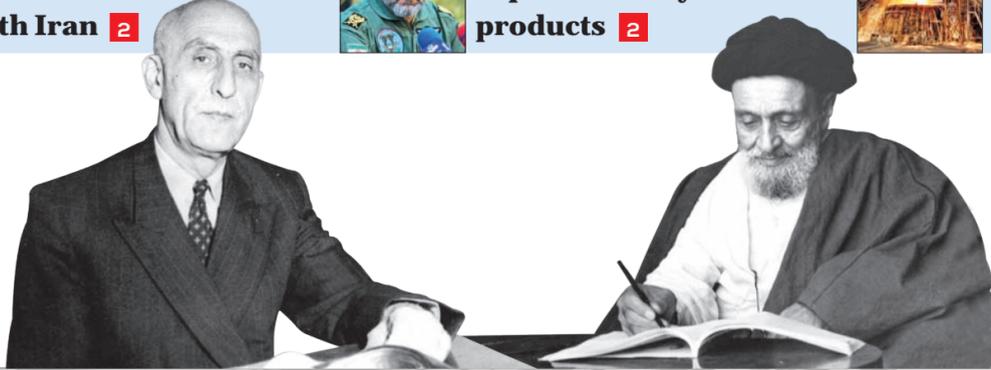


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New wave of Afghans headed to Europe from Iran

INTERNATIONAL In recent weeks, we have witnessed an exodus of Afghan citizens living in Iran and their efforts to find a new place for business. The devaluation of Iran's national currency, partly driven by cruel U.S. sanctions and the silence of European countries with regard to Trump's actions, has sorely damaged the Afghans' finances.

A large proportion of Afghans have used Iranian currency and spent it on their families across the Iranian border and this trend has intensified in recent months. Also, given the continuation of the security crises in Afghanistan and the lack of proper employment opportunities in Afghanistan, many Afghans, rather than returning to their homeland, prefer to go to Europe after leaving Iran. →7

CBI makes promises to improve domestic economy

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Writing on Twitter, governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) clarified some of the bank's recent taken measures and adopted policies and also made some promises to keep for improving domestic economy. IRIB reported on Saturday. Showing gratitude to all the financial, monetary and banking experts who have

expressed their views about CBI's recent policies or those who have suggested different solutions to egress the current economic situations and to dominate stability in the market, Abdolnaser Hemmati vowed the Iranian nation to have increasing transparency and combating rent seeking among his top priorities till the end of his tenure. →4

Moscow ready to send second nuclear fuel batch to Iran

The Russian Foreign Ministry in a statement on Friday announced that the second nuclear fuel consignment is ready to be sent back to Iran. Russia consistently continues to implement its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the statement said, according to IRNA. "The Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation is carrying out a series of

projects designed to ensure compliance with the terms of the JCPOA," it said. The ministry announced a high-tech Russian-Iranian project on reconfiguring two centrifuge cascades is successfully being implemented at a former uranium enrichment plant at Fordo with the aim of producing stable isotopes which will be used for industrial and medical purposes. →2



1953 coup plotters still fear Iran

See page 2

ARTICLE
Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

Can U.S. government do without friends in long run? No

Iran's neighbor, Turkey, with a population almost as large as Iran's is suffering some of the same economic problems that Iran is suffering: a currency that has fallen precipitously against the "almighty" U.S. dollar, much higher inflation, and in Turkey's case debt rating downgrades by the likes of the debt rating agencies (those with the most clout based in the U.S.), calls for the Turkish authorities to bend over to Western financial authorities and institutions, to borrow money from the IMF and well, you know, lose gobs of their sovereignty.

Indeed, it's quite obvious the U.S. expects Turkey to do only what the U.S. wants, and that includes no further mending of relations with Russia, not building a gas pipeline from Russia across Turkey, killing plans Turkey has to buy Russia's S400 missile defense systems (far superior to anything the U.S. can cough up, and far less expensive). In addition, Turkey was supposed to get a bunch of U.S.-made F-35 warplanes. Frankly, one must hope they have not been paid for yet, and if they have been paid for, that the U.S. returns the funds. If Erdogan has any sense, he would not want the F-35 anyway.

This overly complex aircraft is plagued with problems that some, even in the U.S. military, say are not fixable, and the machine is the most expensive warplane ever. Frankly, it is a POS (Piece of S**), if you understand the acronym, and I know a little about airplanes, having been a pilot, at least of small planes, for decades. The Russian inventory of warplanes is far more reliable, and far less costly, and even by some accounts more effective.

