golden Apricot filmfest **16**



Stable economic roadmap is answer to fluctuations

Ayatollah Khamenei calls for boosting ties with countries in the East and West with exception of a few states like the U.S.

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ARTICLE

Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

Trump's record on race

Donald Trump has a long history of criticizing immigrants, which includes Mexicans and Muslims, black women, and people protesting racism. In an interview with The Sun, and a press conference on Friday (July 13) with UK Prime Minister Theresa May, the U.S. president explicitly endorsed the far right and nationalist views during his trip to Britain.

Trump told The Sun that Britain is “losing its culture” because of immigration. When he was pressed on the remarks by a British reporter during the press conference, he doubled down. Britain has already absorbed the food, language, and customs from around the world, but Trump appeared to be referencing the influx of Muslims into Europe in recent years, and to South and Central European immigrants in the U.S.

The United States controversial president whose hardline immigration policies have led to the separation of immigrant families, condemned migration flows into Europe this time, and called the changing population there “a shame.”

Standing next to the British prime minister on Friday, Trump took his racism to a higher level: “I think the immigration, allowing the immigration to take place in Europe is a shame,” Trump said. “I think it changed the fabric of Europe, and unless you act very quickly, it’s never going to be what it was, and I don’t mean that in a positive way. So I think allowing millions and millions of people to come into Europe is very, very sad. I think you’re losing your culture.”

The U.S. president continued: “I just think it’s changing the culture. I think it’s a very negative thing for Europe. I think it’s very negative,” he said, as if we didn’t hear him the first time with the foghorn. “And I know it’s politically not necessarily correct to say that. But I’ll say it and I’ll say it loud. And I think they better watch themselves because you are changing the culture.”

Experts, politicians, and activists warned that Trump’s words are dangerous, especially in a Europe where nationalism and anti-immigrant feelings are spreading. Chris Allen, Associate Professor in Hate Studies, University of Leicester wrote accordingly “When world leaders adopt cultural racism in this way, they legitimize right-wing extremism.” **→7**

Iranian official urges Trump not to use U.S. strategic oil reserve

A senior Iranian oil official urged U.S. President Donald Trump not to use the nation’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve to push prices lower, and instead drop sanctions on Iran’s crude exports.

“My advice to you, Mr. President, is to avoid touching the SPR - to cool down and give up sanctioning Iranian oil,” Hossein Kazempour Ardebili, Iran’s representative to OPEC, said by email.

The Trump administration is actively considering tapping into the nation’s emergency oil inventories as political pressure grows before congressional elections in November, according to people familiar with the matter. Trump is also trying to choke off Iran’s oil exports after quitting a nuclear deal with the country.

“Mr. President, as I have foreseen earlier, it seems you are resorting to the SPR due to the fact that there is no spare capacity to cover for Iranian exports - but there will be many repercussions,” Kazempour said.

Trump is pressing Saudi Arabia and some other



OPEC members to fill in any supply gap that will arise when U.S. sanctions curtail Iranian crude exports. Iranian flows could be slashed in half once American sanctions take effect on Nov. 4, according to the International Energy Agency. The country ships about 2.5 million barrels a day.

Global markets

U.S. government teams visited Saudi Arabia recently to ensure that global markets remain

adequately supplied after the deadline. Producers such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Russia have announced their intention to increase supply.

“Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E and Russia pretended to be able to deliver 2.5 million barrels a day of Iranian exports,” Kazempour said. “That was a miscalculation, Mr. President: you have fallen in their trap, and prices will go up.”

It’s not the first time the Iranian official has responded to Trump’s policies. Earlier this month, Kazempour said that tweets by Trump criticizing the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries had pushed oil prices up by about \$10 a barrel.

“If we in Iran were to stop our exports for just one month to show what it can bring to the world economy, you would have thought twice,” Kazempour said. “But we are a civilized nation, and a responsible government.”

(Source: Bloomberg)

12 years and the victory still echoes

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—It was the 12th of July 2006, when the Hezbollah resistance arrested 3 Zionist soldiers, in order to exchange them and free its own arrested soldiers and other Lebanese citizens from the Zionist prisons. At the very beginning, only the Lebanese occupied Shiba Farms were expected to be the zone of confront. However, the Zionist entity had already decided to fire its preprepared aggressive assault on Lebanon.

Various air-raids were launched; targeting residential areas and civil facilities. During the

33 days of the imposed war, the resistance was able to weaken the Zionist army and to smash its fake legend, which maintains that it is “the undefeated army.” Undoubtedly, no one can forget the scene of the smashed Merkava tanks by the resistance’s men who bravely confronted the Zionists and global led war against the Lebanese sovereignty.

The spying planes were intensively monitoring the enemies’ targets all over Lebanon. However, the resistance and its public masses were determined to safeguard their homeland and thus to

defeat the Zionist-American conspiracy to divide Lebanon. This imperialist project was highly backed and financed by the Gulf monarchies’ mercenaries, and which aimed at that time to enter Syria from the Lebanese door.

Accordingly, after the tremendous defeat in Lebanon, the enemies turned to Syria. Over the 7 previous years, today the Lebanese and Syrian brethren celebrate their triumph over the Western schemes. The methodology of resistance has proven today as ever that the end of colonialism and hegemony would definitely be pernicious. **→13**



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Tehran Symphony Orchestra rehearses with guest conductor Babak Kazemi

Babak Kazemi conducts the Tehran Symphony Orchestra during a rehearsal at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on July 15, 2018.

Kazemi who is the music director and chief conductor of the Light of Music Symphony Orchestra in London will accompany the orchestra as a guest conductor during a concert at the hall on July 19.

Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3, Johann Strauss’s Die Fledermaus Overture and Tchaikovsky’s Romeo and Juliet Overture are the highlights of the repertoire assembled for the performance.

Kharrazi outlines strategies to fight terrorism

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Kamal d e s k

Kharrazi, head of Iran’s Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, on Sunday set out three strategies to counter terrorist groups including Daesh, also called IS, ISIL or ISIS.

Kharrazi enumerated the strategies in a speech at the 7th World Peace Forum at

Tsinghua University in Beijing.

The three strategies are as follows:

Researches on the ideology of Takfiri groups by “international think tanks;

Exchange of information and coordinated actions by Iran, Pakistan, China, Russia and Central Asian countries to fight Daesh in Afghanistan; **→2**

Certain manipulators of cellphone market arrested

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Gholam d e s k

Hossein Mohseni Ejei, the Judiciary spokesman, announced on Sunday that certain individuals have been arrested and a number of companies closed down over price violations in the cellphone market.

“Documents have been found that show a number of serious violations have been made” in the cellphone market, he said

during a press conference.

According to a list published recently by the Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi, certain companies which had received foreign currency at the official rate to import cellphones sold their goods at a high price by taking advantage of the value of dollar and other currencies at the black market. **→2**

Iraq on high alert amid protests, claims of ‘infiltration’

At least four people are reportedly injured after Iraqi police fire in the air to prevent protesters from storming the main government building in Basra on the seventh day of unrest.

The protests that have swept southern cities over poor services prompted authorities to place Iraq’s security forces on high alert.

Hundreds of protesters on Sunday rallied in Basra where police used water cannons and tear gas as some of the demonstrators tried to storm the provincial

government building.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi visited Basra on Friday in a bid to help restore calm to the oil-rich province, pledging to take “necessary measures against infiltrators and pursue them in accordance with the law.”

Abadi, who also serves as the commander in chief of the armed forces, ordered security forces to remain on high alert, Reuters quoted unnamed military intelligence and Ministry of Defense sources as saying. **→3**



REPORT

Ramin Hossein Abadian
Mehr News Agency
Journalist

Zionist carnage in Gaza continues

Zionist regime’s fighter jets have conducted a series of fresh raids against the Palestinian resistance forces and the defenseless people in the Gaza Strip. According to media reports, so far, a number of Palestinians have been martyred following the attacks.

In response to the aggression, the Palestinian resistance forces bombed the settlements with a number of rockets. Palestinian fighters do not fear the Zionist enemy, and they respond to its crimes on the oppressed people of Gaza. Analysts wonder whether the war will intensify. Another Hamas spokesman, Fawzi Barhum, said that “the purpose of the Palestinian attacks is to ensure a rapid and sufficient deterrent to force the enemy to stop its acts. Protecting our people and defending them is a national demand and a strategic option.”

Meanwhile Hamas spokesman Abdul Latif al-Kanou said: “We will not allow the occupiers to target our nation and martyr us and we will react. Increasing Zionist movements can not change the equation or impose a new reality or stop the Palestinian Great March of Return. We will respond to the enemy with missiles.”

Palestinian analyst Nasser Hamad has suggested that Israel is afraid of the flare of the Gaza Strip, so it will confer with Egypt to restore calm in Gaza. Hamad emphasizes: “Zionists are moving to target Palestinians who send incendiary kites to Zionist settlements. Syrian troops and their allies stoked Tel Aviv’s fears by approaching Quneitra after retaking Daraa.”

The fact that the Zionist regime’s aggressive attacks on the defenseless people of the Gaza Strip is not anything new, as they have imposed on them over the last decade three wars: a 22-day, 8-day and 53-day. The attacks showed the depth of the Zionists’ anger at the axis of resistance in the occupied territories of Palestine and illustrated how Tel Aviv is concerned about the resistance’s growing power.

The Zionist regime must now wait for the iron fist of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance and their painful reaction to the terrible crimes in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian resistance groups have insisted that they have the right to respond to this crime. **→7**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iranian military chief's first visit to Pakistan

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Mohammad Baqeri visited Islamabad, Pakistan, on Sunday for a three-day visit.

General Baqeri is scheduled to meet with senior Pakistani political and military officials.

This is the first visit by the chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces to Pakistan over the past 40 years.

The trip has been made upon the invitation of Chief of Army Staff of the Pakistan Army Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Iran, Pakistan, China and Russia which see the terrorist activities of Daesh in Afghanistan as a serious threat plan to establish cooperation against the group.



Assad reiterates strategic ties with Iran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on Sunday underlined the importance of strategic relationship with Iran, saying it would benefit the two countries and the entire region.

President Assad made the remarks in a meeting with Hossein Jaber Ansari, the special assistant to Iranian foreign minister for political affairs, and his accompanying delegation in Damascus, Fars reported.

Jaber Ansari, for his part, said the crackdown on terrorism in Syria has provided a proper ground to find a political solution to the Syrian conflict.

He also congratulated the Syrian people and leadership on the recent achievements of the Syrian army in Dara'a province.



Iranian diplomat to meet Lebanese officials

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Hossein Jaber Ansari, a senior assistant to the Iranian foreign minister, is scheduled to hold meetings with Lebanese officials on Monday.

According to the Fars news agency, Al-Hayat daily has reported that Jaber Ansari plans to meet with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri and Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

Reportedly, the Iranian diplomat plans to discuss the U.S. sanctions on Iran.



Navy to boost intelligence superiority in Oman Sea

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The commander of the Iranian Navy has announced plans to boost intelligence superiority in marine zones other than the Persian Gulf.

"If we want to avoid lagging behind the world's state-of-the-art technology, we need to stop applying old methods; today Eshraf (Intelligence Superiority) Plan can be effective as a precise and complete scenario against any regional and trans-regional threat as it can enable us to realize at what point we are standing and which measures we should take for our combat preparedness and capabilities and to take the best decision under the hardest conditions," Rear Admiral Hossein Khamenei said, addressing a Navy festival in Tehran on Sunday.

According to Fars, Eshraf Plan focuses on further reinforcement and equipment of the Navy with the most modern technologies to have intelligence superiority over the Sea of Oman and the international waters away from the territorial waters in the Persian Gulf.



Netanyahu, Trump discuss Syria, Iran ahead of Helsinki summit

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said on Sunday that he discussed Syria and Iran with U.S. President Trump ahead of the latter's meeting in Helsinki with Russian President Putin, Reuters reported.

In remarks to the Israeli cabinet, Netanyahu said that in a phone conversation on Saturday he and Trump discussed "security and diplomatic issues arising from regional developments, chief most among them, of course, Syria and Iran".

Trump meets Putin in the Finnish capital on Monday. Last week, Netanyahu flew out to Moscow for talks with Putin that focused on Israel's demand that Iranian forces leave Syria.



Joining FATF to harm national interests: MP

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — An Iranian lawmaker has warned against a parliamentary bill aimed at the country's accession to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), saying it would harm the national interests.

"We believe that cooperation with the FATF will result in the self-imposition of sanctions and will undermine the national interest of the country," Mohammad Ali Pourmokhtar, a member of the parliament's Judicial and Legal Affairs Commission, told Tasnim.

"When we give the country's confidential information to some foreign countries, naturally, the grounds would be provided for their infiltration into the country," the parliamentarian said.

Leader: Stable economic roadmap is answer to fluctuations

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution on Sunday urged the administration to prepare a "stable economic roadmap" to stop fluctuations in the business market, saying in that situation "people and economic activists will know their duty and will hurry to help the government under a sense of stability and tranquility."

The suggestion by the Leader comes as the U.S. has exited the 2015 nuclear agreement and reintroduced sanctions against Iran. The first stage of sanctions are going to be implemented next month.

Addressing President Hassan Rouhani and his cabinet team, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said "empowering the private sector" and "taking decisive action against wrongdoers (corrupt people)" are other remedies to the national economy.

Since the U.S. announced restoration of sanctions against Iran, some opportunists have been misusing the situation to buy foreign currencies, especially dollar, and gold coin in large quantities, leading to the fall of national currency and a consequent



inflation.

The Leader said those who have disrupted the foreign exchange and gold markets should

be punished "at any rank" they might be.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the government should present a "capable", "competent",

IRGC, Intelligence Ministry bust three terror gangs

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Ministry of Intelligence have smashed three terror gangs in western Iran.

In the first operation, the IRGC smashed a terrorist group and killed three of its operatives and injuring another one seriously near the border with Iraq.

In a statement on Saturday, the Najaf Ashraf Base of the IRGC Ground Forces said it had completely destroyed a "counter-revolutionary terrorist group" that planned to carry out acts of sabotage and measures against national security after crossing the border into Iran in the Nowdesheh area in Kermanshah Province.

During the clashes, an IRGC soldier also lost his life,

it added.

It noted that some ammunition and military equipment were confiscated in the operation.

Also, IRGC and Intelligence Ministry forces smashed two terror gangs in West Azarbaijan Province.

During these clashes, two terrorists were killed and some weapons and ammunitions were taken from their gangs.

Nuclear deal remains 'triumph of multilateral diplomacy' despite U.S. exit: Zarif

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that that the historic nuclear agreement that Tehran signed with the 5+1 group on July 2015 is still a "triumph of multilateral diplomacy" despite the U.S. exit from the accord.

Zarif made the remarks in a post on his official Twitter account on the occasion of the third anniversary of the conclusion of the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"On 3rd anniversary of JCPOA, it remains

a triumph of multilateral diplomacy despite US actions," Zarif tweeted.

President Donald Trump announced on May 8 that Washington was walking away from the nuclear agreement and that he planned to impose "the highest level" of economic bans on the Islamic Republic.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the termination of nuclear-related sanctions imposed against Tehran.

Since the U.S. president pulled Washington out of the nuclear deal, European countries

have been scrambling to ensure that Iran gets enough economic benefits to persuade it to stay in the deal. The remaining parties have vowed to stay in the accord.

Zarif, one of the architects of the nuclear pact, criticized unilateral actions by Trump's administration.

"While we knew U.S. can't be trusted to keep its word—as its allies have now discovered—JCPOA proves that toxic unilateralism of Trump Admin means it can't be relied on to honor any deal," the top Iranian diplomat pointed out.

Talking to reporters in Vienna on July 6 following a meeting with the EU foreign policy chief and his counterparts from Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia for the first time since the U.S. withdrawal, the Iranian foreign minister said that all the remaining signatories to the 2015 nuclear agreement had political will to stand up to the U.S. move.

However, he warned that if the European sides failed to properly fulfill their commitments, Iran would take its own measures to counter the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA.

Tehran awaiting European action plan to save JCPOA: MP

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, a member of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Sunday that Iran is waiting for a European action plan to save the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, now that Donald Trump has pulled the U.S. out of the agreement.

"Any proposition to counter the U.S. sanctions cannot be useful if it is not practical. We are still waiting for Europe's practical actions which would show that Europe has a thing to say to counter Trump's U.S.," Boroujerdi told Mehr News Agency.

The entire world, excluding despots in Saudi Arabia and the UAE along with extremists in Israel, has expressed an unequivocal support for the preservation of the nuclear agreement without the United States.

The Joint Commission of the JCPOA met at the foreign ministerial level in Vienna on July 6. It was the first such meeting since the U.S. left the agreement. European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, who chaired the meeting, announced that Iran and the remaining parties to the nuclear agreement had agreed to continue negotiations, including on

economic measures, over how to save the deal.

Trump who announced the U.S. exit from the JCPOA on May 8 said sanctions will be restored against Iran.

According to the U.S. Treasury, the first stage of sanctions will be snapped back in August and the second stage in November.

Trump has asked countries to cut their oil imports from Iran by November.

Under the nuclear agreement approved by the UN Security Council, Iran is obliged to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of sanctions.

Certain manipulators of cellphone market arrested

1 → The official rate for dollar is 4200 toman.

Mohseni Ejei said the Judiciary chief has ordered the Tehran prosecutor to immediately appoint special investigators to deal with those who have disrupted the foreign currency and cellphone markets and also those companies which used foreign cur-

rencies at official rate to import luxurious automobiles.

The Telecommunication Ministry announced last month that it would take strong action to control cellphone prices and crack down on opportunists.

"People are not defenseless in cellphone market and the government support people

not to be victim of opportunists who rip people off," Azari Jahromi said at the time.

As the Iranian rial plunged to a record low against the U.S. dollar in the unofficial market many opportunists took unfair advantage of the chaotic conditions and over-charged people for electronic devices, such as cellphones.

The Judiciary spokesman also said the person, who is known as the "king of gold coin", had been arrested some five years ago but was released upon a request by the central bank.

Recently, police said the "king of gold coin", named Hamid Mazlomin, has been detained with 2.5 tons of gold coin.

Kharrazi outlines strategies to fight terrorism

1 → And a media campaign to raise public awareness, especially among the youths, about destructive role of the Takfiri ideology".

■ Extremis ideology rooted in Wahhabism

In his speech, Kharrazi said that ideology of the extremist groups is rooted in Wahhabism.

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Wahhabism.

Kharrazi added although Daesh is greatly defeated in Iraq and Syria its ideology still exists.

He said the terrorist group is spreading its actions in Afghan-

istan which should be taken seriously given that the country is neighbor to Iran.

"Based on credible information, the terrorist groups are being guided to other parts, especially Afghanistan and north of Africa, after defeats in Syria and Iraq," he explained.

■ Kharrazi urges world to withstand U.S. excessive demands

In a press conference after the peace forum, Kharrazi said that the international community should stand against the U.S. excessive demands and also sanctions against Iran.

Kharrazi who was foreign minister from 1997 to 2005 said Iran's general stance is not to give in to the U.S. bullying.

He added that the international community should cooperate in countering the U.S. unilateralism.

On May 8, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The U.S. plans to reintroduce sanctions against Iran. The first stage of sanctions is going to be enforced in August and the last stage in November. The U.S. has threatened to punish any country or company that do business with Iran.

Countries should not rely on U.S. dollars for trade: Turkish ambassador

By Marjan Golpira

TEHRAN — The Turkish envoy to Iran suggests displacement of dollars in international trade may protect states' national interests.

In a press conference, held on Sunday at the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Tehran on the occasion of the second year anniversary of failed coup d'etat in Turkey, Ambassador Hakan Tekin reasoned that "moving away from the U.S. dollar would protect nations from damages and sanction regimes imposed on various states by countries like the U.S."

To help reduce the costs of currency conversion and transfer for dollars, in October 2017, Turkey and Iran's central bank formally agreed to trade in their local currencies, i.e. Iranian Rial and Turkish lira, as Iran had been barred from using the U.S. financial system. The two countries had been using euros previously, too.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last week also said that his country is determined to trade with Iran with its national



currency.

On the upcoming U.S. sanctions on Iran, in August and November, Ambassador Tekin stressed that Turkey considers Washington's unilateral sanctions on Tehran neither "legitimate" nor "constructive." However, he added Turkey is still waiting to hear more from the White House regarding commerce with Iran.