Moreover, there's the matter of a failed coup attempt against President Recep Erdogan not long ago, and the possibility that an alleged "pastor" named Andrew Brunson, an American who has been in prison in Turkey for a while under suspicion that he may have been working for the CIA and that the U.S. may have been behind the coup attempt, is not going to be released from prison and returned to the U.S. →7

Turkish economy will not collapse: Logoglu

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Referring to strong economy of Turkey, Senior member of Turkey's CHP member says the evangelical circles in the USA, have turned the Pastor Brunson issue into a show case to win the millions of evangelical votes in the upcoming mid-term elections in November. The U.S. has threatened to impose more economic sanctions on Turkey if it does not free a detained American pastor, Andrew Brunson who has been held in Turkey for nearly two years over links to PKK terrorist group. The dispute over his release has seen the two NATO allies impose tariffs on one another's goods. The row between Turkey and U.S. worsened

a crisis for Turkey's currency, the lira, which has lost about a third of its value against the dollar since January. The crisis has prompted widespread selling in other emerging markets, sparking fears of a global crisis.

After a little recovery of Turkish lira, U.S. President Trump on Friday again threatened Turkey with more economic punishment. Many believe detention of Andrew Brunson is just an excuse for U.S. to punish Turkey and the real crimes of Ankara are buying the Russian S-400 missile system for Turkey, refusing to accept U.S. support for America's Kurdish YPG. In an interview we discussed the issue Dr. Osman Faruk Logoglu, a senior member of Turkey's Republican People's Party (CHP). Here is the full text of interview with him:

■ What are the reasons behind recent tensions in Turkey and U.S. relation? Are they mainly economic or political? Is there any relation between the U.S. unfriendly approach toward Turkey and Ankara's regional policies?

A: The reasons for the recent escalation of tensions are both political and economic, each step in one domain triggering reactions in the other, resulting in a negative downward spiral. That is to say, political issues lead to economic sanctions which in turn exacerbate the political differences.

While Turkey's policies on Syria and Iran, its relations with Russia and its approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict do play a stage-setting role in shaping the Washington's attitude toward Ankara, the immediate reason has more to do with American domestic politics. →7

Has Al-Qaeda withered fully from Indian sub-continent? No, says a UN report

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — There has been intense speculation over whether the Al-Qaeda is still active in Afghanistan and the region or has it been consigned to oblivion with the emergence of other terror groups like ISIS.

The group that was accused of September 11 attacks on the U.S., which led to the American invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, is believed to have withered away slowly, replaced by newer groups, most importantly the ISIS. How much is the group's remaining presence in Afghanistan is a matter of debate.

"We have decimated Al-Qaeda" in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Scott Miller, who has been chosen as the next commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan told the U.S. Congress in June.

A military report released the same month concluded that the few senior Al-Qaeda figures remaining in Afghanistan "are focused on their own survival," while members of a local Al-Qaeda subgroup are mainly helping the Afghan Taliban on the battlefield.

However, according to a new United Nations report, Al-Qaeda might not have withered fully. Al-Qaeda Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), set up by Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri in 2014 to expand the group's influence in the Indian sub-continent, continues to seek security gaps for opportunistic attacks in the region.

The AQIS, the Al-Qaeda's regional affiliate, is led by Asim Umar — who is believed to be an Indian national and former commander of terror outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami.

The 22nd report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, submitted to the UN Security Council Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee a few days ago, noted that the group still maintained a presence in South Asia, adapting to the local environment and trying to embed itself into local struggles and communities.

The strength of AQIS in Afghanistan is estimated at several hundred people, mainly located in Laghman, Paktika, Kandahar, Ghazni and Zabul provinces, the report mentions, adding that some members of the core leadership council of the group, including Zawahiri and son of slain Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, Hamza bin Laden, are reported to be in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. →6

PERSPECTIVE
Mudasir Sheikh
Researcher and writer from Kashmir

U.S. faces isolation in global community by sanctioning Iran

The recent statement of the Iranian president Hassan Rouhani regarding isolation of the U.S. due to its unilateral withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, also known as JCPOA, seems to become more relevant with every passing day as obvious from the actions of BRICS, EU and other countries like Turkey.

The crux of 2018 BRICS Summit was to counter the U.S. unilateralism by switching to an open world economy and a multilateral trade system that is currently facing unprecedented threats. According to Chinese president Xi Jinping, the U.S. administration has abused international law and the norms governing international relations with its unilateral withdrawal from JCPOA, thus there is a need for developing new types of international relations so that the hegemony of the so-called 'superpower' can be contained. Further Xi Jinping stressed on the fact that it is intolerable to recognize energy blockades, sanctions, and economic warfare through USA's unilateral decisions.

For balancing the world order, the BRICS should be upgraded to BRICS Plus, the term itself proposed by China in 2017 at the Xiamen Summit which is aimed at developing mutually beneficial relations with all developing countries and has a transcontinental scope. According to Wang Yi, who served as a China's deputy foreign minister, BRICS Plus is an integration roadmap with global significance and attack on Iran is not only a blow to BRICS Plus but to the whole global south. It indicates that there are very slim chances of China succumbing to the U.S. pressure on Iran.

The increasing consent among eastern nations is isolating the U.S. in this part of the world. It is obvious from the response by Russia and China regarding U.S. sanctions on Iran as they have refused to suspend their trade with Iran. Russia and China are supporting Iran's nuclear program and aerospace industries and they have also helped Syrian president Bashar-al Assad, a close ally of Iran in the region, to remain in power. →6



Elaheh Ahmadi carries Iran's flag in Asian Games

SPORTS TEHRAN — Iranian shooter Elaheh Ahmadi carried her country's flag at the opening ceremony of the 2018 Asian Games on Saturday.

Iran delegation participate in the prestigious event with 378 athletes. About 18,000 athletes and officials from 45 Asian countries will be at the Asiad, organizers said, looking to make their mark across a range of sports from swimming to sepak takraw and bridge. The 2018 Asian Games began on Saturday, Aug. 18, and will end on Sept. 2.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rouhani urges closer ties with Pakistan as Khan takes office

POLITICS TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani sent a message to Pakistan's new Prime Minister Imran Khan congratulating him on his new post and voicing Tehran's readiness to enhance ties with Islamabad, Tasnim reported.

In his message to Imran Khan, who was sworn in as prime minister on Saturday after his party's victory in last month's election, Rouhani expressed the hope that the new Pakistani leader's tenure would mark "growing unity and convergence in the Islamic world and deepening of bonds between the two friendly neighbors."

"As always and particularly in the new era, the Islamic Republic of Iran expresses preparedness to promote interaction and cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," Rouhani added.



Zarif says 'extremely saddened' by Kofi Annan's death

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has expressed grief over the death of former United Nations secretary general and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kofi Annan, describing him as "an unwavering champion for peace, justice and rule of law".

"Extremely saddened by passing of Kofi Annan, a towering global leader and an unwavering champion for peace, justice and rule of law. Rest in peace my dear old friend," Zarif said on his Twitter account on Saturday.

Annan died after a short illness at the age of 80, his foundation announced in a statement.

Annan, of Ghanaian nationality, died in a hospital in Bern, Switzerland, in the early hours of Saturday.

In 2001, Anan won the Nobel Peace Prize for humanitarian work and for having revitalized the UN.



Iran able to export military products

POLITICS TEHRAN — Chief of the Army Aviation said on Saturday that Iran has made great progress in producing domestic military equipment and is able to export its products, Mehr reported.

Brigadier General Amir Ghorbani also said that the project of renewing helicopters is going ahead as planned, adding that the range of missiles installed on combat helicopters has increased to above 8 kilometers.

Ghorbani further said that even countries that claim to be great military power are not capable of manufacturing helicopters on their own and they are doing so in cooperation with other countries.



Guardian Council rejects bill on combating money laundering

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Guardian Council has rejected a bill to amend the anti-money laundering law in line with moves to combat the financing of terrorism, the council's spokesman Abbas Ali Kadkhodaei said on Friday.

In a tweet, Kadkhodaei said the council has rejected the bill for four contradictions it had with the Islamic law and the constitution, returning the bill to the parliament for making the required amendments, Mehr reported.

Iran has less than two months to adopt financial reforms proposed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as part of efforts to improve connections to the international banking and trade system.



Iran expects Iraq to pay overdue war reparations: senior MP

POLITICS TEHRAN — Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said on Saturday that Iran expects Iraq to pay war reparations as Iraqis can afford the payments.

"Iraq can afford paying war reparations to Iran. So, we expect this to be done according to the 10 article of UN Security Council Resolution 598," Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh told ISNA.

He further said there has been a series of remaining disputes between Iran and Iraq that have not been resolved yet. The war damages to Iran amounts to 1.2 trillion dollars.



'Iran's geography dictates balanced ties with the East and West'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Elaheh Koulaei, a professor of political science at the University of Tehran, has said more balanced and normalized relations with the world are key to secure Iran's national interests.

In an interview with the Hamshahri newspaper published on Saturday, Koulaei said Iran should not be completely opposed to Russia or enamored with it.

"The geography of Iran dictates balanced [relations] with the East and the West," She remarked.

Koulaei, an expert on Russia, also said Washington is following the same model it used against the Soviet Union, calling on the country's authorities to draw on that experience.

China says to continue to advance ties with Iran

By staff and agency

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Friday that Beijing values its relations with Iran and is willing to continue to advance mutually beneficial cooperation according to the development of the situation.

According to Xinhua, in a phone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Wang said that the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is an important achievement of multilateralism in line with the common interest of the international community.

Adhering to the nuclear deal also conforms to the fundamental interests of Iran, he said.

"We have openly indicated that we oppose the wrong practices of unilateral sanctions and 'long-arm jurisdiction' in international relations," he noted.

For his part, Zarif said that Iran is willing to strengthen coordination with the related parties, including China, and properly tackle the new situation on the nuclear issue.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the nuclear deal on May 8 and ordered restoration of sanctions against Iran.