This past May U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear pact negotiated in 2015, and reimposed sanctions on Iran, calling the JCPOA "defective" at its core.

Ambassador Tekin underlined the long-

term and extensive relationships between Iran and Turkey in the areas of economy, politics, defense and culture.

The Turkish envoy reported the volume of Ankara's import to Tehran at \$3.2 billion and the figure for Turkish goods to Iran stands at \$7.5 billion.

Tekin's remark came after the Iranian Ambassador to Ankara, Ebrahim Taherian Fard, announced that Tehran and Ankara were eager to boost their trade to \$30 billion.

On Turkey's policy in Syria the diplomat said that Ankara believes there is "no military solution" in Syria but that "diplomacy" and tact are the way forward.

However he added that "Idlib is of high importance for Turkey, as it has been discussed with our two partners, Iran and Russia. If Idlib is going to have the same fate as other regions [in Syria], then Syrian peace talks in Astana are meaningless." He warned that if Syria initiates the same kind of moves in Idlib, it will face serious consequences.

Tekin then referred to two successful Turkish military operations in northern Syria,

Operation Euphrates Shield and Operation Olive Branch in Afrin against ISIS and PKK and PYD forces. He claimed that the Turkish military has no intention to remain in the region permanently but to help locals to gain control of their own home.

"We want to halt the conflict in Syria and create an inclusive system that represents the entire Syrian people."



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British PM warns rebels: Back me or risk ‘no Brexit at all’ May: Trump told me to sue the EU



British Prime Minister Theresa May warned her divided party on Sunday that there may be “no Brexit at all” if they wrecked her plan to forge a close relationship with the European Union after leaving the world’s biggest trading bloc.

“My message to the country this weekend is simple: we need to keep our eyes on the prize,” May wrote on Facebook. “If we don’t, we risk ending up with no Brexit at all.”

Linking the fate of Brexit to her own survival in such an explicit way indicates just how precarious May’s position remains after her government was thrust into crisis and U.S. President Donald Trump publicly criticized her Brexit strategy. With less than nine months to go before the United Kingdom is due to leave the EU on March 29, 2019, the country, the political elite and business leaders are still deeply divided over what form Brexit should take.

By warning that Brexit itself is in danger, May is sending a blunt message to the dozens of headline Brexiters in her party that if they sink her premiership then they risk squandering the victory of an EU exit that they have dreamed about for decades.

Some pro-Brexit Conservatives fear that a deal could emerge that leaves Britain tightly bound to EU rules and represents a Brexit in name only.

The British government has also stepped up planning for a so called “no deal” Brexit that could spook financial markets and dislocate trade flows across Europe and beyond.

May has repeatedly said Brexit will happen and has ruled out a rerun of the 2016 referendum, although French President Emmanuel Macron and billionaire investor George Soros have suggested that Britain could still change its mind.

Seeking to strike a balance between those who want a smooth Brexit and those who fear staying too close to the EU’s orbit, May sought the approval of senior ministers for her plans on July 6.

After hours of talks at her Chequers country residence she appeared to have won over her cabinet, but just two days later David Davis resigned as Brexit secretary, followed by her foreign minister, Boris Johnson, the next day.

May called on Sunday for the country to back her plan for “friction-free movement of goods”, saying it was the only option to avoid undermining the peace in Northern Ireland and preserving the unity of the United Kingdom.

■ “Sue the EU”

Davis, writing in the Sunday Times, said it was an “astonishingly dishonest claim” to say there is no worked-out alternative to May’s plan. He said her plan would allow EU regulations to harm British manufacturers.

“Be in no doubt: under the government’s proposal our

fingers would still be caught in this mangle and the EU would use it ruthlessly to punish us for leaving and handicap our future competitiveness,” Davis said.

Steve Baker, a senior lawmaker who served as a deputy to Davis in the Brexit ministry before resigning with his boss, said May had presided over a “cloak and dagger” plot to undermine Brexit.

May’s position was further undermined by Trump who said in an interview published in Rupert Murdoch’s Sun newspaper on Friday that her proposals would probably kill off any chance of a post-Brexit trade deal with the world’s biggest economy. May on Sunday revealed that Trump had previously advised her to sue the EU rather than enter into an exit negotiation with the bloc.

“He told me I should sue the EU,” she told BBC television. “Sue the EU. Not go into negotiations - sue them.”

Though Trump later contradicted his comments by then promising a great U.S. trade deal, the president made clear his admiration for the 54-year-old Johnson, who Trump said would one day make a great British prime minister.

Steve Bannon, Trump’s former adviser, was even quoted by Britain’s Daily Telegraph as saying that it was now time for Johnson to challenge May for her job.

“Now is the moment,” The Telegraph quoted Bannon, Trump’s former strategist and a key player in his 2016 election campaign, as saying.

“If Boris Johnson looks at this... There comes an inflection point, the Chequers deal was an inflection point, we will

have to see what happens,” Bannon said.

■ Tensions in parliament

Johnson, the face of the Brexit campaign for many has remained silent in public since he warned in his resignation letter on July 9 that the “Brexit dream” was being suffocated by needless self-doubt.

When asked on Sunday if she would stand if a Conservative Party leadership contest was triggered, May declined to directly answer saying: “I am in this for the long term.”

The extent of the danger to May from rebels in her party will become clearer over the course of two debates in parliament this week.

Pro-Brexit lawmakers are expected to use a debate on Monday on customs legislation to try to force her to harden up her Brexit plan, while a debate on trade on Tuesday will see pro-EU lawmakers push for even closer ties with the bloc.

Brexiters are unlikely to have enough support in parliament to win a vote, but the debate will show how many in May’s party are prepared to vote against her at a time when some are looking to gather the numbers needed to challenge her leadership.

If May does clinch a Brexit deal with EU leaders, lawmakers could still vote it down.

Voting down a divorce deal so late in the process would trigger a major political crisis in Britain which would then be on course to crash out without any formal Brexit arrangements for trade, immigration and security.

(Source: Reuters)

Trump says he has ‘low expectations’ for Putin meeting German minister warns Trump against unilateral deals with Putin

by staff & agencies

U.S. President Donald Trump said he had low expectations for his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday in Helsinki. “I go in with low expectations,” Trump said in an interview with CBS news published on their website on Sunday. “I’m not going with high expectations.”

Meanwhile, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has warned U.S. President Donald Trump against making any unilateral deals with Russia that come with a cost for the United States’ Western allies.

Trump, who meets Russian President Vladimir Putin in Finland on Monday, this week accused Germany of being a “captive” of Russia due to its energy reliance, before a NATO summit where he pressed allies to more than double defense spending.

On Thursday, Trump described Putin as a “competitor” rather than an “enemy” and said he expected they would get on well when they hold their first summit in Helsinki. Trump also said the meeting with Putin may be the easiest on his Europe trip.

Maas welcomed the meeting, at which the U.S. president has said he will raise the issue of nuclear weapons reduction.

“We have always said that we need dialogue with Russia. That’s why it’s good if



Washington and Moscow talk to each other,” Maas told the Bild am Sonntag newspaper. “It would be a step forward if this meeting also provided impetus for nuclear disarmament.”

But Maas added: “He who offends his partners, risks losing in the end. Unilateral deals at the expense of one’s own partners also harm the U.S. in the end.”

■ Not to meet Putin

A group of top Democratic Party lawmakers in the U.S. Senate have warned President Donald Trump against a one-on-one meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, ahead of a planned summit between the two Finland. Eight Senate Democrats, including

Minority Leader Charles Schumer, Minority Whip Dick Durbin and the top Democrats on the Senate Intelligence, Foreign Relations, Judiciary, Armed Services, Appropriations and Banking committees sent a letter to Trump on Saturday making the demand.

“If you insist on meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, Finland, on Monday, we write to urge that you include senior members of your team,” the letter said.

They argued that “Putin is a trained KGB intelligence veteran who will come to this meeting well-prepared.”

“There must be other Americans in the room,” they wrote, urging Trump to “rely

on the expertise and the experts of the State Department, Defense Department, CIA and other U.S. government agencies” and “not wing it on your own.”

Many in the United States are calling for the meeting to be cancelled after the U.S. Justice Department indicted 12 Russian intelligence officials on Friday in connection with the alleged Russian interference in the 2016 election. Trump, however, resisted the demands and instead blamed the administration of former President Barack Obama for not “doing something about” election interference. “The stories you heard about the 12 Russians yesterday took place during the Obama Administration, not the Trump Administration,” he tweeted on Saturday. “Why didn’t they do something about it, especially when it was reported that President Obama was informed by the FBI in September, before the Election?”

On Friday, Republican Senator John McCain called on Trump to cancel his upcoming summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin if he is “not prepared to hold Putin accountable.” Trump said Tuesday that his meeting with Putin “may be the easiest” out of all his other meetings with NATO leaders this week. And on Friday, he voiced skepticism that the meeting with Putin would result in a confession about election meddling.

Iraq on high alert amid protests, claims of ‘infiltration’

➔ A statement from Abadi’s office cited “small and organized groups who try to exploit the peaceful demonstrations of citizens to sabotage and attack state institutions and private property.”

On Saturday, about 100 protesters closed access to the Umm Qasr commodities port near Basra. Port employees said the road leading into the terminal was blocked and trucks had no way of getting in or out.

Oil Minister Jabbar al-Luaibi has said that the protesters tried to break into an oil installation in the West Qurna 2 oil field of Basra province. The rallies began in the southern oil hub of Basra last week amid concerns over acute unemployment as well as electricity and water shortages and spread to several other cities, including Najaf, Amara, Nasiriya and Baghdad. Two more protesters were reported killed in Amara overnight Saturday, bringing to three the number of demonstrators who have lost their lives since the unrest erupted last Sunday. Protesters occupied the headquarters of the provincial governorate in Amara, threw stones at branches of the Dawa party, and beat up policemen.

It was not clear who killed them but provincial authorities said there had been “indiscriminate gunfire” in the city.

Hundreds of demonstrators entered Najaf airport’s main hall and walked onto the tarmac on Friday, but air traffic resumed later after the protesters withdrew.

Witnesses said security forces allowed protesters to enter the main airport building. Head of the airport’s adminis-

trative council Jawad al-Karawi said certain officials and politicians were trying to economically harm the airport.

The holy city of Najaf is a popular destination for Shia pilgrims. Flights to Iran’s holy city of Mashhad also take place from Najaf, with IRNA news agency saying they had been temporarily suspended until further notice.

Unidentified calls were posted on social media Saturday for massive demonstrations to take place in Baghdad. Some urged demonstrators to head for the fortified Green Zone, an area out of bounds for most Iraqis where key institutions and embassies including the U.S. and British missions, are located.

■ ‘Generous’ but ‘miserable’

Iraq has seen the growing wave of protests since the beginning of July when temperatures topped 50 degrees Celsius in some Iraqi provinces, especially in Basra.

The situation in Basra - an oil export hub for Iraq’s exports - remains tense amid heavy deployment of security forces to prevent the situation from spiraling out of control.

Long neglected, Basra is one of the few cities in the Middle East without an effective water treatment system. Many of its waterways are stagnant cesspools, with state officials blaming a public funding crisis caused by years of low oil prices.

Abdel Mehdi al-Karbalai, the representative of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, said many residents of Basra “are suffering from an extreme lack of public services” as he urged the government to deal seriously with the demands of citizens.

“It is not fair and it is never acceptable that this generous

province is one of the most miserable areas in Iraq,” he said. “We can only stand with our dear citizens in their demands as we feel their great suffering,” Karbalai added.

Karbalai, however, urged the demonstrators to refrain from violence, warning them against being influenced by “unruly individuals or those acting in self-interest.”

The Council of Ministers meanwhile said the government will quickly address the demands of the protesters as Iraq’s National Security Council urgently convened a meeting in Baghdad Saturday.

■ ‘Direct result of U.S. wars’

Michael Springmann, a former U.S. diplomat, has told Press TV that the ongoing popular outrage is a fallout of United States-led wars against Iraq.

“This is the direct result of American wars by George H. W. and George W. Bush in 1991 and 2003,” he said, referring to the U.S. invasions of Iraq. “They destroyed the Iraqi economy,” he said. “We are seeing the results of this now. There is...20-percent unemployment, electricity less than five hours a day, shortage of water.”

He went on, “Grand Ayatollah Sistani is siding with the protesters because he knows what is happening. Normally, he does not get involved in politics, but this is outrageous and it is the direct result of American warfare and the direct result of American people running the country into the ground,” so they can gain control of Iraqi oil.

(Source: Press TV)

Turkey’s plan to buy Russian defense system a risk for NATO: U.S. general

Turkey’s plans to buy the Russian S-400 missile defense system would give a weapon used by “known foes” of NATO deep insight into the radar-evading F-35 fighter jets arriving in growing numbers in Europe, the top U.S. Air Force general in Europe said.

General Tod Wolters, also the NATO Allied Air Commander, told Reuters the issue was worrying, but he was working to maintain strong military ties with the NATO member for now.

“Anything that an S-400 can do that affords it the ability to better understand a capability like the F-35 is certainly not to the advantage of the coalition,” said Wolters, who was in Britain for an air chiefs conference in London and the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford.

U.S. and NATO officials want to prevent the Russian-built defense system from accumulating information about Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets just as they are gaining a foothold in Europe.

Norway, Britain and Italy will have a total of 40 F-35s in Europe by the end of the year, with 24 more to be delivered next year and the Netherlands to receive two jets as well, according to a spokesman for the U.S. Air Force.

Turkey’s plans to buy the Russian air and missile defense system have raised tensions with Washington, and U.S. lawmakers are seeking to block the transfer of any F-35 jets to Turkey.

A senior U.S. official last month said Turkey was a key NATO ally, but its purchases of the F-35 would be at risk and Ankara would face sanctions if it proceeded to buy the S-400.

Ankara received its first F-35 jet at the Lockheed plant in Texas last month, although the aircraft will stay in the United States for training.

“The Turks have to make a choice. They’re either going to be part of NATO or they’re going to move into the Russian camp in terms of defense,” said David Deptula, a retired Air Force general and industry consultant.

He said NATO would never integrate an S-400 system into its integrated air defense system because it would give the Russian-built system data about operating tactics and procedures that could be transferred to other users.

Operating an F-35 nearby would also allow the S-400 system to glean key information about range of detection and other characteristics of the aircraft, potentially undermining any element of surprise.

Wolters said NATO was worried about “how much, for how long and how close” any F-35s would be operated near the S-400 systems. “All those would have to be determined. We do know for right now it is a challenge.”

But he said his contacts with the Turkish air force remained “rock solid” despite the dispute over the S-400, focusing on current security threats.

“For right now, all the conversations surrounding that challenge have not hindered at all the strong relationship that we have with the Turkish air force and the great alliance that the two nations have together,” he said. “We want to make sure that for now we’re continuing on that path.”

(Source: Reuters)

Israeli air raids kill two Palestinian teens in Gaza

By staff & agencies

At least two teenagers in the Gaza Strip have been killed by Israeli air raids, according to Palestinian health officials, as Israel carried out the largest daylight attack on the besieged enclave since the 2014 war.

Amir al-Nimri, 15, and Luay Kaheel, 16, died of their wounds on Saturday shortly after an air strike targeted al-Kutaiba, an area in western Gaza, the health ministry said.

Twelve others were wounded by the attack.

The al-Kutaiba square is adjacent to a park frequently visited by families over the weekend, especially during the summer months, witnesses told Al Jazeera.

In a Twitter post, the Israeli military confirmed it targeted a “high-rise building” and said it had “warned” residents to evacuate prior to the attack.

At least 30 people have been wounded in the raids, which targeted several neighborhoods in Gaza.

Following the attack on al-Kutaiba, a ceasefire agreement was reached through international and regional mediation efforts, Palestinian officials said on Saturday.

In a Twitter post, Hamas, the group governing the Gaza Strip, said the efforts of “several parties” including neighboring Egypt succeeded in implementing a lasting ceasefire.

There has been no immediate confirmation from the Israeli side.

Earlier in the day, it said it attacked several Hamas positions in the Gaza Strip, as dozens of rockets and mortars were fired towards Israel from the besieged enclave.

■ Ceasefire holding as UN official says Gaza has nothing to lose

Meantime, A United Nations aid agency official says Palestinians in the Gaza Strip “have nothing to lose” as a ceasefire reached between Israel and the Palestinian resistance groups seemed to be holding on Sunday, following Israel’s heavy bombardment of the territory and Hamas’s retaliatory rocket fire a day earlier.

The remarks by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) media adviser Adnan Abu Hasna underlined problems facing Gazans who grapple with a shattered economy in the face of a crippling Israeli siege.

“There is no tomorrow in Gaza, it’s a big prison, there are no dreams, there is no stability. Two million people, 50 percent unemployment, the private sector doesn’t work,” he said in an interview with Ynet, the online arm of Israeli paper Yedioth Ahronot on Saturday.

“The damage from the 2014 war has still not been repaired, but the central problem here in Gaza is that people have nothing to lose,” he said.

He was referring to Israel’s last war against the enclave, which killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians, including 577 children. The war last for 50 days.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	108072.3
IFX	1219.62

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	43,270 rials
EUR	50,566 rials
GBP	57,261 rials
AED	11,738 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$70.67/b
Brent	\$74.65/b
OPEC Basket	\$74.40/b
Gold	\$1,242.15 /oz
Silver	\$15.84/oz
Platinum	\$832.40/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



36 Iranian SMEs attract \$2.3b of foreign investments in a year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Some 36 Iranian small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (SMEs) attracted above \$2.3 billion of foreign investments during the previous Iranian calendar year 1396 (ended on March 20, 2018), Managing Director of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) Sadeq Najafi told IRNA on Sunday. Najafi, who is also the deputy industry minister, added that Iran has attraction of investments and modern technology among its top priorities and under the conditions that the country is trying to deal with the U.S.-led economic pressures, SMEs can act as suitable means to absorb foreign investments.



No need for wheat imports

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**— The managing director of Government Trading Corporation of Iran announced on Sunday that according to the implemented plan, Iran is self-sufficient in production of wheat and level of wheat imports will remain zero during the present Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2019), as it did in the preceding year. As IRNA quoted Yazdan Seif as saying in a ceremony on Sunday, Iran suffers from shortage of water, but Iranian farmers achieved self-sufficiency in wheat production.

Cuba to recognize private property in new constitution

Communist-run Cuba will officially recognize private property, something it has long rejected as a vestige of capitalism, under a new constitution that also creates the position of prime minister alongside the president, state media reported on Saturday.

Cuba's current Soviet-era constitution only recognizes state, cooperative, farmer, personal and joint venture property.

But former President Raul Castro's market reforms, aimed at trying to boost the economy and make Cuban socialism more sustainable, have prompted hundreds of thousands of Cubans to join the ranks of the island's self-employed since 2010, in new privately-owned businesses ranging from restaurants to beauty salons.

Ruling Communist Party newspaper Granma published a summary of the new constitution on Saturday, saying a draft it had seen included 224 articles, up from 137 previously.

Details were not immediately available, and Reuters did not see the draft. But Granma said it enshrined recognition of both the free market and private property in Cuba's new Magna Carta.

That could mean enhanced legal protections for Cuba's fledgling entrepreneurs, and foreign investors too, even though Granma said the constitution reaffirmed that central planning and state enterprise are the pillars of the economy overall.

It also noted the Communist Party would remain as Cuba's dominant political force.

Cuba expert Luis Carlos Battista at the Washington-based Center for Democracy in the Americas cautioned that the acknowledgment of private property did not mean the government wanted to give private enterprise a greater role.

Earlier this week, he noted, the government published a set of regulations tightening control on the self-employed and hiking possible fines to include property confiscation.

According to Granma, the government commission revamping the constitution will present its draft to the national assembly when it meets next week. It will then be put to a national referendum, expected later this year.

The commission is headed by Castro, 87, who remains head of the Communist Party.

New President Miguel Diaz-Canel, who sits on the commission, is also expected to announce his council of ministers at the assembly meeting.

Apart from introducing the position of prime minister, dividing the roles of head of state and head of government, the new constitution makes the president head of the assembly and imposes a term limit on the presidency of two consecutive five-year periods.

Castro, who together with his older, late brother Fidel Castro ruled the country for nearly 60 years, had proposed the limit in 2011, as part of a bid to modernize the political system.

(Source: Reuters)

Stock market index rises 13.7% since March

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)'s main index (TEDPIX) has risen 13.7 percent to hit 109,505 points since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21), Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday.

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 \$127.6 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 \$29.3 million) were traded through 58,000 deals in a day.

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

Over 73% of rural areas connected to gas network in 3 months

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s Gas Distribution Director Saeid Momeni said 73.6 percent of the country's rural areas have been connected to the national gas network by the end of the current Iranian calendar year's first quarter (June 21).

According to the official, the NIGC

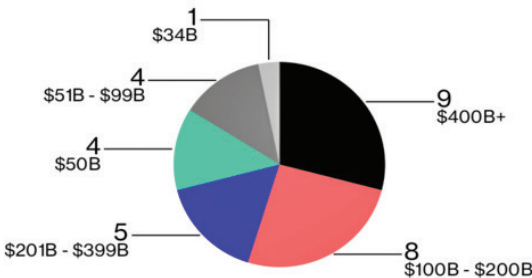
has it on the agenda to supply gas to 10 villages every month, that means by the end of the current year 3600 villages will be connected to the gas network, Shana news agency reported on Saturday.

The number of the cities connected to the national gas network, has also increased to 1117, which is 96.9 percent of the country's total urban areas.

Economists are all over the map on trade war's duration, scope

How Far Will the Tariffs on China Go?

Views among respondents to a Bloomberg News poll vary widely



Source: Bloomberg News survey of 31 firms and economists; conducted July 6-11, 2018

Bloomberg

Talks between the world's two largest economies have stalled since June, amid U.S. complaints over the bilateral trade deficit and China's alleged theft of intellectual property.

"They don't even agree on what the source of the problem is," said Tom Fullerton, a

survey respondent and economics professor at the University of Texas at El Paso, who predicted the tariffs will last 18 months and reach \$450 billion in goods. "It makes it very difficult to envision either side backing down at this point."

The survey was conducted July 6-11. Ana-

lysts were asked how long the \$34 billion in tariffs implemented July 6 would remain in effect, and for the maximum value of goods subject to tariffs through the end of 2019.

The Trump administration on July 10 proposed a list of an additional \$200 billion of Chinese goods that would be subject to levies. Survey responses submitted after that news skewed toward a bigger trade war. The median estimate of maximum tariffs following that announcement was \$300 billion, while the duration was the same at 12 months.

KC Mathews took a more sanguine view. The chief investment officer at UMB Bank in Kansas City, Missouri, predicted tariffs will top out at \$50 billion in goods, and China will come to the negotiating table within a year.

"We're of the opinion that the current administration knows the data that trade wars are bad for economic activity," Mathews said. "We are hopeful that this firm strategy and perhaps firm talk about potential tariffs will bring parties to the table to discuss."

(Source: Bloomberg)

Prepare for no-deal Brexit, German business groups tell members

German business groups have urged their members to step up preparations for a hard Brexit that would see Britain crash out of the European Union next year without negotiating a deal.

British Prime Minister Theresa May secured a cabinet agreement last week for "a business-friendly" proposal to leave the EU, aimed at spurring stalled Brexit talks. But the hard-won compromise has come under

fire from within her governing Conservative Party and may yet fall flat with EU negotiators.

"Even if the British government is moving now, companies must plan for the scenario in which there is no agreement," Joachim Lang, managing director of the BDI, Germany's biggest industry lobby, told the Welt am Sonntag newspaper.

Thilo Brodtmann, managing director of the VDMA engineering association, told

the same paper: "It is urgent to prepare for Brexit and to expect the worst case scenario."

German industry is concerned about increased friction in trade with Britain after Brexit. Britain is the second-biggest export market for German car manufacturers.

But Lang said some German businesses were only just starting to analyze what Brexit would mean for them, adding: "At least that has moved us forward from a few

months ago."

Brodtmann warned engineering firms against being lured into a sense of complacency by stable business in Britain now.

"Brexit is such a big nonsense that many companies still hope it will not be that bad because the EU will not allow a hard landing for the economy. But I can only warn against that," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

Planemakers plot course through trade, Brexit worries to air show deals



Farnborough is the first such event since Airbus and Boeing shook up the industry by agreeing to absorb key commercial programs of smaller rivals Canada's Bombardier and Brazil's Embraer as they prepare for future competition from China.

The result should be a fierce contest for sales in the 100-150-seat sector even before Boeing closes its Embraer deal. A new airline, Moxy, is expected to confirm a large order for the rebranded Airbus A220, the former Bombardier CSeries.

The event is also expected to provide new evidence of strong demand for freight planes as e-commerce drives up shippers' profits despite global trade tensions.

Analyst predictions for total commercial orders and commitments vary from last year's 900 to about half that.

While high fuel prices make efficient new planes attractive, they hurt the bottom line of buyers, delaying some decisions. "We are not blind: there are things that need to remain on watch," the head of major engine-maker CFM said on Saturday.

Farnborough will also be an opportunity for aerospace firms to plot next moves on civil and defense for decades to come.

The July 16-22 show is not only about order headlines but also about sending signals to investors, keeping com-

petitors guessing and keeping potential buyers interested.

Boeing will want to maintain interest in a potential new mid-market plane, while giving itself until next year to decide whether to launch the new 220-270-seat jet.

While it is further ahead in pre-development than at the same stage on earlier programs, it must convince airlines it can be ready in 2025, the deadline for many fleet overhauls.

Airbus may talk up its possible new A321XLR, designed to address a shortfall in transatlantic performance of its longest-range single-aisle jet and targeted at U.S. majors.

The aircraft, with an improved take-off weight of 100 tonnes and 4,500 nautical miles range, has already had an unannounced commercial launch in a bid to head off Boeing's proposed new jet from 2021, industry sources said.

U.S. sources doubt it will do everything Airbus claims.

Both planemakers are likely to deepen a push into high-margin services, announcing maintenance and operational deals in competition with airlines and parts providers. It's part of a tug of war for profits between planemakers and their partners.

Suppliers will be trying to gauge how far the jetmakers are prepared to go in buying up parts of their supply chain. And many in Europe will be discussing how to prepare for a possible 'hard Brexit' or a disorderly UK exit from the European Union.

Sensitive UK choices over international partnerships are also expected to loom large in the defense side of the show. The UK government will set out a combat air strategy with potential repercussions for defense suppliers around the world.

It could ignite efforts to develop a successor to the four-nation Eurofighter but is expected to leave open whether Britain would seek to enter a project already underway between France and Germany, or risk a repeat of costly procurement splits.

For now, Sweden is shaping up as the most likely partner and South Korea, Japan and Turkey or Persian Gulf arms-buying countries like Saudi Arabia could be drawn in, arms analyst Francis Tusa said.

(Source: Reuters)

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Why the Eritrea-Ethiopia peace is good for African politics

By Nanjala Nyabola

Diplomats from Ethiopia and Eritrea are calling it a “joint declaration of peace and friendship” but that innocuous name is masking what may be one of the most important political changes in East Africa in the past 20 years.

With a simple, five-pillar agreement the presidents of Ethiopia and Eritrea, which were once one country but were bitterly divided by one of Africa’s most expensive and devastating conflicts, jointly declared its end.

It is very easy to be skeptical of the peace declaration given the region’s history of unremitting conflict and political false starts. The Derg regime, which came to power in Ethiopia in 1974 following the ousting of Emperor Haile Selassie, was supposed to mark the end of imperial rule in the country, but in no time itself became a violent, bloody regime.

After fighting a war of liberation against the Derg regime for many years, Isaias Afwerki took control of the newly independent Eritrea in the early 1990’s and swiftly transformed it into a hermit state.

In the name of remaining ready for war, hundreds of thousands of Eritreans have been forcefully conscripted into interminable military service. Despite its small population, Eritrea has consistently been producing the largest number of African refugees to Europe for years.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia constructed the most elaborate security state in East Africa. Millions of dollars that could have been spent on food security and development have instead been wasted on armies and surveillance, turning citizens into spies and destroying freedom of expression.

Therefore, the excitement and enthusiasm with which Ethiopians and Eritreans at home and abroad received the announcement about the end of the 20-year-long African Cold War are understandable. Thousands had been forced into exile as a result of rapid militarization in both countries, and Monday’s landmark agreement is the surest indicator yet that a pivot away from security-centered statehood is possible.

Yet, in the rest of East Africa, some have found it hard to process the news. The Kenyan media, for example, failed to devote any coverage to the event on the day and has only had marginal analysis since, despite the fact that thousands of Ethiopians and Eritreans currently live in Kenya. The changes Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is pursuing in Ethiopia will have an impact beyond the borders of his country and its neighbor, Eritrea. So how should East Africans especially, but outsiders in general see this peace declaration?

Between ending the war and decriminalizing various political groups, Ahmed is breaking a network of political taboos that have been a constant hum in the background of east African politics for the past 20 years. Specifically the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia has been a seemingly unchangeable fact in a region that has a long history of protracted conflicts. So even floating peace as a possibility is a radical act of political transformation that changes the scope of what is possible or imaginable within the political arena - this could be the beginning of a major shift in the discourse around peace and security in East Africa and that needs to be acknowledged.

Of course, such a move will have political implications beyond this. In Kenya, the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) is a major infrastructure project that was developed with the explicit aim of connecting landlocked Ethiopia with the sea.

The animus with Eritrea meant that shared infrastructural connections between the countries that predated Eritrean independence could not be used. As the most stable country in the Horn, Djibouti has been a natural alternative for Ethiopia, although recently Addis Ababa has also made overtures to Somalia and Somaliland for the use of Berbera port.

Kenya maintains that the LAPSSET project is part of a broader continent-wide North-South, Cape to Cairo transport network, but regardless, the utility of the LAPSSET project and the displacement and disruption it has already created will now be under greater scrutiny following the peace accord between Asmara and Addis Ababa.

At the same time, tensions between Somalia and Somaliland about the use of Berbera port will seem less urgent if Ethiopia is able to develop a workable alternative through Eritrea.

In June, Mogadishu accused Hargeisa of violating the conditions of semi-autonomy by entering into an agreement with Ethiopia over the development and use of the port, which they argue should have been approved at the federal level.

The tension forced Ethiopian diplomats to backtrack on commitments to direct trade through Berbera. With peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia, both of whom stand to gain immensely from normalization of their relationship, the tension between Somalia and Somaliland will perhaps dissipate, at the very least taking another point of contention off the table.

None of this should overshadow the human element of this declaration - the fundamental reason why this matters. Like India and Pakistan, or Sudan and South Sudan, the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has torn families and communities apart, particularly those living along the border.

The political separation was further entrenched by the severing of communication ties and travel bans, making any dialogue between the citizens of the two countries impossible. As mentioned above, militarization of public life in both countries has significantly distorted networks of trust within communities and a key hope is that the end of the Ethiopia-Eritrea war will feed into a broader process of demilitarization in both countries.

The images of joyful Eritreans and Ethiopians receiving this news is a reminder that war happens to people and to communities, and the end of war is always cause for celebration for everyone.

Of course, it is far too early to make definitive declarations of what the future holds for these two countries. Yet, while cynicism has value in political thought, and especially when history provides ample examples of good faith gone bad, it is important to be as ready to accept good news as the bad.

Independently of what happens moving forward, this is a special moment for East Africa that must be cherished and encouraged. For those of us who are neither Ethiopian nor Eritrean, this is a timely reminder that within the politics of a complicated region, sometimes good things do happen.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Amid the Trumpian chaos, Europe sees a strategy: Divide and conquer

By Steven Erlanger

European allies knew to expect the unexpected from President Trump, especially after their rancorous encounter last month at the Group of 7 summit meeting in Canada.

But Trump’s European tour has still rattled many on the Continent and in Britain, who have watched from a distance the chaos he creates on a daily basis in the United States but had not been directly exposed to it until this week.

More important, for the long term, they have begun to believe that underneath the presidential narcissism, sarcasm and bluster there is a strategy: to undercut European solidarity in NATO and the European Union so the United States can exercise its economic and military power to shape relations with individual countries, just as China and Russia seek to do.

The atmospherics have been awful. Trump happily broke protocol at NATO and in Britain, skipping appointments with other leaders, forcing changes in the agenda, scolding other leaders, calling an early news conference to get onto morning television programs in America, making unfounded claims about agreements and giving an interview to the British mass-market tabloid The Sun that deeply embarrassed his host, Prime Minister Theresa May.

But Europeans are now convinced that Trump has an agenda that is inimical to their interests, said François Heisbourg, a French political analyst. “Europeans realize that he’s not just a temperamental child, but that he wants to dismantle the multilateral order created 70 years ago that he believes limits American power.”

European leaders had already taken into account the disrupter Trump, said Tomas Valasek, the director of Carnegie Europe, a foreign policy think tank. “We’re not in the dark about him, but we’ve never dealt with this sort of political animal before,” Valasek said. “This is a new ballgame and we’re learning how to play it. We’re not necessarily more effective, but we’re getting wiser.”

Different leaders have tried different strategies with Trump, from the “buddy-buddy” approach of President Emmanuel Macron of France and Ms. May, to the cooler attitude of Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany. “But we found that none of this matters,” Valasek said. “He’ll treat you like a competitor one way or another. He wants to pit countries against one another and use U.S. power and wealth against the others for his advantage.”

The frustration sometimes comes out in meetings. At the NATO meeting, for instance, Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen of Denmark told Trump that Danes had suffered as many casualties per capita as the United States had in Afghanistan, and that blood mattered more than money.

“In direct and clear speech, I have made it clear to him that Denmark’s contribution cannot be measured in money,” Rasmussen said afterward.

The personal distaste could also be measured in body language, when European leaders made little effort to engage with Trump, chatting to one another while Trump walked along with the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a semi authoritarian outsider.

“Trump is becoming politically toxic in Western Europe,” Valasek said. “No one wants to be seen smiling with him after being berated on Twitter. Even more, Trump’s insults and his unpopularity among European voters make it harder for European leaders to do what he wants them to do, like increase military spending, even when they think they should do it.”

After Trump split with the Europeans on issues like climate change and the Iran nuclear deal, Valasek said, “leaders don’t want to be associated with anything he wants; it’s the kiss of death.”

They are also fearful of his populism, his support for Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union, or Brexit, and his affinity with their political adversaries, who share



“Trump is becoming politically toxic in Western Europe,” said Valasek, the director of Carnegie Europe, a foreign policy think tank.

his nationalist, anti-immigration message.

Yet, Europe faces a dilemma with Trump, as Sigmar Gabriel, the former German foreign minister, said in an interview with Der Spiegel. “The truth is, we can’t get along with Trump and we can’t get along without the U.S.,” Gabriel said. “We therefore need a dual strategy: clear, hard and, above all, common European answers to Trump. Any attempt to accommodate him, any appraisal only leads him to go a step further. This must be over. From trade to NATO.”

He continued: “We cannot delude ourselves anymore. Donald Trump only knows strength. So we have to show him that we are strong.”

How to do that, however, is less clear, since Europe’s security dependence on the United States is both obvious and will not change soon, despite European talk of more money for a joint European defense.

The problem is visible not just in Germany but in Spain, distant from Russia. Pedro Sánchez, Spain’s new Socialist prime minister, outraged the leftist lawmakers who helped put him in office when he pledged to raise his country’s military spending to 2 percent from the current 0.9 percent of the country’s gross domestic product.

John C. Kornblum, a former American ambassador to Germany who still lives there, said that “the real problem is that postwar Europe seems not to have regained a sense of purpose and direction.”

“It cannot formulate self-confident and achievable goals,” Kornblum continued, “and above all seems unable to stand up for itself against the criminals of the world” — including the former Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic in the 1990s and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia now.

The European nations’ great accomplishments — continental peace and social welfare — have led them “to become self-righteous in their pride about them, but in reality these steps forward were only possible within an American bubble,” Kornblum said. And now Trump has called them out on it and “spoken the unspeakable,” Kornblum said, and it is both unwelcome and uncomfortable.

If nothing else, Trump’s apparent willingness to turn over the table has gotten the attention of Western allies, creating a sense of urgency to meet the spending goals, and not everyone drew back in alarm.

The French newspaper Le Monde, for example, was relaxed. “Once again, Donald Trump brought on the show, but

the damage was limited,” the newspaper said. “The NATO summit, which threatened to become a psychodrama because of the American president’s caprices, wound up reinforcing the alliance. The Europeans are ready to pay more for their defense, and the U.S. reaffirmed its military commitment to its historic allies.”

But the big question is whether any amount of spending would actually satisfy Trump, or whether his real attempt is to divide NATO and the European Union, both Heisbourg and Valasek said. Trump mixes his threats about more trade tariffs if the European Union does not come to better terms with his threat to withhold security from those same countries.

Of course, Trump also uses and misuses the figures he chooses. He often says that the United States pays for 90 percent of NATO, or sometimes he says 70 percent, when the figure is really about 67 percent, and includes the percentage of global military spending.

In fact, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, of the \$603 billion the United States spends on defense, only about \$31 billion goes to Europe. That number is increasing. But the European countries of NATO are spending about \$239 billion and rising, even if their spending is not very efficient or coordinated.

Similarly, Trump likes to cite a \$151 billion trade deficit with the European Union. But that figure is for goods only — not for services, which represent nearly 80 percent of the economy, where the United States has a small trade surplus with Europe.

For Heisbourg, Trump the businessman is simply “monetizing American power.” As Trump recently said, he regarded the European Union “possibly as bad as China, just smaller.” He sees Germany as dominating the bloc, and Germany, for which he has a special animus, as “the weak link in an organization vulnerable to linkage between trade and security.” Heisbourg said.

The same is true of Trump’s support of Brexit, on display again on Friday in Britain. Trump’s view is that “if you have a soft Brexit and stick with the European Union too closely, it doesn’t work for me, so goodbye, you’re on your own,” said Pierre Vimont, a former French ambassador to Washington. “For Trump there are no allies and no enemies, just partners or not, and the U.S. will deal with them separately. And the Europeans have no key to answer this new U.S. foreign policy.” (Source: NYT)

Turks enter uncharted waters as Erdogan forges ahead with new powers

By Sibel Hurtas

The swearing-in of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on July 9 marked the end of Turkey’s parliamentary system and ushered the country into a new form of governance that accumulates power in the hands of the president.

The new presidential system — narrowly approved in a constitutional referendum last year — is a unique one that defies easy definition. Turks have been trying to divine how it will function from the slew of decrees that Erdogan began to issue as soon as he took office following his victory in the June 24 polls.

The first decree authorized the president to form the Cabinet. Previously, this authority belonged to the prime minister, a post that no longer exists. Later in the day, Erdogan announced his 16-member Cabinet and named a vice president.

In the old system, the government had to receive a vote of confidence from parliament to assume office and lawmakers could also initiate censure motions against the government and individual ministers. This parliamentary check mechanism has been abolished. The authority to appraise and remove ministers now rests exclusively with the president.

Abdullatif Sener, a former deputy prime minister who is now a lawmaker for the main opposition party after falling out with the president, told Al-Monitor, “Even if they drag the country into wars on all sides, even if hundreds of soldiers die every day, even if hell breaks loose, no constitutional mechanism exists now to change the government.”

Budget-making is another key authority transferred from parliament to the president. “The president has obtained the power to spend 25% of the national income ... as he likes,” Sener said.



The president is also entitled to legislative powers through his authority to issue decrees. “There is no democracy in the world where parliament shares its legislative authority. Be it a parliamentary system or a presidential one, the law-making power belongs unequivocally to parliament, but this system is like no other,” Sener said. “Don’t be misled by the term ‘decree’ — those decrees amount to laws. Parliament has lost its legislative prerogative.”

Is the president free to issue decrees on any subject? Sener said, “The decrees cannot be used to restrict basic rights and freedoms, but there is a trick here. Economic rights such as the rights to collective bargaining and strike were exempted.”

Well-known lawyer Omer Faruk Eminaoglu suggested that Erdogan could use the legislative duality to foist unpopular economic measures on parliament. “The presidency will be in charge of all legislation, but bills about heavy economic and tax burdens that could

spark popular discontent will be passed by parliament at the president’s demand,” he said in an interview with Al-Monitor.

If parliament and the president push different legislation on the same issue or if the president oversteps the scope of decrees, the matter will go to the Constitutional Court. Here, another problem emerges, as the president will be highly influential in shaping the composition of the court under the new system.

Eminaoglu said, “Just as the legislative, the judiciary has been tied to the president. President Erdogan will appoint half of the Constitutional Court members as well as the members of the Higher Board of Judges and Prosecutors, which is the backbone of the judiciary. ... To speak of an independent judiciary is no longer possible. If the president issues a very controversial decree tomorrow, Turkey has no mechanism to quash it.”