The first batch of sanctions was snapped back on Monday, August 6. The second batch will be restored on November 4.

CNBC reported on August 8 that China



condemned the measures reinstated against Tehran and urged oil and gas firms to reject calls for them to completely

cut off from Iranian crude. "China's commercial cooperation with Iran is open and transparent, reasonable,

fair and lawful, not violating any United Nations Security Council resolutions," China's Foreign Ministry said.

1953 coup plotters still fearful of Iran

Today marks the 1953 coup in Iran. 65 has passed since that date. Among Iranians it is known in as the 28 Mordad coup d'état.

On that day the streets of Tehran became the scene of violence and chaos by hooligans in support of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The violence was engineered by Britain and with the help of U.S. dollars. Finally, the democratically elected government of Mohammad Mosaddeq was toppled.

The coup was plotted to take revenge for the nationalization of oil in Iran on August 19, 1951. The nationalization of oil became possible through unity among nationalists and religionists.

The British, who saw unity among different groups of society as the main hurdle to their plundering

of Iran, tried to create division among religionists and nationalists on the date the nationalization of oil was declared. They did so in order to create the ground for the return of Pahlavi to power on August 19, 1953.

The coup was the highlight of suppression and despotism and the plundering of national resources until the victory of the Islamic Revolution in February 1979.

There are many stories about the role of Britain and the U.S. in the coup. However, Kermit Roosevelt, the chief of the CIA's Near East and Africa division who was director of the coup, said in an interview that it was the first secret operation against a foreign government which had been engineered at the end

of the Truman administration.

These revelations show that due to political, geopolitical and economic reasons, foreigners have always had a covetous eye on Iran and that such moves have not been limited to the post-1979 revolution.

Needless to say that regardless of who has been in power in Washington or London, the U.S. and Britain have not yet abandoned their evil intentions toward Iranians, a nation that many experts say has civilizational superiority.

These moves show that the leaders of liberal democracy, from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Donald Trump, have been fearful of Iran no matter the nationalists have been ruling this country or proponents of Islamic republicanism.



Shiraz Water & Wastewater Company

Shiraz Water & Wastewater Company Invitation for the prequalification of bidders

شرکت آب و فاضلاب شیراز فراخوان ارزیابی کیفی مناقصه گران

Shiraz Water & Wastewater Company intends to call for a tender for the following works:

شرکت آب و فاضلاب شیراز در نظر دارد نسبت به برگزاری مناقصه ذیل اقدام نماید:

Project subject and specifications:

Subject : Design, procurement of equipment and construction of two modules for the Shiraz city's wastewater treatment plant with a capacity of each 50,000 m ³ /d using international finance (EPC+F)
Bidders Category and Grade : A joint venture of foreign and domestic contractors having technical experience and business license for the subject of this invitation, domestic contractors having grade 1 in water works as well as grade 1 in installation and equipment , and domestic consultants of grade 1 in water & wastewater projects
Execution Duration : 36 months
Operation Period : 24 months

موضوع و مشخصات پروژه :
موضوع : طراحی، تامین تجهیزات و ساخت دو مدول تصفیه خانه فاضلاب شهر شیراز به ظرفیت هر یک 50,000 مترمکعب در شبانه روز به روش فاینانس بین المللی (EPC+F)
رشته و پایه مناقصه گران : پیمانکاران خارجی یا مشارکت پیمانکاران داخلی دارای سوابق و توان فنی (Business License) متناسب با موضوع مندرج در این آگهی، به صورت مشارکت به همراه پیمانکاران داخلی پایه یک آب و توما" پایه یک تاسیسات و تجهیزات و مشاورین داخلی پایه یک آب و فاضلاب
مدت اجرای : 36 ماه
مدت بهره برداری : 24 ماه

General conditions: loan and interest repayment will be guaranteed by the Plan & Budget Organization.

Supervision body :Iranab consulting Engineers

Dates to receive prequalification documents is as of August 20,2018 upto September 3,2018 and prequalification documents submission deadline the end of official hours of October 6,2018.

Address of receiving and submitting documents :IranabConsulting Engineers: #5, Jila Alley, Bassiri St., DorahiGholhak, Dr. Shriati Ave., Tehran

Tel.: 22633047-53

Bidders, having good financial, technical and performance experience in this regard, having deposited IRR 3,000,000 in bank account number of 73151730/48 (Bank of Mellat-Tehran Mirdamad Branch-Code of 65078) in the name of IranabConsulting Engineers, presenting the original receipt of the deposit and a valid letter of introduction could buy the documents. It is noteworthy that the prequalification documents will only be delivered to bidder's representatives having valid letter of introduction and identified subject in.

شرایط کلی: بازپرداخت اصل و سود تسهیلات مالی توسط سازمان برنامه و بودجه کشور تضمین خواهد شد.