The presidency took over the authorities of the old Council of Ministers as well. The

founding laws of all ministries were abolished with a single decree. Policies in various realms will be now drawn up at nine offices attached to the president, and the ministers will be left to implement them. From the National Intelligence Organization and the General Staff to the Directorate General of Press and Information and even state theaters, almost all public institutions are now attached to the presidency.

In sum, the new system brings all the state’s administration under the president’s control and disables the checks and balances. Broadly stated, the president will issue laws, draw up the country’s budget and the programs of all ministries, appoint the members of top courts, head the intelligence service and the military and even issue the press cards of journalists. The entire state system will be run from the presidential palace, with Erdogan wielding unbounded and unchecked power.

What does this mean for the future of Turkey?

According to Sener, “We’ve entered a very peculiar period, which I cannot define as a democracy. The regime has changed. It could [devolve further], depending on the initiative of those who have accumulated the power in their hands. We might speak of a dictatorship in Turkey in the future.”

Eminaoglu likened the new system to a “constitutional monarchist rule.” Referring to movements in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he said, “Ottoman times saw two constitutional eras, which upheld a republic and a constitution against the monarch. Now, a third constitutional era is underway, but just in the opposite way. It is a monarch’s movement against the republic and the constitution. The republic and the constitution are only on paper now.” (Source: Al Monitor)

Plots foiled to ruin Iran-Russia alliance in Syria

By Mohammad Mehdi Maleki

TEHRAN (MNA) — A political commentator told Mehr News Agency that Mr. Velayati's visit to Moscow was of prime importance and foiled the plots to destruct Iran-Russia relations.

"The enemies [of the Islamic Republic of Iran] have mounted a propaganda campaign to instill the idea that the Russians' approach to Syria has changed and this is their plot to create disagreement and divide between Tehran and Moscow but their plots were foiled," said Shoaib Bahman, an international affairs pundit, in an interview with Mehr News Agency.

The interview was carried out concurrent with Mr. Velayati's visit to Moscow. Mr. Velayati, Leader's senior advisor, left Tehran for Moscow on Wednesday for a Thursday meeting with Russian President Putin. He was tasked to deliver the special messages of Iran's Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and President Rouhani to Mr. Putin.

Mr. Bahman asserted that Velayati's visit to Moscow was in line with former efforts of Tehran and Moscow to broaden bilateral ties in areas of economic and political cooperation.

"While we were witnessing an extensive campaign of consultations by American, Zionist regime, and Arab sides to influence Russia's stance towards the Islamic Republic of Iran or undermine the close ties between Tehran and Moscow, the timely visit of Mr. Velayati to Moscow happened and the messages of the Leader and president were delivered to Mr. Putin," he added.

"During this visit some important and



noteworthy areas were discussed. The first thing was expansion and continuation of bilateral relations of the two countries in political and economic as well as other dimensions. The second thing discussed in the meeting was the issue of the JCPOA considering the US withdrawal from the agreement and Trump's plan to pose more pressure on Iran especially in the field of economy. And finally the two sides exchanged views on how to tap Russia's international and political capacity," recounted the political commentator.

"In respect to regional issues, the Syrian crisis was another area of talks between Mr.

Velayati and Mr. Putin. While some countries were trying to wedge a gap between Iran and Russia in regards to Syrian crisis and at the same time were trying to persuade Iran, through the channel of Russians, to withdraw its forces from Syria or minimize its presence in Syria, the meeting showed that Iran and Russia have shared interests in this issue," he added.

"Based on what both Iranian and Russian sides have announced after Mr. Velayati's visit to Moscow, relatively good agreements have been reached between Iran and Russia which indicates that Israeli American efforts of the past months have been futile and Teh-

ran-Moscow relations are still expanding, progressing, and growing," he said.

"The other issue which is still of prime importance is the trilateral summit of Iran, Russia, and Turkey in the form of Astana talks in Tehran," Mr. Bahman reiterated.

"The core of issue is a positive point that the summit of three guarantor states of Syrian peace talks will be held in Tehran," he highlighted.

Prior to Velayati's visit to Moscow, Foreign ministry Spokesman Bahram Ghasemi said that, "Moscow and Tehran have many commonalities and shared interests in regional and international areas and that makes the meeting of Mr. Velayati and Mr. Putin in Kremlin all the more important."

Iranian Parliamentary Director General for International Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said, before Velayati's visit to Moscow, that Leader's message to Putin, delivered by Velayati, is about taking the opportunity to contain common threats.

Pointing to the trip of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to Moscow and repetition of his baseless and unfounded claims against Iran, Velayati in Moscow said, "the development trend of amicable ties between Iran and Russia is reciprocal and will not be affected by the intervention of other countries especially Zionist regime."

A Top Aide to Iran's Leader Ali Akbar Velayati said Fri. that during his visit to Moscow, Russia and Iran put an end to the rumors that Russia's cooperation with Resistance Front has ended, adding Putin and Erdogan will visit Tehran to hold talks on Syria.

Trump's record on race



1 → "The way he put this argument about changing our culture ... about Europe becoming less nice than it is, in other words, these people are here and they are making the culture crappy and making the place lesser, that's straight out of the white supremacist/white nationalist playbook," said Heidi Beirich, director of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project.

Claire M. Massey, a scholar at the Institute for British and North American Studies at Ernst-Moritz-Arndt Universität in Greifswald, Germany, said Trump's comments were "awfully painful," especially for the United Kingdom, where immigration has played a key role in rebuilding the country after World War II. "England and the United Kingdom wouldn't be what it is today without immigrants," she said.

It's to be noted here that according to a Quinnipiac University poll: 49% of people said they believe President Donald Trump to be a racist while 47% believe he is not. These results indicate that half of the American citizens believe that their president has racist views.

The fact is that Trump has repeatedly played with racist and xenophobic language and sentiments. He used to say that Mexico is sending rapists and criminals to the United States, and stated that the white supremacist violence in Charlottesville was a

In a joint article, David Leonhardt and Ian Prasad Philbrick, explain that why the current U.S. President is regarded as a racist figure: «Donald Trump has been obsessed with race for the entire time he has been a public figure.

«both sides» issue. The examples aren't limited to these two cases of course. His late order on separating children from their families raised lots of anger worldwide. Anyhow, there is no need to review here the list of Trump's offensive comments and policies that led to such a hatred among American citizens as well as other people around the world. This issue raised serious concerns among many experts since before Trump won the White House.

In a joint article, David Leonhardt and Ian Prasad Philbrick, explain that why the current U.S.

President is regarded as a racist figure: «Donald Trump has been obsessed with race for the entire time he has been a public figure. He had a history of making racist comments as a New York real-estate developer in the 1970s and '80s. More recently, his political rise was built on promulgating the lie that the nation's first black president was born in Kenya. He then launched his campaign with a speech describing Mexicans as rapists.»

They continue: «The media often falls back on euphemisms when describing Trump's comments about race: racially loaded, racially charged, racially tinged, racially sensitive, and Trump himself has claimed that he is "the least racist person." But here's the truth: Donald Trump is a racist. He talks about and treats people differently based on their race. He has done so for years, and he is still doing so.»

Zionist carnage on Gaza continues



1 → The Zionists also know fully well that they will sooner or later get the answer for their cowardly crimes. The resistance groups' response is not limited to carrying out direct operations (missile and rocket attacks) to the Israeli sites, but they may choose to pay back the Zionists by self-sacrifice and so on.

However, with the continued Zionist attacks, retaliation is the Palestinian resistance's right. Palestinians want to stabilize the situation and the Zionists are trying to prevent it. The question is whether Zionists are getting prepared for another big war. Given the growing strength of the Resistance Forces in the Gaza Strip, it does not seem likely that Zionist authorities, at least in the near future, will decide to impose an all out war on the Gaza Strip.

Know the psychology of ISIL

By Sajad Abedi

TEHRAN — In my opinion, the "ISIS phenomenon" is not new; it distinguishes the factors of this group; for example, the audience of the world's television networks is watching films that ISIS itself publishes. They have internet sites that send their films and photos to the world. On the other hand, the region is full of journalists because both the Syria war is underway and the Middle East regional issues are so important, so journalists can cover the moment.

In addition, the strategic importance of the Iraqi state and its oil resources was due to the fact that ISIS had its first attacks on oil and refineries, but it was effective in triggering their actions, but the thing that shook the world more than anything else, A pattern of behavior that the group represented during the capture of places; films from ISILs that were showing them on the road and checking cars, while carrying laptops with names of those who worked with the government, or any kind of their thoughts It was different from the ideology of ISIL.

The members of the group matched the driver identification card with the list of these names, and if their names were on this list, they would have been executed without trial!

These films spread throughout the world, and the wonder of the whole world prompted which ideology and religion could be, according to which, people were allowed to kill someone by merely naming and without trial, killing someone along the road and rejoicing.

The problem is that the members of this group, other than themselves, do not know the rest of the people as religious and religious, so they assume any violence and murder as loyal to their religious ideology, while many Muslims around the world, especially their classroom, are astonished at these actions and never do such acts godly and on the basis of religion and hate them.

■ Is Isis a Terrorist?

"Terror" means the creation of horror and fear. In fact, terror means the use of unexpected, shocking and unlawful violence against civilians to force a state or a society to accept demands based on an ideology.

But what does a terrorist want from a psychological point of view, what happens in society and what is his goal? They create psychological phenomena in society, through which they pressure the people and civilians to push them on to governments, and ultimately, to reach the demands of that group. The psychological phenomena that are caused by terrorist movements and their news in people are horror, discomfort and turmoil, unrest and restlessness, pessimism, anxiety and anxiety, anger, grief and tragedy.

Most importantly, the combination of all these unpleasant feelings is causing a lot of confusion, discomfort and insecurity inside people. But what makes the assassination possible? It is clear that those who do such behaviors do not consider themselves brutal or inhumane, and they have the absolute right to do such acts.

In recent years, investigations have been carried out on those who have had extreme behaviors. One of the most important and best investigated was Dr. Wagdey Luzzza at the University of Cantabria on the terrorism of religious groups such as al-Qaeda, with the Middle East approach, and the results could be extended to ISIS. According to the study, it turned out that in the West, most of those joining these groups are men aged 17 to 23, usually from middle-class families with relatively high academic and academic achievements in modern science with academic degrees.

But the results of the 1999 study also revealed that those who carry out terrorist acts in their own countries are people with low and unemployed education who have been roughly dropped out of the text of the community, and themselves have separated themselves from the context of society.

The leaders of these radical and radical religious groups, on average 15 years older than the followers and other members of the group, are about 40 years old, have a great deal of affection and influence, are able to inspire the respect of their followers and their own self, Their ideology, in such



a way that they can influence others, have intrinsically an influential personality, inspire others, encourage in the best possible way, usually do not fear death and are professors of death. Of course, in the leaders of these groups, there are people who, incidentally, completely escape death while encouraging others to die in the ideology.

■ Those who are attracted to groups like ISIS are abnormal?

There is no consensus on this. Some studies show that many of these people have personality disorders. Some even suffer from major psychiatric disorders. But the most important point of the personality that can be mentioned is that they have grown up in a family or a community that has created a feeling of self-sufficiency and humiliation.

These people have never been taken seriously and they feel that they are not first class citizens and their rights are different from the rights of other citizens. They feel like they are not treated to others. One of the most prominent examples of this situation may be seen in the behavior of Arab people living in the suburbs of Paris over the past 2-3 years. They were born in Paris and had a French passport, but their sense of belonging and attachment to the French community was not formed, which caused disturbances in Paris, which caused a lot of damage.

After that, the French government has just realized that it cannot continue to discriminate, and must provide grounds for joining these people to French culture while respecting Arab and Islamic culture in order not to face such rebellion and chaos. Another aspect of the personality of the members of such groups is that they do not have personality independence and they need to follow someone else with a higher appeal. They have no self-confidence and can only feel confident within an ideology, that is, ideology with rough behaviors so that nobody dares to stand in front of them.

People who lack the sense of empathy and sympathy with others, and they are not basically born of a child of conscience, suffered a severe damage to their self-image from a childhood, which is said to be bad in their family and society, they are a bad people, their religion is not worthless. , Have a brutal nationality, and they are constantly seeking to abandon their anger, and one of the best ways to do this is to join groups that can be abused by membership and violent behavior.

Members of these groups are pessimistic about the world around them and the world, and sometimes have a lot of mental employment, for example, under the control of a very violent parent or violent and punitive rule. Groups like ISIS will be able to empower them. People with such characteristics are so influenced and influenced by a kind of hypnosis that their contacts with the facts are discontinued and their perceptions of facts are confused.

One of the things that the leaders of these groups do well is brainwashing, that is, brainwashing ideological issues in the name of reality in the whole universe, and assuring them that the truth is what their leaders say.

Another group of researchers, according to their studies, has concluded that members of the terrorist groups do not have an abnormal character at all; many of them naturally, educated and highly adhered to their ideology, and are even willing to sacrifice their lives for their ideology. In fact, these people, through sacrificing their lives, feel useful, sacrificed and sacrificed and are proud to be in this way, which ultimately leads to a great name in this world and a fortune-telling to come place for them.

In my opinion, naturally, both groups of these people are seen in groups like ISIL, and perhaps we should look at their behavior in order to find out the reality. I believe that what distinguishes natural people from abnormal is the degree of conscientiousness.

Those who believe in devotion and sacrifice and honesty are surely not willing to surrender their captive family members without trial, roadside, and in front of their eyes.

Unfortunately, due to the actions and actions of the ISIS group, it seems that most of its members have an abnormal character and their thoughts are immortal and primitive. They are usually accustomed to learning to look very straightforward. The example of this is the declaration of the caliphate for the whole world from an area in Iraq and the burning of European citizens' passports to show that they are universal and do not think nationally! These people believe that they have established a government and a caliphate for the whole world, all of which shows their simplicity.

They see phenomena as absolute black or white, or good or bad. They see the world divided into two categories: the helpless rich, the exploited, and the poor, are miserable, and this means thinking all or nothing. Their beliefs are based on the rejection of the thoughts of others, rather than certain beliefs, and they consider all the rights to themselves. Moreover, they believe that their thinking for all ages and for all people and all the conditions is right, so they want to persuade everyone to force their ideology and if anyone opposes it, they seek to hurt him. Clearly, the analytical system of these groups is weak because the training that they have seen in their schools is more based on memory rather than analysis.

Finally, I emphasize that the formation of ISIS and its groups is the result of being repelled and humiliated by the family and society. Therefore, if any country wants a phenomenon like ISIS not to emerge, one must understand that it is necessary to respect the rights of citizenship and religion of the people.

(Source: Modern Diplomacy)

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ISA supports space-based city services

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Space Agency (ISA) supports development of space-based city services, ISA official Ali Taherzadeh said in a press release on Sunday. He called ground- and space-based infrastructures in the field of city services, information and transport as the main principles for development in this area.

ISA aims to expand public utility services nationwide and to develop its ecosystem for space-based city services, he said.

Recognition of national spatial and satellite database potentials to establish spatial database for city information, which is accessible for citizens as well as providing private and public services through the city are amongst the main aims of ISA, he said.



The development in quality and speed of city services is high on agenda by many of mayors and their advisors to solve urban problems, he said.

On the other side, connection and information infrastructures has a great development with the help of technology, which leads to increase in the quality of living in the cities, he said.

He pointed to the formation of smart cities in past decades as a global approach.

In smart cities, connection and city services are developed, urban transport and pollution are controlled, the quality of urban environment is increased, he said.

Smart cities characteristics

According to the Internet of the Things Agenda website a smart city is a municipality that uses information and communication technologies to increase operational efficiency, share information with the public and improve both the quality of government services and citizens welfare.

Emerging trends such as automation, machine learning and the internet of things (IoT) are driving smart city adoption.

In the transportation arena, smart traffic management is used to keep track of and analyze traffic flows to optimize streetlights to prevent roadways from becoming too congested based on time of day or rush-hour schedules.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Forget the popularity contest on social media



Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, Ning, Digg, MeetUp, blogs, etc., -- the number of social networking sites and tools is exploding. Social networking is the killer app of the Internet for everyone -- not just the texting teenybopper crowd. Such sites have breached the walls of the corporate firewall, are a part of our most important smartphone apps, are a vital tool for any serious job search, and are the new way to connect with current and new friends.

But using social networking tools and sites seems to be in direct conflict with another important principle of using the Internet -- protect your identity from identity theft. Participating in online social networking sites leaves a trail of personal information that can make stealing your identity a whole lot easier. What's a current-day Internet user to do? Should we go blithely along like a fish protected in a larger school of potential identity theft victims, or maybe we should forego social networking altogether? No and no. Instead each of us should take responsibility for protecting ourselves.

Put a number on something and suddenly you have a competition. The person with the most "friends" isn't necessarily the winner in social networking, unless of course you are running for president or you are in some type of recruiting, sales or media business. That's just more people, including possibly strangers, who now have access to more of your information. It is best to only friend people who really are or have become your friends. Your personal information has less opportunity for misuse. If you do get an unsolicited invite to connect, check them out first and try to figure out why you know them or if you even do at all.

For some, blogging and social networking sites are more than casual places for casual connections. Presidential candidates use MySpace and Facebook to reach out to constituents and hundreds of thousands of potential voters. Industry thought leaders and influencers use blogs and twitter to build up communities of readers and followers for business purposes.

(Source: networkworld.com)

Iran develops smart system for early autism screening

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — A group of Iranian experts have developed a smart comprehensive system for early autism screening by using smart systems and methods like smart toy cars, cognitive plays and smart screening system.

The system can be setup in kindergartens as well as medical centers in all parts of Iran and can be used without the need to a physician, executive director of the project announced.

Manuchehr Moradi Sabzevar said that the project will be set up in different parts of the country in coming two years.

Autistic children need a range of educational, social and medical services, which will be done through cooperation between psychiatrists, physicians and social workers, project co-worker Hamidreza Pouretmad explained.

The true process of recognition and rehabilitation for autistic children allow them



to have a better social life in the future, he explained.

He highlighted the importance of early recognition in autism, which leads to natural learning and development of children.

In a press release published by IRNA in late May, Mohammad Taqi Jaghtaei, an advisor to the Ministry of Health, said that it is anticipated that nearly 30,000 children under age five are suffering autism in the

country, as prevalence is estimated at 1 in 250 births, and with 1.5 million births per year in Iran some 30,000 are possibly suffering autism, he explained.

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are characterized by social-interaction difficulties, communication challenges and a tendency to engage in repetitive behaviors.

World Health Organization estimates that 1 in 160 children has an autism spectrum disorder worldwide.

Autism cannot be diagnosed at birth. A study, published in February 2010 in Science Daily, of the development of autism in infants, comparing the behavior of the siblings of children diagnosed with autism to that of babies developing normally, has found that the nascent symptoms of the condition -- a lack of shared eye contact, smiling and communicative babbling -- are not present at 6 months, but emerge gradually and only become apparent during the latter part of the first year of life.

Innovation ecosystem possible through knowledge-based economy: VP

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The innovation ecosystem would be possible through passing from oil-based economy to knowledge-based economy, Iran's vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari has said.

"Unfortunately the government is present in all sectors due to economy based on underground resources and it is considered as a weakness in innovation ecosystem," he said.

He pointed to total ranking of Iran, which has moved up 48 spots to place 65 in Global Innovation Index (GII) 2018 in comparison with 2013.

As per an annual ranking of countries by their capacity for, and success in, innovation, 2018 released on Wednesday Iran ranks 65 among 126 countries in GII 2018.

He also named Tehran as a city, which has a great potentiality to turn into a smart city in near future.

Tehran houses several leading universities and it already has all infrastructures to be a smart city, which would be possible through improvement of organizations, infrastructures and market, he said.

GII is announced according to two main factors namely innovation input and innovation output, he said.

Unfortunately Iran is not very powerful in innovation input, which includes organization, infrastructure, market and business complexity, he continued.

However, Iran has a good situation in human resources and research as well as some indicators like creative output and science and technology input, he said.



A checklist for your startup



Why do so many new businesses fail? Maybe it's because too many would-be entrepreneurs concentrate on the wrong issues before the actual startup happens.

The pre-startup checklist requires one to undergo a process of self-evaluation that will help answer the question, 'Am I prepared to start a business?' If more people considered the following four issues, there would likely be a higher success rate in future startups.

■ **Register social media profiles** Getting set up on the major social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, to start) will make marketing on them later easier. Also, it's important to reserve your brand as a profile name. Try Knowem.com to

reserve the names.

The starting point for growing your audience on any social network is strong profiles and pages for your social accounts. This requires including branded cover photos and profile photos. It also requires filling out all of your details. On Twitter, that's as simple as a 160-character bio, website link and location. Facebook wants a short description, website link, address and phone number. In short, fill out as many fields for your social profiles and pages as you can.

Next, share a few updates (five to ten) before you start your quest to build an audience. This will give people who visit your social accounts a reason to follow you.

(Source: smallbiztrends.com)

What is cloud computing?



Cloud computing is the delivery of on-demand computing services -- from applications to storage and processing power -- typically over the internet and on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Rather than owning their own computing infrastructure or data centers, companies can rent access to anything from applications to storage from a cloud service provider.

One benefit of using cloud computing services is that firms can avoid the upfront cost and complexity of owning and maintaining their own IT infrastructure, and instead simply pay for what they use, when they use it.

In turn, providers of cloud computing services can benefit from significant economies of scale by delivering the same

services to a wide range of customers.

Examples of cloud computing

Cloud computing underpins a vast number of services. That includes consumer services like Gmail or the cloud back-up of the photos on your smartphone, though to the services which allow large enterprises to host all their data and run all of their applications in the cloud. Netflix relies on cloud computing services to run its video streaming service and its other business systems too, and have a number of other organisations.

Software vendors are increasingly offering their applications as services over the internet rather than standalone products as they try to switch to a subscription model.

(Source: zdnet.com)

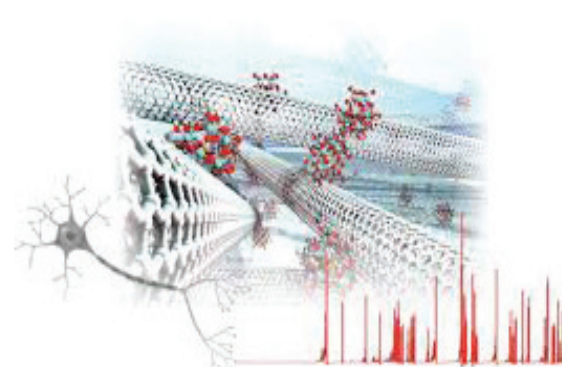
Brain function partly replicated by nanotechnology materials

The brain requires surprisingly little energy to adapt to the environment to learn, make ambiguous recognitions, have high recognition ability and intelligence, and perform complex information processing.

The two key features of neural circuits are "learning ability of synapses" and "nerve impulses or spikes." As brain science progresses, brain structure has been gradually clarified, but it is too complicated to completely emulate. Scientists have tried to replicate brain function by using simplified neuromorphic circuits and devices that emulate a part of the brain's mechanisms.

In developing neuromorphic chips to artificially replicate the circuits that mimic brain structure and function, the functions of generation and transmission of spontaneous spikes that mimic nerve impulses (spikes) have not yet been fully utilized.

A joint group of researchers from Kyushu Institute of Technology and Osaka University studied current rectification control in junctions of various molecules and particles absorbed on single-walled carbon nanotube (SWNT), using conductive atomic force microscopy (C-AFM), and discovered that a negative differential resistance was produced in polyoxometalate (POM) molecules absorbed on SWNT. This suggests that an unstable



dynamic non-equilibrium state occurs in molecular junctions.

In addition, the researchers created extremely dense, random SWNT/POM network molecular neuromorphic devices, generating spontaneous spikes similar to nerve impulses of neurons.

POM consists of metal atoms and oxygen atoms to form a 3-dimensional framework. Unlike ordinary organic molecules, POM can store charges in a single molecule. In this study,

it was thought that negative differential resistance and spike generation from the network were caused by nonequilibrium charge dynamics in molecular junctions in the network.

Thus, the joint research group led by Megumi Akai-Kasaya conducted simulation calculations of the random molecular network model complexed with POM molecules, which are able to store electric charges, replicating spikes generated from the random molecular network. They also demonstrated that this molecular model would very likely become a component of reservoir computing devices. Reservoir computing is anticipated as next-generation artificial intelligence (AI).

Their research results were published in Nature Communications ("A molecular neuromorphic network device consisting of single-walled carbon nanotubes complexed with polyoxometalate").

"The significance of our study is that a portion of brain function was replicated by nano-molecular materials. We demonstrated the possibility that the random molecular network itself can become neuromorphic AI," says lead author Hirofumi Tanaka.

It is expected that this group's achievements will greatly contribute to the development of neuromorphic devices of the future.

(Source: nanowerk.com)

Scientists peer into heart of hurricanes to improve intensity forecast

Despite advances in predicting where hurricanes are heading, forecasters are still struggling to determine a crucial factor in deciding emergency measures and evacuations: their intensity.

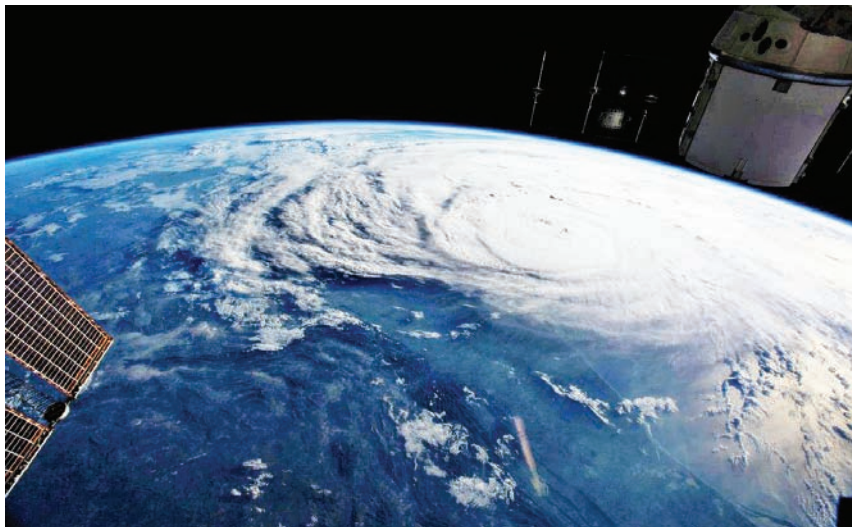
With a better way to predict a storm's power, or intensity, people on the ground will be more prepared in knowing whether a hurricane headed their way will cause devastating floods and winds that can uproot trees like Maria, which devastated Puerto Rico last year, or just shake branches and rattle windows.

The "fact that we have a much better understanding of where these storms are going to go is a great first step. We sort of have half the circle filled in, and we need to get that other half filled in, which is that intensity component," said Steve Bowen, director and meteorologist for insurer Aon Benfield's Impact Forecasting team.

■ Intensity predictions

Due to warming sea and air temperatures, there is also more energy in storms, which might affect intensity predictions, some climate scientists have said.

Measuring a hurricane's intensity quickly and formulating predictions on its changes is key to giving people on the ground time to prepare as the Atlantic hurricane season peaks this year after a devastating 2017 season.



Maria, one in a series of devastating hurricanes last year, killed an estimated 4,465 people, knocked out the electric grid and caused \$90 billion in damage in Puerto Rico.

The storm carved a destructive path in the Caribbean, killing more than 1,000 people in Haiti, according to data gathered by Reuters. There are more than a dozen scientific

There are more than a dozen scientific models for predicting hurricane intensity but they are of limited use, scientists say.

models for predicting hurricane intensity but they are of limited use, scientists say.

While the science of tracking a storm relies heavily on data about conditions on its periphery, predicting intensity relies on finding where its energy is coming from by measuring what is happening in the middle of it.

■ Measuring wind speeds

Typically, that means flying a hurricane hunter aircraft inside the storm, measuring wind speeds from a weather buoy as a storm passes overhead or relying on satellites that may fly over once every other day.

One project to obtain more data to predict intensity is the Cyclone Global Navigation Satellite System or CYGNSS for short, a constellation of eight low-orbit satellites launched by NASA in 2016.

Previous satellites, which flew over relatively infrequently, had trouble measuring ocean surface winds at the center of storms, with their signals often being degraded by heavy rain at the core, NASA said.

"For storms that are changing really quickly, you could miss something like rapid intensification," said Christopher Ruf, principal investigator for CYGNSS and a climate science professor at the University of Michigan.

(Source: Reuters)

Team may have figured out a historic climate puzzle



Thirteen thousand years ago, an ice age was ending, the Earth was warming, the oceans were rising. Then something strange happened – the Northern Hemisphere suddenly became much colder, and stayed that way for more than a thousand years.

For some time, scientists have been debating how this major climatic event – called the "Younger Dryas" – happened. The question has grown more urgent: Its answer may involve the kind of fast-moving climate event that could occur again.

On the basis of measurements taken off the northern coasts of Alaska and Canada in the Beaufort Sea, the scientists say they detected the signature of a huge glacial flood event that occurred around the same time.

This flood, they posit, would have flowed from the Arctic into the Atlantic Ocean and shut down the crucial circulation known as the "Atlantic meridional overturning circulation" (or AMOC) – plunging Europe and much of North America back into cold conditions.

"Even though we were in an overall warming period, this freshwater, exported from the Arctic, slowed down the vigor, efficiency of the meridional overturning, and potentially caused the cooling observed strongly in Europe," said Neal Driscoll, one of the study's authors and a professor at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

The result remains contested, though, with other researchers still arguing for different theories of what caused the Younger Dryas – including a very differently routed flood event that would have entered the

ocean thousands of miles away.

■ Warming of the planet

Nonetheless, the story is relevant because today, we're watching another – or rather, a further – deglaciation, as humans cause a warming of the planet.

There is also evidence that the Atlantic circulation is weakening again, although scientists certainly do not think a total shut-off is imminent, and are still debating the causes of what is being observed.

Either way, the new research underscores that as the Earth warms and its ice melts, major changes can happen in the oceans. And could happen again.

The researchers behind the current study, working on board the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy, analyzed sediments of deep ocean mud, which contain the shells of long-dead marine organisms called foraminifera.

In those shells, the scientists detected a long-sought-after anomaly recorded in the language of oxygen atoms.

The shells contained a disproportionate volume of oxygen-16, a lighter form (or isotope) of the element that is found in high levels in glaciers.

That is because oxygen-16, containing two fewer neutrons and therefore lighter than oxygen-18, evaporates more easily from the ocean but does not rain out again as readily. As a result, it often falls as snow at high latitudes and is stored in large bodies of ice.

"This is the smoking gun for fingerprinting glacial lake outbursts," Driscoll said. And that means the findings may also represent the trigger for the Younger Dryas.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Study finds deep subterranean connection between two Japan volcanoes



Scientists have confirmed for the first time that radical changes of one volcano in southern Japan was the direct result of an erupting volcano 22 kilometers (13.7 miles) away.

The observations from the two volcanoes -- Aira caldera and Kirishima -- show that the two were connected through a common subterranean magma source in the months leading up to the 2011 eruption of Kirishima.

The Japanese cities of Kirishima and Kagoshima lie directly on the border of the Aira caldera, one of the most active, hazardous, and closely monitored volcanoes in southern Japan. Identifying how volcanoes interact is critical to determine if and how an eruption can influence the activity of a distant volcano or raise the threat of a new strong explosive event.

The research team from the University of Miami's (UM) Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science and Florida International University analyzed deformation data from 32 permanent GPS stations in the region to identify the existence of a common magma reservoir that connected the two volcanoes.

Leading up to the eruption of Kirishima, which is located in the densely-populated Kagoshima region, the Aira caldera stopped inflating, which experts took as a sign that the volcano was at rest. The results from this new study, however, indicated that the opposite was happening -- the magma chamber inside Aira began to deflate temporarily while Kirishima was erupting and resumed shortly after the activity at Kirishima stopped.

■ Radical change

"We observed a radical change in the

behavior of Aira before and after the eruption of its neighbor Kirishima," said Elodie Brothelande, a postdoctoral researcher at the UM Rosenstiel School and lead author of the study. The "only way to explain this interaction is the existence of a connection between the two plumbing systems of the volcanoes at depth."

Prior to this new study, scientists had geological records of volcanoes erupting or collapsing at the same time, but this is the first example of an unambiguous connection between volcanoes that allowed scientists to study the underlying mechanisms involved. The findings confirm that volcanoes with no distinct connection at the surface can be part of a giant magmatic system at depth.

"To what extent magmatic systems are connected is an important question in terms of the hazards," said Falk Amelung, professor of geophysics at the UM Rosenstiel School and coauthor of the study. "Is there a lot of magma underground and can one eruption trigger another volcano? Up until now there was little or no evidence of distinct connections."

"Eruption forecasting is crucial, especially in densely populated volcanic areas," said Brothelande. "Now, we know that a change in behavior can be the direct consequence of the activity of its neighbor Kirishima."

The findings also illustrate that large volcanic systems such as Aira caldera can respond to smaller eruptions at nearby volcanoes if fed from a common deep reservoir but not all the time, since magma pathways open and close periodically.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Software-based chemical screen could minimize animal testing

Worldwide, millions of animals are used for toxicity testing of compounds intended for human and environmental use. Now, toxicologists have developed software that can accurately predict the outcomes of these assays.

The researchers compiled information from public databases including PubChem and the U.S. National Toxicology Program on 10 million chemical structures and existing chemical safety data to develop an algorithm that was at least as reliable than animal testing itself.

"There is no doubt that this is an innovative approach," Fiona Sewell, a program manager in toxicology and regulatory sciences at the National Centre for Replacement, Refinement, and Reduction of Animal in Research in the UK who was not involved in the work, writes in an email to The Scientist. "Time will tell whether, in practice it delivers a reliable alternative to methods based on experimental animals."

"I am extremely optimistic about this and other similar tools to limit animal testing," says Andrew Rowan, chief scientific officer for The Humane Society of the United States who was also not involved in the work. "Using animals to predict human safety is significantly flawed and very expensive. It takes three years to do comprehensive testing while a tool like this takes minutes."

For a fee, Illinois-based Underwriters Laboratories — an independent, global safety science company that partly funded this work — has already made the Hopkins team's software available to companies wanting to screen their products prior to submitting safety data to regulatory agencies for review.

(Source: thescientist.com)

Activating neurons in the brain might help jet lag: new study

New research from scientists at the city's Washington University discovered a possible way to fight jet lag. In a study published in Neuron on Thursday, the scientists detailed how activating neurons in the brain could shift your internal clock.

Jet lag occurs when someone travels across different time zones. A person's circadian rhythm — the physical, behavioral and mental changes that occur throughout the day — is set to his or her original time zone. When traveling to a new one, the circadian rhythm takes time to reset, causing fatigue, difficulty focusing or even stomach problems. Now there might be a way to skip that exhausting first day of traveling.

Circadian rhythms are controlled by your internal "clock," a cluster of 20,000 nerve cells, or neurons, in the part of the brain called the hypothalamus. These cells form the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN).

Erik Herzog, a professor at Washington University, whose lab conducted the study, said in a statement, "Just like your watch is good at keeping time but is useless unless you can set it to local time, we wondered how the body clock adjusts to its local time."

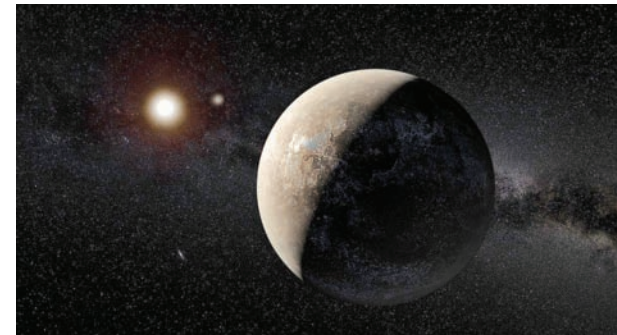
His team hypothesized that about 2,000 of the cells in the SCN controlled the others, and appropriately called these the "grandmother" neurons. These special neurons produce vasoactive intestinal polypeptide, or VIP. They use VIP to communicate with the other neurons to sync their rhythms, possibly each time someone enters a new time zone.

To test if activating the grandmother neurons would help reset someone's internal rhythm, the scientists kept mice in total darkness during the day and night, giving them no clues about the time. At the same time every day, the scientists activated the mice's grandmother cells to use VIP with optogenetics, a tool that uses light to control cells.

(Source: Newsweek)

Exoplanet just 11 light years away could support life, scientists claim

As scientists study the stars, we're finding exoplanets closer and closer to home. Proxima Centauri b is just a few light years away, and now astronomers have tantalizing new details about the second closest exoplanet known as Ross 128 b. Through analysis of the host star, researchers say the exoplanet is small, rocky, and could potentially support life.



The red dwarf star Ross 128 is just 11 light years away, which is in our own backyard in interstellar terms. Most exoplanets are detected using the transit method, where instruments like the Kepler spacecraft watch for brief dips in light as planets pass in front of their host stars. However, that only works if the plane of a solar system is aligned with ours. That is not the case with Ross 128. Astronomers used a decade of radial velocity data from the European Southern Observatory's HARPS spectrograph to show that a planet was tugging lightly on the star as it orbited.

Since Ross 128 b doesn't transit the star, it's difficult to study it directly. Therefore, a team from Brazil's Observatório Nacional and the Carnegie Institution studied the star with the aim of extrapolating details about the planet.

Using the Sloan Digital Sky Survey's APOGEE spectroscopic instrument, the team measured Ross 128's near-infrared spectrum to measure the abundance of carbon, oxygen, magnesium, aluminum, potassium, calcium, titanium, and iron. They determined that Ross 128 has iron levels similar to our sun, but there's more magnesium.

With an approximate mass from radial velocity measurements and the new star measurements, scientists were able to draw some conclusions about conditions on Ross 128 b. Exoplanets more than 1.7 times the radius of Earth are usually gas giants, but Ross 128 b is below that threshold.

(Source: extremetech.com)

BSI's Transactions Exceed 96,000bn Rials: CEO

The transactions volume of Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) surpassed 96,000 billion rials in the Iranian month of Khordad (June 22), the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

The growing trend of using Mobile Bank has been highly welcomed in banking system of the country among other e-banking systems due to the increased penetration rate of smart mobile bank, the report added.

In the meantime, new versions of Android 4.94 and iOS 5.96 of the mobile bank of Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) has provided

suitable ground for the financial exchanges and monetary transactions due to the widespread services.

According to the report, over 96,000 billion rials was transacted in the Iranian month of Khordad (June 21) using Mobile System of Bank Saderat Iran, showing a considerable hike as compared to a month earlier.

Mobile bank system of Bank Saderat Iran also experienced a considerable 53 percent growth in terms of transactions in

the Iranian month of Ordibehesht (May 21), the report added.

Adding ID field of depositing fund to the second stage of card-to-card money transfer, modification of geographical data of branches, possibility of sharing transaction record, displaying more complete information in inter-banking services are considered as saline important changes conducted by the bank in promoted version of Android 4.94 and 5.96 iOS version, the issue of which has provided more facilities for mobile users

of the bank.

The customers, who repay their received facilities in installments, will receive the below messages and information after each payment terms as follows: type of facilities, number of facilities, amount of each installments of the balance of liability, possible fine, date of first unpaid installments, liability of remaining facilities, number of total installments, number of installments paid, total installments and possible fine paid, maturity of last date of installments, etc.

Pakistan Embassy Commercial Envoy Visits BMI Museum

In line with the special emphasis of the government on exclusion of banks from non-business activities, Bank Melli Iran (BMI) has transferred stocks of subsidiary companies to the private sector through tender notices and after conducting legal procedures, the

Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

Given the special emphasis of the CEO of the bank and in line with the implementation of Article 16 of the Law on the Removal of Competitive Production Barriers as well as promotion of financial system of the country,

weekly sessions of the Working Group for divesting stocks of the company was held regularly in the current year (started March 21, 2018), the report added.

However, the bank divested 14,000 billion rials worth of stocks of its subsidiaries to the

private sector.

After proceeding legal procedures through tender notices, the bank managed to stand at the first rank in divesting stocks of its subsidiary companies, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank ended.

‘Dirt cheap’ water in Iran causes thoughtless overconsumption: official

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — Water is dirt cheap in Iran, an official with the Department of Environment said, regretting that no one seems to care about water economy and this is the driver of the nation’s thoughtless overconsumption. Phasing out water subsidies and regulation of pricing policies regarding water would help in addressing water shortage, ISNA quoted Ali Moridi as saying on Sunday.