دستگاه نظارت : مهندسین مشاور ایراناب

مهلت دریافت اسناد ارزیابی از تاریخ 97/5/29 تا 97/6/12 و آخرین مهلت تسلیم اسناد ارزیابی کیفی پایان وقت اداری مورخ 97/7/14 می باشد.

نشانی دریافت و تحویل اسناد ارزیابی : تهران - خیابان دکتر شریعتی، دوراهی قلهک، خیابان بصیری، کوچه زیلا، پلاک 5 شرکت مهندسین مشاور ایراناب.

تلفن 53-22633047

بدینوسیله مناقصه گران محترم که دارای امکانات مالی، فنی و سابقه اجرایی مناسب در این زمینه می باشند می توانند با مراجعه به آدرس فوق، اسناد ارزیابی کیفی را پس از وارز مبلغ 3,000,000 ریال به حساب جاری شماره 73151730/48 نزد بانک ملت شعبه میرداماد تهران (کد شعبه 65078) بنام شرکت مهندسین مشاور ایراناب با ارائه اصل رسید وارز وجه و معرفی نامه معتبر، خریداری نمایند. اسناد و مدارک ارزیابی فقط به نماینده مناقصه گران با ارائه معرفی نامه معتبر و با قید موضوع، تحویل خواهد شد.

Bomb that killed Yemeni kids supplied by U.S.: CNN

Munitions experts have confirmed that a bomb used by Saudi Arabia in last week's attack on a school bus in Yemen that killed dozens of children had been supplied by the US.

The experts told CNN on Friday that the bomb was a 227-kilogram laser-guided Mark 82 bomb.

They also noted that the numbers on the weapon identified major U.S. military contractor Lockheed Martin as its maker.

The Saudi air raid on Sa'ada hit a school bus on August 9 as it drove through a market in the town of Dhahyan, sparking outrage from international human rights groups and UN officials.

The attack killed a total of 51 people, among them 40 children, and left 79 others wounded.

Earlier this week, a local journalist said recovered bomb fragments showed that it was likely manufactured in the U.S.

Riyadh initially described the Sa'ada strike as a "legitimate military action," but later launched an investigation into the incident amid mounting criticism of its bloody war on Yemen. Asked about CNN's report, Saudi "coalition" spokesman Colonel Turki al-Maliki said that it would not "be appropriate for the coalition to comment further while the investigation is underway."

The report also said that the bomb used in the Sa'ada airstrike was very similar to the one that hit a funeral hall in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, in October 2016, killing 155 people and injuring 525 others.

In December that year, the US cancelled



the sale of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia because of concerns about civilian casualties. In March 2017, however, the US administration under President Donald Trump overturned the ban.

Retired Rear Admiral John Kirby claimed that the government of former President Barack Obama had "deep concerns about the way the Saudis were targeting, and we acted on those concerns by limiting the kinds of munitions that they were being given and stridently trying to argue for them to be more careful and cautious."

Recent fatal Saudi airstrikes have high-

lighted the issue of the U.S. complicity in the deaths of the Yemenis.

■ Sana'a protest

On Friday, thousands of Yemenis took to the streets of Sana'a to condemn the economic hardship caused by the U.S.-backed Saudi war.

Protester Abdulrahman Faya'a said, "Saudi Arabia and the United States which lead the aggression against Yemen are the reasons behind the increase in prices."

"They are the reasons behind this systematic process targeting the Yemeni riyal. Because the reason for the recession of the

Yemeni riyal are those countries who started the aggression and are targeting the Yemeni people, their food and livelihood."

■ War goes on

Separately on Friday, the Yemeni army fired a ballistic missile at the kingdom's southern Narran region in retaliation for the deadly military campaign on the impoverished state.

Iran's Arabic-language Al-Alam news network reported Yemeni soldiers and Popular Committees fighters had targeted a new Saudi military base in Najran with a Badr 1-type missile.

Additionally, Yemen's al-Masirah television network reported a Saudi airstrike on the Hamadan district in Sana'a Province.

Saudi Arabia and its allies launched a brutal war, code-named Operation Decisive Storm, against Yemen in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall former Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, a staunch ally of Riyadh, and crush the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

The offensive initially consisted of a bombing campaign, but was later coupled with a naval blockade and the deployment of ground forces into Yemen.

The imposed war, however, has so far failed to achieve its goals, thanks to stiff resistance from Yemeni troops and allied Houthi fighters.

Several Western countries have been supplying Saudi Arabia with advanced weapons and military equipment.

(Source: agencies)

Erdogan says to challenge 'games' on the economy



A day after two major ratings agencies downgraded Turkey closer to junk status amid a currency crisis, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he would challenge those playing "games" on the economy.

Both Moody's and Standard & Poor's ratings agencies cut Turkey's sovereign credit ratings deeper into "junk" territory late Friday. Standard & Poor's cited extreme lira volatility and forecasted a recession next year. The rating agency downgraded the rating by one notch to B+ from BB- and kept Turkey's outlook at stable in a move which came after the lira lost some 40 percent of its value against the dollar this year.

"Today some people are trying to threaten us through the economy, through interest rates, foreign exchange, investment and inflation," Erdogan told the congress of his ruling AK Party.

"We are telling them: we've seen your games, and we are challenging you."

The lira has plunged as investors fret

about Erdogan's influence over monetary policy. Heavy selling in recent weeks has spread to other emerging market currencies and global stocks and deepened concerns about the economy, particularly Turkey's dependence on energy imports and whether foreign-currency debt poses a risk to banks.

On Friday, Turkey's battered lira weakened 3 percent after a Turkish court rejected an American pastor's appeal for release, drawing a stiff rebuke from President Donald Trump, who said the United States would not take the detention "sitting down".

The case of Andrew Brunson, an evangelical Christian missionary from North Carolina who has lived in Turkey for two decades, has become a flashpoint between Washington and Ankara and accelerated a widening currency crisis.

"We did not and will not surrender to those who act like a strategic partner but make us a strategic target," Erdogan said, in a reference to the United States.

(Source: Reuters)

Qatar accuses Saudi Arabia of blocking access to Hajj



Qatar has accused Saudi Arabia of barring its nationals from performing this year's Hajj, a charge Saudi officials deny.

Around 1,200 Qatari citizens are allowed to attend the pilgrimage under a quota system, but Qatari officials say it has become impossible to register for the annual religious event.

Saudi Arabia, alongside the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt, severed relations with Qatar in June 2017, and has placed the Persian Gulf state under a land, sea, and air blockade.

Qatari nationals are also banned from entering the states, but Riyadh claims to have made an exception for the Hajj.

In June, Saudi Arabia's ministry for the Hajj announced the opening of a website, which allowed Qataris to register for the pilgrimage. However, those in Qatar say registration is impossible.

Abdullah al-Kaabi of the state-run Qatar National Human Rights Committee said Saudi Arabia had shut down the

system used by travel agencies to obtain permits.

"There is no chance this year for Qatari citizens and residents to travel for Hajj," he told the Reuters news agency.

"Registration of pilgrims from the State of Qatar remains closed, and residents of Qatar cannot be granted visas as there are no diplomatic missions."

According to Reuters news agency, three travel agencies in Doha said they had stopped trying to sell Hajj packages.

"Last year we lost a lot of money as the crisis started after we had booked everything in Mecca and Medina and we had to pay people back," said a manager of one travel agency in Doha, declining to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Riyadh temporarily opened the land border for the Hajj last year, but has not done so this year.

Saudi officials reject the accusations and accuse Qatar of trying to politicize the Hajj.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

More heavy rains likely in India's Kerala as flood death toll jumps

India deployed thousands of soldiers and dozens of helicopters to rescue people marooned by the worst floods in a century in the southern state of Kerala, where the death toll of 186 people as of Saturday could rise fast as rains continue.

The weather office warned of more heavy "red" category rains on Saturday as tens of thousands of people were still stuck on the rooftops of houses and community centers. Rescue workers have yet to reach many flooded areas, some too narrow for boats to navigate.

People trapped without food, water and electricity worried about being left without help as their phone batteries were dying. An adviser to the state's chief minister put the initial loss estimate at \$4 billion.

"There are seven families in this apartment now. We're safe compared to many others, but we're cut off," said James Joseph Moolakkatt, owner of an agricultural business who lives in a 10-story building across the southwestern state's Periyar river.

"This is my second phone and to save power I have been turning data on and off intermittently. If this goes out, I will have some charge left in my laptop and then it will be incommunicado."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was taken by helicopter over inundated farmland and villages, promised more helicopters, boats and other equipment needed to expand the rescue operation in the still unfolding emergency.



He said the Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard were assisting disaster relief agencies in the rescue, and a total of 38 helicopters had been pressed into service along with a number of aircraft and ships to ferry resources.

"More helicopters, boats and other equipment are being sought and Modi promised to provide all of these as fast as possible," Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told journalists. "The air marshal in charge of the air operations said more helicopters are on the way."

According to a lawmaker in Pathanamthitta district, some 10,000 people were stranded and in grave danger unless they were rescued urgently.

A Reuters witness in Aluva town, nearly 250 km (155 miles) from state capital Thiruvananthapuram, said army helicopters airlifted up to 14 marooned residents, including children and elderly people from an apartment.

■ Food shortages

With hundreds of thousands of people converging in halls and auditoriums of schools, temples, churches, and mosques with little or

no toilet facilities, people from less affected areas moved in to help those badly in need.

But some people in the relief camps were finding it difficult to access food and water. Videos on social media showed groups of people breaking open shops to take food.

Chief Minister Vijayan has estimated that more than two million people have been forced to move into relief camps since the monsoon season brought torrential rains three months ago. He put the death toll from floods and landslides since the start of the rainy season at 324.