In lieu of paying subsidies the government could allot the funds to provide the citizens with water conservation devices, the expert suggested.

He went on to say that the government is certainly concerned about water shortage and feel the obligation to respond to its threats but some officials still believe that right prices of water would affect the livelihood of people and put people into a lot of expenses but these are just “a bear’s service”.

Raising public awareness and encouraging public participation by educating them about water shortage would enable them to fight water shortage, he added.

According to CETAQUA water economy means the definition and analysis of indicators related to the environmental efficiency of businesses, emphasizing the water footprint of products, processes and production units, combined with the development of cost-effective and cost-benefit methodologies to support decision making.

Consumers have little incentive to conserve as water isn’t priced in a way that encourages conservation right pricing policies would definitely result in water conservation and even increases the revenues earned by the government and can be spent on water conservation methods as well, Moridi highlighted.

According to the European Commission in many parts of the world, demand for water is outstripping the availability of water. Water is increasingly seen as a scarce resource that has an economic value, and thus needs to be managed carefully to ensure that it is used effectively. This needs to be achieved whilst managing competing demands for water from different water users, such as households, industry and agriculture, as well as ensuring the environment has enough water to sustain ecosystems. Setting the price of water is a key tool used to support water management decisions; water that is underpriced may lead to its unsustainable use.

Govt. allots \$310m to quake-hit Kermanshah

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN**—The Iranian government has allocated some 13 trillion rials (nearly \$310 million) in loans for housing projects in quake-stricken areas of the western province of Kermanshah, the province’s governor general has said.

Some 98,000 individuals have applied for the housing loans, of them 88,000 have received the financial aid, IRNA quoted Houshang Bazvand as saying on Sunday.

Bazvand explained that some 220 billion rials (nearly \$5.2 million) in loans has so far been paid for job creation in the region, but the sum was not enough.

Banks should ease the process for granting loans for job creation, he added.

On November 12, 2017 a destructive magnitude 7.3 earthquake shook Kermanshah. Some 90,000 houses were partly or completely damaged by the tremor in urban and rural areas of the region. Sadly, the quake took over 660 lives and left more than 10,000 injured. Those quake victims who have lost their homes spent a bitter winter in tents and conex boxes.

LEARN ENGLISH

Farm Animals

A: Isn’t this great? I always wanted to own a farm, live out in the **country**, and grow my own food!
B: This is very beautiful. Though I have to **confess**, I **don’t know the first thing about** farming!
A: That’s fine! Don’t worry about it!
B: What was that?
A: Relax, it was just a goat!
B: And that?
A: It’s just the cows that are **grazing** over there. We can **milk** them later.
B: What was that?
A: Honey, seriously, it’s just a sheep. Relax!
A: Relax, that was just the horses and donkeys that are in the **stable**.
B: You know what? I don’t think I can **hack it** here out in the countryside. I’m going back to the city!
■ **Key vocabulary**
country: rural areas
confess: to admit something that you feel embarrassed about
don’t know the first thing about: know little about
graze: to feed in a meadow or pasture
milk: get the milk from a cow
stable: a building for the shelter and feeding of domestic animals, especially horses and cattle
hack it: be able to manage or manage successfully
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
stall: a compartment for one domestic animal in a barn or shed
pig sty: a pen or enclosure for pigs; pigpen
pen: a small enclosure for domestic animals
chicken coop: an enclosure or cage for chickens
herd: a group of cattle or other domestic animals of a single kind kept together

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Add insult to injury: Hour al-Azim wildfire is still haunting Khuzestan

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — While the southwestern province of Khuzestan is a victim of recurrent sand and dust storms, smoke rising from a wildfire in Hour al-Azim wetland, which has lasted for almost two weeks now, is adding insult to injury.

The raging fire sweeping through Hour al-Azim, a trans-boundary body of water shared between Iran and Iraq, started on July 2 and originated mainly in the Iraqi part of the wetland, according to Mehr news agency.

However, the wildfire is belching out choking smoke in many cities, including Ahvaz, Howeyzeh, Mahshahr, Susangerd, Bostan and even Shadegan in the province.

The report stated that occasionally fire breaks in canebrakes in parts of the wetland located in Khuzestan, but it is soon extinguished by Iranian forces. Also as the wetland is filled with water in Iran the fire cannot spread and extinguishes within a few hours.

Khuzestan provincial department of environment chief Ahmadreza Lahijanzadeh has said that so far some 13,000 hectares of the wetland is burnt in fire in Iraq.

Lahijanzadeh has also explained that southward winds would ignite the fire as the southern parts of the wetland are dried and more prone to catch fire.

He also highlighted that photos of burnt buffalos going viral on news agencies and social media are not related to the recent events.

Joint committees, including Iranian and Iraqi officials are following up on the issue, he added.

Nazem Soboti, Howeyzeh governor, also explained that some 300 hectares of Hour al-Azim is already burnt in Khuzestan.

All health care centers are on call in Howeyzeh and on average some 10 patients suffering respiratory diseases sparked by the smoke from fires referred to the centers every day.

Iran has expressed readiness to send helicopters to Iraq combat wildfires, Soboti said, adding that satellite images indicates that the fire is extinguishing in some parts of the wetland but as the land area affected by the fire are vast some part are still burning in fire.



While the fire is almost contained in Iran the smoke is still a health threat for citizens of the southwestern province.

According to Air Now website smoke is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles produced when wood and other organic materials burn. The biggest health threat from smoke is from fine particles. These microscopic particles can penetrate deep into your lungs. They can cause a range of health problems, from burning eyes and a runny nose to aggravated chronic

heart and lung diseases. Exposure to particle pollution is even linked to premature death.

People with heart or lung disease, persons with diabetes, children and elderlies are those who are more at risk.

Foul air quality is not the only problem the province is struggling with. Early in July protests sparked in the cities of Khorramshahr and Abadan in the province mainly over the poor quality of water and increased salinity of municipal water.

Swimming with baby whales to be banned worldwide



calves should not be approached closer than that distance. Encounters should be limited to 30 minutes, it suggests.

Experts at the World Cetacean Alliance, who have spent 18 months consulting whale-watching firms and marine life experts, said they were confident the tour companies involved would follow the guidelines and urged other businesses to follow suit.

Scientists have revealed through various studies that pressure from swimmers getting close to whales can harm the survival of their young, the campaigners claimed.

Calves are particularly vulnerable to disturbance, and tourists getting close to mother and calf pairs can reduce resting and nursing times, increase the risk of predation by separating mothers and calves, and use up the creatures’ vital energy reserves as they try to avoid swimmers and boats.

The alliance says evidence is increasing

that interacting with dolphins and whales “has a negative effect on the very animals that people love to see”, arguing the guidelines “will ensure that future whale and dolphin watching trips offer an incredible experience for tourists whilst actively helping to protect whales, dolphins and our oceans through marine conservation initiatives, community education projects, and research”.

Awareness of the need for wild animals to live as close to nature as possible has gradually spread worldwide, with campaigns to boycott SeaWorld taking off.

The alliance, a partnership of conservation charities, scientists and tour firms, says although the guidelines balance the protection of cetaceans with the practicalities of running tour businesses, this is the first time anyone has drawn a line at swimming with baby whales.

Demand for swimming with whales in the

wild has accelerated in recent years, thanks in part to natural-history documentaries, creating a boom in “swim-with” and snorkelling tours in tropical waters where whales and dolphins nurse their calves.

The industry is now believed to be worth £1.6bn a year.

Humpback whales live for 50 years or more and travel further than the circumference of the Earth, but calves must first rest, suckle and learn from their mothers for six months, without being disturbed by people in the sea, according to the experts.

Dylan Walker, head of the alliance, said: “We talked to a lot of stakeholders around the world and felt that there was increasing concern for whale calves in particular.

“Sperm whales, for example, often leave their calves alone at the surface to dive deep for food, returning to the surface for only short periods. This means the calves are vulnerable while alone, but they must also maximise the brief time available when their mothers return to them.

“So the disturbance likely during ‘swim-with’ encounters represents too high a risk to the animals.”

He added: “Rather than closing the door to these activities, we have created a comprehensive set of best-practice guidelines to ensure any impacts are minimised. These include some key lessons learnt from best practice whale- and dolphin-watching businesses from across the WCA partnership.”

Sophie Lewis, author of the guidelines, said: “The decision to exclude swim-with baby whales from the guidelines wasn’t taken lightly and the collaboration towards this decision was made with both tour operators and researchers alike.”

“Whales are critical to ocean health,” said Mr Walker. “They reinvigorate ecosystems by bringing food and nutrients to the surface, which even helps our oceans absorb more carbon from the atmosphere so every baby whale is precious.” (Source: Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → €

Tehran relief foundation to earmark \$30m for generating jobs

Tehran province’s department of Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation will spend some 1.3 trillion rials (nearly \$30 million) on generating jobs for 8,000 financially struggling people in the province this calendar year (ending on March 20, 2019), the foundation’s provincial director has said. The money will be allocated to the individuals in forms of low-interests loans, Fars news agency quoted Mohsen Valiee as saying on Friday. Under the scheme employers who recruits people in financial distress are exempt from paying their share of the employees’ premium for two years or can receive low-interest loans, Valiee added.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“un-“

- **Meaning:** remove, reverse, not
- **For example:** Maggie carefully **unpacked** the gifts she had bought.

PHRASAL VERB

Come forward

- **Meaning:** to offer help to someone, or offer to do something
- **For example:** The police appealed for witnesses to come forward with information.

IDIOM

Hit the nail on the head

- **Explanation:** used to say that what someone has said is exactly right
- **For example:** He hit the nail on the head when he said this company needs more HR support.

Syrian forces liberate Quneitra village near occupied Golan

A Syrian village in the strategic southwestern Quneitra Province, which borders Jordan, Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, has returned to government control, as reported by a Britain-based monitoring group.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported on Sunday the recapture of Masharah, which lies about 11 kilometers from the occupied Golan.

“Around 800 missiles and shells have been fired against several areas in the province and fierce fighting continues on the ground,” SOHR head Rami Abdel Rahman said.

The monitoring group further reported the shelling of terrorist targets in the town of al-Haara in Quneitra’s neighboring Dara’a Province.

Since June 19, the Syrian army has been conducting a major counter-terrorism operation in Dara’a, which also borders Jordan and the Golan Heights.

On July 12, Syria’s al-Watan newspaper said that the army had deployed reinforcements to Quneitra to launch a “broad military operation” and wrest control of the province.

The full liberation of both Dara’a and Quneitra by Syrian government forces would cut the much-reported collaboration between Israel and anti-Damascus militants operating in the two regions.

In recent days, Dara’a militants have been handing over their heavy weapons to Syrian government forces and leaving the region in negotiated surrender deals mediated by Russia.

According to the SOHR, pro-Damascus forces are now holding more than 80 percent of Dara’a Province.

Israel has been on high alert in recent days as Syrian government forces advance against foreign-backed terrorists near the Golan Heights.

Tel Aviv has frequently attacked military targets inside Syria in an attempt to prop



up terrorist groups that have been suffering defeats at the hands of Syrian government forces.

The Israeli regime has also been providing weapons to anti-Damascus militants as well as medical treatment to Takfiri elements wounded in Syria.

■ **West scrambles to evacuate White Helmets from Syria amid assassination threats**

Elsewhere, Western countries have reportedly been scrambling to evacuate “volunteer” White Helmets from Syria, who have been accused of cooperating with Takfiri terrorists and staging false flag gas attacks.

CBS News broadcasting service reported on Saturday that White Helmets members are in danger of assassination and in need of rescue as the Syrian army intensifies its counter-terrorism operation in the country’s southern part.

The report said the issue of the White Helmets’ withdrawal from Syria had been raised with the United States President

Donald Trump in multiple conversations with allied countries on the sidelines of the July 11-12 NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) summit in Brussels.

The Netherlands, Britain, France, Canada and Germany have been trying to find a way to get an estimated 1,000 White Helmets volunteers and their family members out of Syria, the report added.

British Prime Minister Theresa May brought up the issue during her meeting with Trump in Britain, and that the topic may also be discussed at Trump’s upcoming summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The White Helmets was founded in Turkey in 2013 by former British MI5 officer James Le Mesurier.

Since its establishment, the group has received at least \$55 million from the British Foreign Office, \$23 million or more from the U.S. Office of Transition Initiatives and untold millions from Qatar.

U.S. officials and Western diplomats say

the evacuation has not been formalized on the agenda of the July 16 Trump-Putin meeting due to uncertainty about the Russians’ help in the process, The CBS News said.

A U.S. government official stressed that efforts to evacuate the White Helmets from Syria is in line with the Trump administration’s plans for a withdrawal from the country.

Back in March, Trump ordered the State Department to suspend \$200 million in recovery funds for Syria, including aid to the White Helmets, amid a review of the future of the U.S. role in the war-torn country.

Three months later, however, Trump authorized the release of \$6.6 million in previously frozen funding for a volunteer organization, without referring to the \$193.4 million that remains frozen.

Both Damascus and Moscow have accused the volunteer group of having staged the suspected chemical weapons attack in the town of Douma in Syria’s Eastern Ghouta region on April 7.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad described the White Helmets as “a branch of al-Qaeda and al-Nusra” militant groups and a “PR stunt” by the U.S., Britain and France.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the group claims to be a humanitarian NGO (non-governmental organizations), but actually supports terrorists and covers up their crimes.

“The White Helmets not only feel at home on Jabhat al-Nusra and Daesh (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/ISIL)-controlled territories but openly sympathize with them and provide them with information and even financial support. How is that for double standards? There is documentary evidence of the White Helmets’ involvement in some of al-Nusra’s operations and cover-up over civilian deaths,” she said.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. official: Russia using social media to divide Americans

The United States homeland security secretary said on Saturday there are no signs that Russia is targeting this year’s midterm elections with the same “scale or scope” it targeted the 2016 presidential election.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen spoke at a convention of state secretaries of state, an event that’s usually a low-key affair highlighting voter registration, balloting devices and election security issues that don’t get much public attention. But coming amid fresh allegations into Russia’s attempts to sway the 2016 election, the sessions on election security have a higher level of urgency and interest.

Nielsen said her agency will help state and local election officials prepare their systems for cyber-attacks from Russia or elsewhere. She said the U.S. intelligence officials are seeing “persistent Russian efforts using social media, sympathetic spokespeople and other fronts to sow discord and divisiveness amongst the American people, though not necessarily focused on specific politicians or political campaigns.”

The conference of top state election officials she addressed was sandwiched between Friday’s indictments of 12 Russian military intelligence officers alleged to have hacked into Democratic party and campaign accounts and Monday’s long-awaited meeting between President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Trump has never condemned Russia over meddling in the 2016 election despite the findings of all top U.S. intelligence agencies, and the Kremlin has insisted it didn’t meddle in the U.S. election. In the past, Trump has reiterated Putin’s denials, but this week he said he would bring up the issue when they meet on Monday in Finland.

“All I can do is say, ‘Did you?’” Trump said days ago at a news conference in Brussels. “And, ‘Don’t do it again.’ But he may deny it.”

Some of the state officials who run elections say it’s important for Trump, a Republican, to take a tougher stance to avoid having the public’s confidence in fair elections undermined.

“I believe as commander in chief he has an obligation to address it and, frankly, put Putin and any other foreign nation that seeks to undermine our democracy on notice that the actions will not be tolerated,” California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, a Democrat, said in an interview this week.

Some of his peers declined to go that far. “I don’t go around telling the president what to do,” said Jay Ashcroft, the Republican secretary of state in Missouri.

Trump portrays the investigation as a partisan attack, but not all Republicans see it that way. This month, the Republicans and Democrats on the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee backed the findings of an assessment from the U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia tried to interfere in the 2016 election and acted in favor of Trump and against his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton.

As part of that effort, Russian hackers targeted at least 21 states ahead of the election and are believed to have breached the voter registration system in at least one, Illinois, investigators say. Without naming the state, Friday’s indictment said the Russian intelligence officers stole information on about 500,000 voters from the website of one board of elections, a breach undetected for three weeks.

There’s no evidence results were altered, but the attempts prompted the federal government and states to re-examine election systems and tighten their cybersecurity.

Federal officials also say it’s possible that malware might have been planted that could tamper with voting or paralyze computer systems in future elections.

The election officials talked about technical details of blocking an incursion.



Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman, a Republican, told her peers how her state is using its National Guard to help test and shore up cybersecurity for elections. She said it’s important to make it clear to voters that the military is not running elections and does not have access to election data.

Some state officials also said Homeland Security is becoming more helpful in sharing information.

On Friday, a federal grand jury indicted the 12 Russian intelligence officers on charges they hacked into Democratic campaign networks in 2016 and then stole and released tens of thousands of documents. The indictment says one of the intrusions came that summer, on a vendor whose software is used to verify voter registration information. The indictment references a spoof email it says the Russian agents sent to more than 100 election-managing customers of the vendor to try to get more information.

(Source: AP)

EU’s Mogherini visits Libya to reopen bloc’s mission

Federica Mogherini, the European Union’s foreign policy chief, has visited Libya’s capital, Tripoli, to reopen the bloc’s diplomatic presence and border assistance mission.

“The return of the diplomatic presence of the EU in Libya will further strengthen co-operation with the government, local authorities and the United Nations,” the bloc said in a statement.

The EU relocated its Libya delegation to Tunis in 2014, as the country was mired into chaos after the 2011 uprising that toppled and killed Dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

Mogherini met the head of Libya’s United Nations-backed Government of National Accord, Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj and

Foreign Minister Mohamed al-Taher Siala, alongside the UN’s envoy to Libya, Ghassan Salame, the EU said.

“Our presence here will be now much more regular. I had an excellent meeting with President al-Sarraj, we discussed the support the European Union is giving to Libya, to the Libyan people,” Mogherini said.

“We are the first partner for Libya when it comes to humanitarian aid, when it comes to development cooperation but also we are the first economic partner for Libya and with the president we have discussed not only the political support the European Union is giving to the political process, also the preparation for elections, but also we have

discussed new projects,” she added.

Rival Libyan leaders agreed to a French-brokered deal in May to hold elections by the end of this year, but there are still concerns over whether a vote can take place.

The EU is eager to see stability return to Libya to help stem the flow of thousands of African migrants making the perilous journey across the Mediterranean from North Africa.

Last month, its 28 leaders agreed to consider setting up “disembarkation platforms” outside the bloc, most likely in North Africa, in a bid to discourage migrants boarding EU-bound boats.

Humanitarian groups have been especially

critical of the likelihood that migrants would be sent to chaotic situations in Libya, where refugees have faced abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

Mogherini also discussed training Libya’s coastguard and securing the country’s land borders, the EU statement added.

She told Sarraj that she was “relieved” that a recent oil crisis had been resolved.

The Tripoli-based National Oil Corporation (NOC) announced the re-opening of four oil terminals after renegade General Khalifa Haftar agreed to hand over control of the ports.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Civilian deaths in Afghanistan hit record high: UN

United Nations (UN) figures show that the number of civilian deaths in Afghanistan’s long-running conflict hit a record high of 1,692 fatalities in the first six months of 2018.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA, said in a report published on Sunday that the death toll was one percent higher than a year earlier and the highest since the group began keeping records in 2009.

Militant attacks and bombings were reported as the leading causes of the deaths in the war-torn country.

Another 3,430 civilians sustained injuries in the conflict, down by five percent from the same period last year, according to UNAMA.

Overall civilian casualties — 5,122 — fell three percent year on year.

The UN mission, established at the request of the Afghan government, said the record high death toll came despite an unprecedented ceasefire between Afghan security forces and the Taliban militants last month.

On June 9, the Taliban announced in a statement that they had agreed to a week-long truce deal proposed by the Afghan government for Eid al-Fitr, which marked the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

After the truce period terminated, Taliban terrorists rejected a government-proposed ceasefire extension and attacked security forces in numerous districts of eastern and southern Afghanistan.

Taliban’s five-year rule over at least three quarters of Afghanistan came to an end when the United States and its allies invaded the country on October 7, 2001 as part of Washington’s so-called war on terror.

Despite the continued presence of foreign troops across the country, the Taliban have been involved in widespread militancy, killing thousands of civilians as well as Afghan security forces and displacing tens of thousands of people across the country ever since.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit has also taken advantage of the ongoing chaos in Afghanistan to establish a foothold in the country and recruited some of its members from among Taliban defectors.