One of his advisers, Prabha Varma, told Reuters 186 people had died since Aug. 8, when the waters began to rise. She said the floods had destroyed 26,000 homes and damaged crops across as much as 40,000 hectares, with estimated losses of 277 billion rupees.

Modi declared initial assistance of 5 billion rupees (\$71 million) and promised more later. He also assured that the federal government would send desperately needed grains, as storage in the state had been flooded and stocks destroyed.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum of the United Arab Emirates, where many Keralites work, said he had formed a committee to extend emergency assistance to the flood victims of the state, whose people he said "have always been and are still part of our success story".

(Source: Reuters)

Taliban say no peace with 'occupation,' want U.S. talks

The leader of the Taliban said Saturday there will be no peace in Afghanistan as long as the foreign "occupation" continues, reiterating the group's position that the 17-year war can only be brought to an end through direct talks with the United States.

In a message released in honor of the Eid al-Adha holiday, Maulvi Haibatullah Akhundzadah said the group remains committed to "Islamic goals," the sovereignty of Afghanistan and ending the war. The Taliban have had a major resurgence in recent years, seizing districts across the country and regularly carrying out large-scale attacks.

Earlier this month, the Taliban launched a major assault on the city of Ghazni, just 120 kilometers from the capital, Kabul. Afghan security forces battled the militants inside the city for five days, as the U.S. carried out airstrikes and sent advisers to help ground forces. The battle for Ghazni killed at least 100 members of the Afghan security forces and 35 civilians, according to Afghan officials.

A year ago, President Donald Trump announced that he would send additional U.S. forces to confront the Taliban. But since then the militants' profile has risen, both on the battlefield and in the diplomatic sphere. The Taliban sent a delegation to Uzbekistan to meet with senior officials earlier this month, and say they recently met with a senior U.S. diplomat in Qatar for what they called "preliminary talks." The U.S. neither confirmed nor denied the meeting.

Earlier this week, the Taliban's top political official, Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, led a delegation to Indonesia, where he met Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi as well as Jusuf Kalla, Indonesia's deputy president, according to a statement the Taliban sent to The Associated Press.

The three day trip ended Wednesday. The statement said Stanikzai discussed the presence of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan and the need for them to leave if peace is to return to the country, said Suhail Shaheen, a spokesman based in the group's Qatar office. While in Indonesia, Stanikzai also "exchanged views on bilateral relations," Shaheen said in the statement, without elaborating.

From 1996 until 2001, the Taliban ruled in accordance with a harsh interpretation of law. Women were barred from education and forced to wear the all-encompassing burka whenever they left their homes, and the country hosted Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda. The Taliban have refused to enter into talks with the Afghan government, which they view as a U.S. puppet, saying they will only negotiate the end of the war directly with Washington. The group has said it is committed to regional security and would not pose a danger to other countries.

However, it has also demanded the complete withdrawal of all U.S. and NATO forces. Although NATO officially ended its combat mission at the end of 2014, it has repeatedly come to the aid of Afghan forces, and it's unclear whether the government in Kabul would be able to remain in power without foreign military aid.

(Source: AP)

China complains about Pentagon report, says it is 'pure guesswork'



China's Defense Ministry has lodged a complaint with the United States about a Pentagon report that said China's military was likely training for strikes against the United States and its allies, saying it was "pure guesswork".

The assessment, at a time of heightened U.S.-China tensions over trade, was contained in an annual report that highlighted China's efforts to increase its global influence, with defense spending that the Pentagon estimated exceeded \$190 billion in 2017.

China's Defense Ministry said in a statement late on Friday that the Pentagon report misrepresented China's strategic intentions and exaggerated the "so-called China military threat."

"China's military expresses resolute opposition to this and has lodged stern representations with the U.S. side," it said.

China is on the path of peaceful development and pursues a defensive national strategy, and has always been a contributor to world peace and protector of the global order, the ministry said.

"The Chinese military's strengthening of modernization is to protect the country's sovereignty, security and development interests, as well as global peace, stability and prosperity," it said.

"The Chinese military's reform, weapons development and defensive capabilities in the internet space are just and reasonable. The criticism in the U.S. report is pure guesswork."

The Pentagon report said that while the People's Liberation Army had continued to extend operations, it was not clear what message Beijing was looking to send by carrying out bomber flights "beyond a demonstration of improved capabilities."

This year, China's air force landed bombers on islands and reefs in the South China Sea as part of a training exercise in the disputed region. In January the Pentagon put countering Beijing, along with Russia, at the center of a new national defense strategy.

China's Defense Ministry said the "peaceful construction work" in the South China Sea was its right as a sovereign country, and it criticized the United States for its freedom of navigation operations there. It said the report by the United States harms mutual trust between the two countries, the ministry said.