■ **Dozens of Taliban militants killed in Kunduz**

Meanwhile, Afghan government forces killed at least 36 members of the Taliban terrorist group in the country’s northern province of Kunduz on Saturday evening.

Abdul Baqi Noristani, the provincial police chief, said the militants were killed during Afghan security forces’ airstrikes and ground operations in Chardara district of Kunduz, adding that at least ten other militants were also wounded.

The Kunduz police chief said several Taliban hideouts were targeted and the militants suffered heavy casualties during the Afghan airstrikes.

Noristani did not offer details about potential casualties among Afghan civilians or security forces.

(Source: agencies)

Iraq overtakes Saudi Arabia as oil supplier to India

Iraq has for the first time in many years been able to take over Saudi Arabia in exporting crude oil to India – the world’s fastest-growing oil consumer.

The latest market figures show that India’s oil imports from Iraq over the past fiscal year of 2017-18 stood at 45.7 million tons (MT) thus indicating a rise of 21 percent compared to the previous year when the figure stood at 37.7 MT.

In value terms, India imported \$17.5 trillion worth of crude oil from Iraq last financial year, a huge 51 per cent increase over \$11.6 trillion worth of crude imported from that nation in the previous fiscal, according to a report published Energy World news website.

India imported 220 million tons (MT) of crude oil during the last financial year, 3 percent more than 214 MT imported in the previous fiscal (2016-17). In value terms, the country’s crude oil imports rose 25 per cent to \$87.8 billion in 2017-18.

Imports from Saudi Arabia in 2017-18 stood at 36.1 MT indicating a decline of around 8 percent from the previous year when the figure stood at 39.3 MT.

In value terms, India imported \$15,263 million worth of crude oil from Saudi Arabia last fiscal, a growth of 12 per cent as compared to \$13,674 million imported in 2016-2017, due to increase in international crude oil prices, the report added.

“This is the first time that Iraq has overtaken Saudi Arabia as the largest crude oil supplier to India,” said K Ravichandran, Senior Vice-President at research and rating agency ICRA.

“Iraq has been steadily ramping up its production and exports in the last five years and has been seeking to aggressively increase market share in the global oil market. As part of this strategy, the nation also tends to give higher discounts than comparable crudes, which works out well for the Indian refiners,” Ravichandran was quoted as saying by Energy World.

12 years and the victory still echoes

➡ Indeed, the victory over the global hostile assault over Lebanon in July 2006 was a collective work of perseverance, steadfastness and courage. The Lebanese solidarity with their resistance and the popular and political alliance of the different factions and parties, despite some local voices which conspired against its compatriots; has obviously led to this historical and phenomenal victory.

As emphasised by his Eminence, Hezbollah’s Secretary General, Sayyed Hasan Nassrullah, the overall situation before the 2006 war is thoroughly different than what will come after. Today evidently, the resistance and its masses show consistent willingness and readiness to expose the imperialist atrocities and violations against humanity and to preserve their own national resource and geostrategic territories.

The victorious battle of Daraa, in which the Syrian south has been recently liberated by the Syrian brave army and its allies; after subduing the terrorist armed factions, has added to resistance power and persistence. The battle of the south has absolutely drawn the coming political route in Syria. Besides, it has emphasised the battle of liberating Palestine’s foreordination.

Certainly, the 2006 brilliant victory has been a turning point in the history of struggle against Zionism. The resistance along with the Lebanese nation have foiled the enemies’ plots during the 33-day war and taught them an unforgettable lesson.

Protests break out in Chicago after a man is fatally shot by police

Protesters in Chicago are demanding answers after the fatal shooting of a man by police prompted violent confrontations in the Illinois city.

“The whole damn system is guilty as hell,” dozens chanted on Saturday just hours after police shot and killed the man in the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago.

The city’s police patrol chief Fred Waller told reporters late on Saturday that the man who was killed was shot after police officers on foot tried to question him because “the bulge around his waistband” suggested he was armed. The man became combative and eventually broke free from the officers, Waller said.

“They thought he appeared to be reaching for a weapon, which he did have a weapon on him, and the officers tragically shot him,” Waller told reporters, adding that police recovered a semi-automatic weapon.

The man, who has not been identified, was pronounced dead at the hospital.

Almost immediately after the shooting, a crowd of onlookers and activists descended on the scene. Video circulating on social media shows tense confrontations between police and protesters.

Local journalist Nader Issa, who reports for the Chicago Sun-Times, wrote on Twitter that at one point the situation

“severely escalated when Chicago Police officers moved their line forward”.

He added: “Officers hit multiple protesters with batons, and protesters punched officers back.”

Issa also said that he was shoved to the ground by police who “smacked” his phone out of his hand.

Chief Waller told reporters that the crowd became combative, throwing bottles and jumping on top of a squad car.

Police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi later tweeted that police had cleared the scene and four demonstrators had been arrested.

(Source: agencies)

It might be time to leave Chelsae - Hazard

Chelsea forward Eden Hazard says “it might be time to discover something different” after six “wonderful years” at Stamford Bridge. The 27-year-old, who scored as Belgium beat England 2-0 in Saturday’s World Cup third-place play-off, has been linked with a move to Real Madrid.

“You know my preferred destination,” Hazard told reporters on Saturday. “I can decide if I want to stay or go but Chelsea will make the final decision - if they want to let me go.”

Chelsea sacked manager Antonio Conte on Friday and replaced him with fellow Italian Maurizio Sarri, within 24 hours.

The Blues then announced the signing of Italy midfielder Jorginho from Napoli. Hazard, who has scored three goals at the World Cup - including Belgium’s second against England - has two years left on his contract at Chelsea.

Since joining them from French club Lille for a reported £32m in June 2012, he has helped Chelsea win two Premier League titles, the FA Cup, League Cup and Europa League.

In June 2017, Hazard said he would “listen” if Real Madrid offered him a deal, but added he could stay at Chelsea “for many years”.

“We all have dreams. It could be Spain, it could be staying with Chelsea,” he added.

In May, former Chelsea assistant boss Steve Clarke said the club may need to sell Hazard “to help fund other transfers”.

(Source: BBC)

Rooney comes off bench to make winning DC United debut

Wayne Rooney came off the bench to make his first MLS appearance and help DC United record their biggest home win of the season against Vancouver Whitecaps.

The ex-Everton and Manchester United forward was introduced 10 minutes after half-time to huge acclaim from the 20,000 crowd at the new Audi Field.

England’s record scorer set up Paul Arriola for a goal and almost added one himself with a header in the 3-1 win.

Earlier, he watched England lose their World Cup play-off 2-0 to Belgium.

It is two weeks since Rooney left Everton to take on the challenge of reversing the fortunes of DC United, who are bottom of MLS’s Eastern Conference.

Coach Ben Olsen did not feel the 32-year-old had trained enough to start the match, but he introduced the forward shortly after the home fans had chanted “we want Rooney” as he warmed up.

Within a minute, Rooney was lining up a free-kick, which he drove into the wall. It was the last time he gave the ball away.

Olsen said afterwards he suspected Rooney found the pace of the game a bit slow, but his link play, touch, and economy of movement helped speed up his side’s attacks.

Playing as an orthodox centre-forward, his best moments were simple passes that led to two well-taken goals and a near-post header that was creeping in until it was clawed away by goalkeeper Brian Rowe.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Sampaoli to leave Argentina by mutual consent after dismal World Cup

Former Sevilla boss Jorge Sampaoli has reportedly agreed to part company with Argentina.

According to AS, Sampaoli will receive €1.4m from Argentine Football Association (AFA) in the way of compensation, despite being liable for €17m if the country sacked him.

The 58-year-old took over from Edgardo Bauza 13 months ago and initially turned around the Albiceleste’s fortunes, qualifying them for the 2018 World Cup.

However, a 6-1 defeat to Spain in March was followed by a disappointing finals campaign, which ended at the last-16 stage after a 4-3 loss to France.

He was also heavily criticised for a perceived overreliance on Barcelona’s Lionel Messi and some of his team selections, among them dropping Serie A top goalscorer Mauro Icardi from his squad for Russia and barely using Paulo Dybala.

It now remains to be seen whether the former Chile Coach will lead out Argentina’s Under-20 team at a tournament in the Valencian town of L’Alcudia, which starts on July 28, having previously agreed to do so.

Sampaoli’s only European experience came at Sevilla during the 2016-17 campaign, when he guided the Andalusians to fourth in La Liga and the Champions League last 16.

(Source: Football Espana)

Napoli President: ‘We were offered Ronaldo’

Napoli President Aurelio De Laurentiis insists his club were offered the chance to sign Cristiano Ronaldo from Real Madrid.

The Portuguese is joining the Partenopei’s Serie A rivals Juventus for a fee of around €100m, following nine years at the Bernabeu. However, reports yesterday surfaced that the 33-year-old’s initial preference was to move to the San Paolo.

And speaking to La Repubblica, De Laurentiis admitted he had had the opportunity to sign Ronaldo – but, owing to financial reasons, he refused.

“Ronaldo was offered to Napoli. Mendes, his agent, telephoned me,” the film producer confirmed.

“We planned to make an offer and we would have paid CR7 with a percentage of the funds guaranteed by his arrival.

“The €350m [wages included] that Juventus will invest is beyond our reach. We would have risked pushing the club towards bankruptcy.”

Ronaldo has signed a four-year contract with the Old Lady, reportedly on wages of over €500,000 per week.

(Source: Football Italia)

Euphoria over, back to reality for Southgate’s England



It could have been the greatest day of their lives but England’s World Cup squad returned home on Sunday with the euphoria that surrounded their run to the last four having dissipated and familiar, less exhilarating, challenges lying ahead.

The Premier League begins in just four weeks and Gareth Southgate’s squad, players who were being hailed as national heroes just a few days ago, will return to the day job and the struggle for starting places at their clubs.

In a league where a large majority of the players are imported from Europe and beyond, being a member of the England squad is no guarantee of first-team football.

It makes life tough for the England manager, who, even at the height of their World Cup optimism, noted the unique issue facing him.

“We only have 33 percent of the league to pick from. So that is still a huge problem for us,” he said.

So for all the talk of England being stronger at the European Championship in two years time, Southgate knows it is not as simple as just adding experience to his side.

The situation is particularly hard for those players at the biggest clubs — none of Marcus Rashford, Phil Jones or Jesse Lingard are guaranteed a regular starting spot under Jose Mourinho at Manchester United.

Fabian Delph, John Stones and Raheem Sterling will all have a battle on their hands to appear regularly on the

Manchester City team sheet alongside their England team mate Kyle Walker, who is a fixed presence at right back.

Sterling may have scored 18 goals in 33 appearances in last year’s title-winning campaign, but while he was in Russia, City manager Pep Guardiola completed the signing of Algerian winger Riyad Mahrez from Leicester City for a reported club record fee of 60 million pounds.

Liverpool midfielder Jordan Henderson was an essential part of their run to the Champions League final last season but he too faces expensively-recruited competition in the shape of Brazilian Fabinho and Guinean Naby Keita.

It is even harder for emerging talent.

Ruben Loftus-Cheek, who ended the tournament with a promising display in the third-place playoff defeat to Belgium, does not even know where he will be playing next season.

His club Chelsea loaned him out to Crystal Palace last term and a change of manager at Stamford Bridge adds to the uncertainty he faces.

■ Air of optimism

Those who can be confident of regular football are found at Tottenham Hotspur — where Harry Kane, Dele Alli and Kieran Trippier are established first-teamers.

Outside the Champions League clubs, goalkeeper Jordan Pickford is a clear number one at Everton and Harry Maguire is at the heart of Leicester’s defence.

Mixed feelings for Belgium as they are feted by fans



Belgium were acclaimed at celebrations in Brussels on Sunday with thousands hailed the team but they will carry mixed feelings about their achievement at the World Cup.

Victory in Saturday’s third place playoff over England in St Petersburg ensured a best ever tournament return for the Belgians but they are likely to be long haunted by a nagging sense they might have done so much better.

The so-called ‘golden generation’ had sights firmly set on winning the World Cup and were well on course after proving their mental fortitude in a dramatic come-from-behind win over Japan and then going toe-to-toe with Brazil and beating them in the quarter-final. But a narrow semi-final defeat to France last Tuesday left them crestfallen, even though they admirably picked themselves up to easily beat England 2-0 in taking the bronze medal.

“I think if we had played the final we would have won the World Cup,” said centre back Vincent Kompany, who at 32 is unlikely to have another chance in Qatar in 2022.

“But third place is consolation for our supporters and a nice reward for us. We played seven matches here and won six of them.”

A total of 16 goals in Russia was also testament to their ability but, in the end,

a team bristling with potentially tournament-winning talent were stymied in their semi-final by France’s superior tactics and got caught out at a corner to see their dreams slip away in a narrow 1-0 loss.

Players such as captain Eden Hazard, Kevin De Bruyne, Romelu Lukaku and goalkeeper Thibault Courtois will likely be back in four years’ should Belgium qualify for the next World Cup, but other key elements like Kompany, Marouane Fellaini, Jan Vertongen and Axel Witsel likely not.

“A lot has been said about this group of players. I think that we have seen at this World Cup that they did not rely on their talent alone,” said coach Roberto Martinez, who now faces much expectation for the European Championship in 2020.

“Talent can take you far but sometime not far enough and these players showed they wanted play as team.”

There Belgium are unlikely to be a much-changed team and so will be among the favourites to first qualify and then go on and win a first major title.

But while Euro 2022 carries major prestige, it is not the World Cup and Belgium will remain forever wandering what might have been had they taken their chances against France and not given away a soft goal.

(Source: Eurosport)

Kerber easily beats record-chasing Williams to win first Wimbledon title

Serena Williams’ good friend the Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle and the Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton watched her in Saturday’s women’s final at Wimbledon.

In Williams’ box were sporting royalty, golfer Tiger Woods and Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton, as well as fashion icon Anna Wintour.

■ The healing power of sport

As the most successful Slovenian judoka of all time, it’s impossible not to be captivated by the hidden power of judo when speaking to Urška Žolnir.

The stars had certainly aligned on Centre Court to watch the American, who was one win away from tying Margaret Court for the all-time lead in grand slams and collecting a maiden major as a mum. But Angelique Kerber’s straight-forward victory means the 36-year-old will have to wait a little longer to make further history.

Kerber, who had flown under the radar in this tourna-

ment due to Williams’ inspirational tale and the exodus of top-10 seeds, beat the 23-time grand slam winner 6-3 6-3 in 65 minutes to make some history of her own.

The 11th seed became the first German winner at Wimbledon since Steffi Graf in 1996, which might make up somewhat for the country’s surprise early exit from the World Cup.

■ ‘A dream come true’

Williams doesn’t often lose grand slam finals -- in 30 major finals, this is only her seventh loss -- but Kerber became the first person other than the American’s older sibling, Venus, to beat her more than once in a grand slam final.

The first time came at the Australian Open in 2016 before Williams turned the tables in another high-quality tussle at Wimbledon. Kerber secured slam No. 2 at the US Open the same year on her way to ascending to top spot in the rankings.

The German described her Wimbledon win as a “dream come true.”



“Feel the power of dream at 2018 World Cup”

There is an undeniable air of optimism around the England team though and Football Association Technical Director Dan Ashworth summed up the view that gaining experience is now the key.

“We’ve got some good players in our senior team and some good technical players in our development pathway as well,” said Ashworth.

“We’re probably a little bit short on big-game experience, a bit short on number of national caps and we’re a bit young for what a winning national team looks like,” he said.

Much of the optimism over England’s future stems from the success of the junior teams. Last year, England’s junior teams won the Under-20 World Cup, the Under-17 World Cup and the Under-19 European Championship.

But there is long-standing concern over how much playing time those youngsters will get at their clubs.

Phil Foden, the talented captain of that Under-17 team, has been highlighted by many as a possible answer to the lack of a creative midfielder in Southgate’s squad but the 18-year-old faces a daunting challenge even to get into Manchester City’s midfield.

“He’s got a lot of ability and I can see him developing into a really talented player,” said his team mate Delph, who offered a reminder that Foden is still “learning his craft”.

(Source: Mirror)

After Russia, World Cup focus now turns to Qatar



Germany came out of its shell, South Africa exceeded expectations and Russia changed negative perceptions when they all hosted the World Cup but just what will unfold in four years’ time when the tournament goes to Qatar is anyone’s guess.

There is only one certainty — it will be an event like no other.

The small gulf kingdom, which stretches only 180km from one end to the other, is unlike any previous host with little sporting tradition, a population of just over 2.5 millions, has never played at the World Cup and is so hot in the customary mid-year window for the tournament that it has moved towards the end of the year.

But what oil-rich Qatar does have is fabulous wealth, enough to persuade FIFA to allow them to host even though that selection process has since been clouded by allegations of bribery. The first Arab country to host the event are planning eight new stadiums for the tournament, with one completed, two more due this year and the rest scheduled to be finished by 2021. None is more than 35km from the center of the capital Doha and all serviced by a brand new metro system.

Furious construction has led to allegations of exploitation of migrant workers building the new infra structure with human rights organizations condemning labor practices

in the country. “We are ready based on the path we have set,” said Hassan Al Thawadi, the secretary-general of the Qatar 2022 organizing committee, in Moscow with a delegation of more than 100 officials shadowing the Russians. FIFA have confirmed that the tournament will be hosted from Nov. 21-Dec. 18, 2022, but whether it will be a 32-team event or expand to 48 remains to be decided.

“It will be a common decision taken between FIFA and Qatar and we are now studying the feasibility of expanding it to a 48-team World Cup. However, all preparations are on the basis of 32 teams,” Al Thawadi added.

Changing the timing of the tournament will disrupt major league seasons and has set FIFA on a collision course with the powerful European clubs but the Qataris are seeking to put a positive spin on the change, claiming it could lead to more exciting soccer.

“Players will be mid-season, not at the end of their seasons, at a time when they can be at their peak of their performance levels,” Al Thawadi said.

Qatar will also relax laws on the consumption of alcohol, planning areas for visiting fans where alcohol can be consumed to ensure they replicate the party atmosphere of past tournaments.

(Source: Reuters)

“I knew I had to play my best against a champion like Serena, it is always an honor to share a court with her,” Kerber, who embraced Williams at the net after her win, said on court. “It is my second chance to play in front of you on Centre Court, I enjoyed every second of the last two weeks so thanks for all the support.”

While not away from the game due to injuries or to start a family like Williams, Kerber’s form slumped badly last year.

She failed to reach a single grand slam quarterfinal and eventually cut ties with Torben Beltz, the man who had coached her to two grand slams. So this is a comeback of sorts for the 30-year-old, too.

Her Wimbledon success followed a semifinal showing in Melbourne and a quarterfinal at the French Open.

And now, Kerber is only one grand slam away — Roland Garros — from completing her collection.

(Source: CNN)

Iran name provisional U23 football squad

S P O R T S **T E H R A N** - Zlatko Kranjcar has named a 27-man provisional squad for the training camp in Iraq and China.

Iran U23 football team will fly to Iraq on July 23 and play the Iraqi team on July 25 and 27 respectively.

The Iranian football team will return to Tehran on July 29 and will travel to China on Aug. 6 to hold another training camp in the East Asian country.

Iran U23 football team will also play a warm-up match with China on Aug. 9.

Iran will fly straight to Indonesia to participate at the 2018 Asian Games.

The Iranian team have been pitted against DPR Korea, Saudi Arabia and Myanmar in Group F of the 2018 Asian Games.

The U23 tournament, which allows each country to field three overage players, will see 24 teams vying for honors.

The top two teams in each group along with the four best third placed teams will advance to the Round of 16.

Men's football will be contested on August 14 to September 1 in Jakarta and Palembang.

Provisional squad:

Mohammad Soltanimehr, Reza Jafari, Mehdi Amini, Abolfazl Razzaghpour, Amir Roostaie, Mohammad Khodabandehloo, Hamid Reza Taherkhani, Shahin Abbasian,



Mohammad Amin Asadi, Mehdi Ghaedi, Ahmad Reza Ahmadvand, Aref Agassi, Reza Jabireh, Younes Delfi, Shahab Adeli, Mehdi Rahimi, Mehran Derakhshanmeh, Mohammad Mehdi Mehdkhani, Mohammad Aghajanjpour, Ali Taheran, Mohammad Reza Azadi, Mohammad Moslemipour, Mohammad Khorram Alhosseini, Ali Shojaei, Nima Mirzazad, Alireza Arta and Aref Gholami.

Iran defeat Japan at William Jones Cup

S P O R T S **T E H R A N** — Iran B basketball team, consisting of youth players, earned their second win in a row at the 2018 William Jones Cup in Taiwan on Sunday.

The team, which is headed by Farzad Kouhian in the eight-day tournament, beat Japan B 78-61 at the Xinzhuang Gymnasium in New Taipei City.

Iran started the competition with a 76-48 win over Lithuania on Saturday.

Vahid Dalirzahan led Iran with 24 points,

while Takuya Hashimoto and Ryota Nakanishi scored 14 points each for Japan.

The 2018 William Jones Cup is the 40th staging of William Jones Cup, an international basketball tournament held in Taipei, Taiwan.

The men's tournament is being held from July 14 to 22 with participation of 11 teams.

The tournament will follow a single round robin format.

The U.S. are the most decorated team with 15 titles and the Philippines and Iran have won five titles each.



Iran's Davoudi takes gold at IWF Junior World Championships

S P O R T S **T E H R A N** — 2016 Youth World Champion Ali Davoudi from Iran snatched a gold medal in the 2018 International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Junior World Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on Saturday.

In the men's +105kg category, Davoudi lifted 192kg in snatch and

227kg in clean and jerk. The Iranian super heavyweight lifter won the gold medal with 419kg.

Armenia's Varazdat Lalayan, silver medalist at the 2016 European Youth Championships, was the overall runner-up with 399kg having come second in the snatch with 177kg and third in the clean and jerk with 222kg.

He finished on the same total as Pakistan's Muhammad Nooh Dastgir Butt, the Gold Coast 2018 bronze medalist who came third in the snatch with 171kg and first in the clean and jerk with 228kg.

Lalayan took the silver medal ahead of Butt by virtue of the fact he posted the total first.



Celtic consider move for Milad Mohammadi



Glasgow Rangers boss Steven Gerrard is keen to bring Milad Mohammadi at Ibrox but could face strong competition from Celtic. The Scottish Sun has now reported that the Bhoys have also registered an interest in the player.

Celtic are financially in a stronger position than Rangers, and it wouldn't be a problem for them to dish out £2m reportedly needed to sign Mohammadi.

The Ibrox club must act quickly and make a quick move for the defender if they are indeed serious. Gerrard has stressed the need to sign a defender, but he would be a smart signing for the club.

the World Cup this summer.

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Jahanbakhsh flown in for medical ahead of £19.4m Leicester move



Leicester City could replace Riyad Mahrez with Alireza Jahanbakhsh, according to reports in the Iranian winger's homeland.

Mahrez completed a long protracted £60 move to Manchester City this week.

And Vananews claims Jahanbakhsh, who plays in Holland for AZ Alkmaar, will undergo a medical with Leicester after being flown in via the Foxes owner's private jet.

The website adds that a fee of €22 million (£19.4 million) is involved for the player, who scored 21 goals and assisted 12 in 33 Eredivisie outings last season.

AZ director Max Huiberts claimed ear-

lier this week there had been no concrete interest in Jahanbakhsh, which suggests that either Leicester have moved fast or the information from Vananews is not quite correct.

Leicester have also been linked with Manchester City's Patrick Roberts as a possible Mahrez replacement.

Jahanbakhsh began his career in Iran, turning out for Damash Tehran and Damash Gilan, but has spent the past five seasons in Holland with NEC Nijmegen and AZ.

(Source: Leicestermercury.co.uk)

Netherlands 2018: Sitting volleyball stage set!

The best 16 men's and 16 women's teams from around the world will face off, starting Sunday (15 July), for the honour to be 2018 sitting volleyball world champion and for a ticket to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

The 2018 World ParaVolley Sitting Volleyball World Championships will visit five cities across the Netherlands with the winner qualifying for Tokyo 2020.

Team effort

Over 300 athletes will be involved in the quadrennial tournament while 300 volunteers will also be involved helping in the organisation. The men's preliminary round matches will take place in Venlo and Eindhoven before the semi-finals and finals take place in the Hague on 21-22 July. While Arnhem hosts the women's preliminary round matches before heading to Rotterdam for the quarterfinals, semi-finals and finals from 19-21 July.

Who are the contenders?

Bosnia and Herzegovina are the defending champions among men and will start again as strong contenders for gold, trying to take revenge on Iran after losing out to them in the final at the 2016 Paralympic Games. In the women's tournament a thrilling showdown is expected between defending champions China, who topped the podium in Elblag, Poland, in 2014, and Paralympic gold medallists USA, who defeated the Chinese team in the final at Rio 2016.

Bosnia and Herzegovina amazing recent record

Iran has dominated the men's tournament having won six World Championship titles although Bosnia and Herzegovina claimed the honours in 2014 by beating Brazil in the final to claim their third World Championship crown in four editions. The Netherlands, who with Germany are the only countries to have participated in all 11 editions, are

the only other winners having won the first ever edition in 1983 and again in 1989.

Chinese women on a role

The Netherlands, with Ukraine are the only countries to have participated in all six previous editions, dominated the women's World Championships winning the first four editions up to 2006 before China have claimed the last two editions in 2010 and 2014.

Theatres of Dreams

The 2018 Sitting Volleyball World Championships will be a real spectacle with the Netherlands hosting the tournament for the fourth time. The World Championships are not only organized in different host cities but it will be played everywhere in large theatres that are transformed into fully-fledged top sports locations.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

France win the 2018 World Cup



After 64 matches in Russia, France proved too good for Croatia claim a second World Cup success, defeating Zlatko Dalic's side 4-2 in Moscow and thus earning Didier Deschamps the trophy as a manager that he had led Les Bleus to as captain 20 years ago.

They were kept honest and made to work by a Croatia side full of battle-hardened warriors and no shortage of quality.

But the likes of Luka Modric, Ivan Rakitic and Mario Mandzukic were no match to Les Bleus, a side who faced questions of their ability and answered their critics.

Croatia had started the brighter of the two sides, seemingly emboldened by knowing that it was a case of now or never for an experienced side.

But they fell behind when Mandzukic, scorer of the semi-final winner, flicked an Antoine Griezmann freekick into his own net after 18 minutes.

Ivan Perisic fired a stunning equaliser some 10 minutes later to put the Vatreni deservedly on level terms.

However, VAR called the referees' attention to an apparent handball against Perisic when defending at a corner, and on review referee Nestor Pitana elected to award a penalty to France; Griezmann coolly converted from the spot for his fourth of the tournament to hand France a half-time lead.

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Mandzukic would score after an error from Hugo Lloris.

But while Croatia would push to look to get back into the game once more, the day belonged to Les Bleus and Deschamps, who joins Brazil's Mario Zagallo and Germany's France Beckenbauer in winning the World Cup as a player and a manager.

(Source: Mirror)

Iran claims three golds at Asian Karate Championships

TASNIM — Iranian karate practitioners claimed three gold medals at the 2018 Asian Karate Championships in Amman, Jordan.

In the men's over-84kg final, Iran's Saleh Abazari thrashed Hideyoshi Kagawa from Japan 8-0 to win the gold medal.

Iran tasted victory in two further events with Hamideh Abbasa beating Chinese Taipei's Wen Tzu-Hsuan 8-0 in the women's over-68kg final and Majid Hassannia Deilami defeating Saudi Arabia's Saud Albasher 6-2 in the men's under-55kg final.

Iran's Ali Asghar Asiabari won a silver medal in the under-75kg after being defeated by Jordan's Bashar Alnajjar 6-4.

Iran also won three bronze medals in the competition.

Mahdi Khodabakhshi won a bronze medal in men's under-84kg class.

Shima Alesadi took a bronze in women's under-61kg category, as well as Iran women's team kata.

The event is the first to offer qualification points for Tokyo 2020, where karate will make its Olympic debut.

Faghani takes charge of Belgium v England encounter



Alireza Faghani of Islamic Republic of Iran was tasked with refereeing the 2018 FIFA World Cup third-place playoff between Belgium and England at the Saint Petersburg on Saturday.

Belgium defeated England 2-0.

The exciting tie between Belgium and The Three Lions was Faghani's fourth appointment in Russia 2018, after overseeing the Round of 16 tie between France and Argentina on June 30; the Group E tie between Serbia and Brazil on June 27 and the Group F match between Germany and Mexico on June 17.

His appointment equaled UAE's Ali Bujsaim who officiated Sweden's 4-0 win over Bulgaria in the 1994 FIFA World Cup USA third-place playoff at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

The experienced Iranian appeared in his second FIFA World Cup and was assisted by compatriots Reza Sokhandan and Mohammadreza Mansouri - who also assisted Faghani in France's 4-3 win against Argentina, Mexico's 1-0 win over Germany as well as Brazil's 2-0 triumph over Serbia.

In Brazil 2014, the 2016 AFC Referee of the Year was the fourth official for seven matches, including the opening match between hosts Brazil and Croatia.

(Source: the-afc)

“Yeva”, “Sunset Truck” win awards at Golden Apricot filmfest



Narine Grigoryan acts in a scene from “Yeva” by Anahid Abad.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — “Yeva”, a co-production between Iran and Armenia and “Sunset Truck”, a co-production between Iran and Germany, won three awards at the 15th Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Sunday.

“Yeva” directed by Nahid Abad received the Armenian National Film Academy Award for Best Film.

In addition, the film brought the film’s

star Shant Hovhannisyan the Sos Sargsyan Award for Best Actor.

Directed by Abolfazl Saffari, “Sunset Truck” won the Hrant Matevosyan Award for Best Script.

Both films were screened in Armenian Panorama, a non-official section of the festival that took place in the Armenian capital from July 8 to 15.

Co-written by Saffari and Sajjad Afsharian, “Sunset Truck” is about an

Iranian family that have been running a camp for desert lovers for many years. Business is gradually drying when Arash, the youngest son, comes up with a novel idea. Through his skillful use of Facebook, he attracts new visitors to the camp with the promise of providing the most beautiful sunsets anywhere in the world. Business takes off again. However, other problems quickly arise.

Iranian director Asghar Farhadi presided

over the jury of the official competition this year. He also received Parajanov’s Thaler, an honorary award for his outstanding artistic contribution to the world cinema.

“Volcano”, a Ukraine-Germany co-production directed by Roman Bondarchuk, won the Golden Apricot for Best Film in the official competition.

Germinal Roaux from Switzerland received the Silver Apricot for Best Director for his film “Fortuna”.

“The Eastern” on Toshihiko Izutsu to screen in Tokyo

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Masud Taheri’s latest documentary “The Eastern” about Japanese expert on religions Toshihiko Izutsu (1914–1993) will be screened in Tokyo next week.

Akira Matsumoto, the co-writer of “Consciousness and Reality: Studies in Memory of Toshihiko Izutsu”, who was a student of Izutsu will deliver a speech before the screening of the film, the organizers announced on Saturday.



The screening will be organized at Hiratsuka Hall on July 24 by the Cultural Center of the Embassy of Iran in Tokyo and Chehrdad Film.

Izutsu was a Professor Emeritus at Keio University in Japan and author of many books on Islam and other religions. His studies were mainly focused on Islam, Taoism and Buddhism, and he made great efforts to create unity among them.

He was fluent in over 30 languages, including Arabic and Persian, and taught at the Institute of Cultural and Linguistic studies at Keio University in Tokyo, the Iranian Institute of Philosophy in Tehran and McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

A poster a screening of Iranian filmmaker Masud Taheri’s documentary “The Eastern” about Japanese expert on religions Toshihiko Izutsu in Tokyo

In 1958, he completed the first direct translation of the Holy Quran from Arabic to Japanese.

In “The Eastern”, over 60 academics and cultural figures such as Professor Hermann Landolt of the Institute of Ismaili Studies in the UK and academic Toshio Kuroda comment on Izutsu.

Korean festival to screen two Iranian shorts

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — “The Last Embrace” by Saman Hosseinpour and “I Love You” by Babak Habibifar, both from Iran, will be competing in the 10th Seoul International Extreme-Short Image & Film Festival (SESIFF) in September, the organizers have announced.



A scene from “I Love You” by Babak Habibifar

“The Last Embrace” will be screened in the International Extreme-Short Film Competition and “I Love You” has been selected to screen in the International Short Film Competition.

Over 100 films from across the world will be competing in the festival, which will be held from September 11 to 16.

Evan Rachel Wood, Sterling K. Brown in talks to join “Frozen 2”

LOS ANGELES (Hollywood Reporter) — Evan Rachel Wood and Sterling K. Brown want to build a snowman.



Evan Rachel Wood and Sterling K. Brown (Taylor Hill, Theo Wargo/Getty Images)

The actors are in talks to voice star in Walt Disney Animation’s “Frozen 2”, joining returning stars Kristen Bell, Idina Menzel and Josh Gad.

Jennifer Lee, who was recently named the chief creative head of WDA after John Lasseter’s exit, will return to direct with Chris Buck. Peter Del Vecho is set to produce.

While the plot is not yet known, “Frozen 2” is set for a Nov. 27, 2019 release.

Wood just picked up an Emmy nomination for her role in HBO’s “Westworld”, while Brown picked up one for his work on “This Is Us”.

Mashhad gallery hangs works by American painter Thomas Berding

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Radin Art Gallery in Mashhad is playing host to an exhibition displaying American painter Thomas Berding’s collection, “The Chronic Disassembly Roadshow”.

The exhibit is being curated by Mehrdad Sedaqat, an Iranian artist who is a graduate of Michigan State University, the Persian newspaper Shahrara that is published in Mashhad reported on Sunday.

The opening ceremony on Friday was followed by a video appearance of Berding, in which visitors held talks with the artist.

Berding is a contemporary artist and painter living in Michigan. He is a professor of studio art at Michigan State University. His works have been recognized by awards from different foundations and organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts.

In his brief words, Berding first talked about painting and said that in his opinion painting is a place in which an artist plays with ideas, a space where the conflict

of concepts and forms are displayed.

To Berding, painting is like a place where explorations occur, the explorations related to physiological concepts and meanings.

He also explained a little about his paintings of the past 10 years, and about the elements and the materials he has used. He said that his primary works were based on lines and forms.

Sedaqat also said that such programs help interested artists become familiar with great masters of art in the world.

There is a great difference between studying artworks in a book as opposed to making direct contact with the artist himself,” he added.

“When I proposed that Berding hold an exhibit in Iran he was so delighted and welcomed the idea. He trusted me and gave me a collection of his valuable works to help promote this cultural exchange,” Sedaqat stated.

The exhibit will be running until July 19.



“Surplus Mound” by American painter Thomas Berding

“Stig of the Dump” author Clive King dies aged 94

LONDON (The Guardian) —The writer Clive King, creator of the much-loved children’s classic “Stig of the Dump”, has died aged 94.

A career that began in 1958 – with “Hamid of Aleppo”, a book for younger children about a hamster – stretched over five decades, with King writing for the children’s theatre as well as publishing more than 20 books. But it was the stone-age hunter living in a chalk pit on the Downs who captured the imagination of generations, with Stig appearing in television adaptations in both 1981 and 2002.

The former children’s laureate Michael Rosen paid tribute to the vivid impact of King’s most famous character: “He was one of those special writers who created an encounter that became iconic, a moment that people who read the book never forget.”

The writer Frank Cottrell Boyce hailed the “crisp narrative” and “big emotion” that give King’s creation its enduring power, as well as the “astounding, sublime” sequence where Stonehenge is built.

“If you’re my age,” said Cottrell Boyce, “Stig of the Dump, with its Ardizzone illustrations, glows with a halo of nostalgia. But that shouldn’t blind you to the fact that it’s fresh as a daisy – a thrilling book about the power of boredom.”

The head of Penguin Random House Children’s Books, Francesca Dow, recalled reading the story as a child and “longing for a special secret Stig and dump of my own”.

“The book’s depiction of the vivid interior



Ash was a very boring place to live and I thought what it needs is something to wake it up’ ... Clive King at his Norfolk home in 2013. Photograph: Si Barber

life and imagination of a child, the delight of roaming free, making shelters and dens away from the grownups, as well as ideas such as the universal language of friendship – and even the importance of recycling – feel as fresh and relevant today as they did when Puffin first published it in 1963,” Dow said.

Born in Richmond in 1924, King grew up on the North Downs near Sevenoaks in Kent. He studied English at Cambridge, before serving in the navy during the second world war and working for the British Council. But it was in the 1960s, while living on the Downs, that he found inspiration for Stig of the Dump.

Speaking to the Guardian in 2013, he explained how it grew out of a combination of remembering his own explorations of the dump by his parent’s home in Kent and watching his son do the same two decades further on.

Lost Stanley Kubrick screenplay, “Burning Secret”, is found 60 years on

LONDON (The Guardian) — His first world war classic, “Paths of Glory”, is one of cinema’s most powerful anti-war movies, widely acclaimed as a masterpiece, as was his Roman epic, “Spartacus”, both of which starred Kirk Douglas. Now a “lost” screenplay by director Stanley Kubrick has been discovered – and it is so close to completion that it could be developed by filmmakers.

Entitled “Burning Secret”, the script is an adaptation of the 1913 novella by the Viennese writer Stefan Zweig. In Kubrick’s adaptation of the story of passion set in a spa resort, a man befriends a 10-year-old boy, using him to seduce the child’s married mother.

He wrote it in 1956 with the novelist Calder Willingham, with whom he went on to collaborate on “Paths of Glory” the following year.

The screenplay was found by Nathan Abrams, professor in film at Bangor University and a leading Kubrick expert, who said: “I couldn’t believe it. It’s so exciting. It was believed to have been lost.”

He added: “Kubrick aficionados know he wanted to do it, [but] no one ever thought it was completed. We now have a copy and this proves that he had done a full screenplay.”

Kubrick made only 13 feature films, but he is revered as a master film-maker and supreme visual stylist with a painstaking approach to meticulous detail. His sci-fi



The legendary American director Stanley Kubrick on the set of Barry Lyndon in 1975. Photograph: Corbis via Getty Images

epic, “2001: A Space Odyssey”, pushed the boundaries of special effects and was at No 6 in the most recent Sight and Sound critics poll of the greatest films of all time.

Kubrick, an American who lived most of his life in Britain, died in 1999, months after completing “Eyes Wide Shut”, the controversial psychosexual thriller starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

His “Burning Secret” screenplay bears the stamp of the script department of MGM. It is dated 24 October 1956, when Kubrick was still relatively unknown, having just made his crime heist film, “The Killing”.

MGM is thought to have cancelled the commissioned project after learning that Kubrick was also working on “Paths of Glory”, putting him in breach of contract. Another account suggests that MGM told Kubrick’s producing partner James B Harris that it did not see the screenplay’s potential as a movie.

Roger Perry, actor on “Star Trek,” “The Munsters” and “The Facts of Life,” dies at 85

LOS ANGELES (Hollywood Reporter) — Roger Perry, the veteran character actor who guest-starred on a memorable episode of the original “Star Trek” and portrayed Eastland headmaster Charles Parker on “The Facts of Life”, has died. He was 85.

Perry died Thursday night at his home in Indian Wells, California, after a battle with prostate cancer, his daughter, Dana Perry McNeerney, told The Hollywood Reporter.

Survivors also include his wife since 2002, actress Joyce Bulifant, perhaps best known for playing the wife of Murray Slaughter (Gavin MacLeod) on “The Mary Tyler Moore” Show.

Perry was previously married to “Laugh-In star” Jo Anne Worley from 1975 until their divorce in 2000.

A contract player at Desilu Studios who was discovered by Lucille Ball, Perry starred on a pair of ABC dramas in the 1960s that lasted just one season. He portrayed the son of Pat O’Brien on Harrigan and Son (their characters were lawyers in their own firm) and was a cop alongside Ben Gazzara and Chuck Connors on “Arrest and Trial”, a 90-minute program that was a forerunner to “Law & Order”.

Also, on a 1965 episode of CBS’ “The Munsters”, Perry played a young man with admirable intentions who’s out to rescue

the beautiful niece Marilyn (Pat Priest) from a band of ghouls. However, they are, of course, members of her loving family.

On the big screen, Perry appeared in not one but two Count Yorga movies; was a doctor in the infamous Ray Milland and Rosey Grier classic, “The Thing With Two Heads” (1972); and played the father of Linda Blair’s flautist character in the musical drama “Roller Boogie” (1979).

On the first-season “Star Trek” episode “Tomorrow Is Yesterday”, which debuted in January 1967, Perry starred as Capt. John Christopher, an Air Force pilot in the 1960s who is suddenly transported aboard the Enterprise in the future.