"We demand the U.S. side abandons Cold War thinking, objectively and rationally views China's defense and military construction, stops issuing the relevant reports, and takes actual steps to promote and protect the stable development of military-to-military relations," it said.

While Washington and Beijing maintain a military-to-military relationship aimed at containing tensions, this has been tested in recent months, notably in May when the Pentagon withdrew an invitation to China to join a multinational naval exercise.

In June, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis became the first Pentagon chief to visit China since 2014.

(Source: Reuters)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	131535.8
IFX	1505.9

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,999 rials
GBP	53,548 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$65.21/b
Brent	\$71.83/b
OPEC Basket	\$69.47/b
Gold	\$1,185.35/oz
Silver	\$14.84/oz
Platinum	\$794.00/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

CBI makes promises to improve domestic economy

1 → The central banker also named improving the value of the depreciated rial, regulating the foreign currency market, controlling liquidity volume, curbing the rampant inflation, modifying financial structure of the banks, combating the cruel U.S. sanctions imposed on financial and banking transactions as well as conducting constant negotiations with other countries in this regard as his other goals on agenda.

Hemmati, 61, replaced Valiollah Seif as the top Iranian banker following a cabinet meeting on July 25, when Iran's national currency lost its value against the US dollar by more than three times.

The dollar was trading for about 30,000 rials when Seif took over five years ago. Now, it is changing hands at more than 100,000 rials on the unofficial market.

Euro zone inflation confirmed above ECB target in July

Annual inflation in the 19 countries sharing the euro increased to 2.1 percent in July, European statistics office Eurostat said on Friday, confirming the rate was above the European Central Bank's (ECB) target.

The confirmation of increasing inflation is good news for the ECB, which aims to end a bond purchasing program by the end of the year and has signaled a possible interest rate hike next year. (Full Story)

Headline consumer inflation accelerated to 2.1 percent year-on-year in July from 2.0 percent in June, pushed up by higher energy costs.

Excluding energy and unprocessed food, an indicator the ECB looks at to measure core inflation, prices rose by 1.3 percent year on year.

On a country-by-country basis, annual inflation was highest in Estonia, Latvia and Belgium, while Greece and Ireland saw the smallest price increases.

The ECB has a mandate to keep inflation close to but below 2.0 percent.

(Source: Reuters)

Turkey's Erdogan says to challenge 'games' on the economy

A day after two major ratings agencies downgraded Turkey closer to junk status amid a currency crisis, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said he would challenge those playing "games" on the economy.

Both Moody's and Standard & Poor's ratings agencies cut Turkey's sovereign credit ratings deeper into "junk" territory late on Friday.

Standard & Poor's cited extreme lira volatility and forecasted a recession next year. The rating agency downgraded the rating by one notch to B+ from BB- and kept Turkey's outlook at stable in a move which came after the lira lost some 40 percent of its value against the dollar this year.

"Today some people are trying to threaten us through the economy, through interest rates, foreign exchange, investment and inflation," Erdogan told the congress of his ruling AK Party. "We are telling them: we've seen your games, and we are challenging you."

The lira has plunged as investors fret about Erdogan's influence over monetary policy.

Heavy selling in recent weeks has spread to other emerging market currencies and global stocks and deepened concerns about the economy, particularly Turkey's dependence on energy imports and whether foreign-currency debt poses a risk to banks.

On Friday, Turkey's battered lira weakened 3 percent after a Turkish court rejected an American pastor's appeal for release, drawing a stiff rebuke from President Donald Trump, who said the United States would not take the detention "sitting down". The case of Andrew Brunson, an evangelical Christian missionary from North Carolina who has lived in Turkey for two decades, has become a flashpoint between Washington and Ankara and accelerated a widening currency crisis.

"We did not and will not surrender to those who act like a strategic partner but make us a strategic target," Erdogan said, in a reference to the United States.

(Source: Reuters)

Crude steel production rises 17% in 4 months on year

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian steel producers produced 8.279 million tons of crude steel during the four-month period from March 21 to July 22, with 17 percent growth from the figure of the same period of time in the past year, IRIB reported on Saturday based on the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

IMIDRO data put the country's crude steel production at 7.062 million tons during

the same four months of the previous year. Meanwhile, Iran's export of the steel products has experienced a 117-percent increase during the four-month period of this year from that of the past year.

According to the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA), Iran was ranked the 11th among the world's largest crude steel producers in the first half of 2018.

The WSA data showed that the country's crude steel output stood at 12.516 million tons during the first six-month of this year,



rising 25.8 percent from 9.947 million tons in the same period of time in the past year.

It is while the world's steel production during January-June, 2018 rose just 4.6 percent.

"Iran produces 34 million tons of steel per year and is aimed at producing 55 million tons of the product by 2025," according to

Industry Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari.

To hit the target, Iran is in need of attracting €8 billion of investments, the minister said.

He also announced that the country exports 9 million tons of crude steel per year and plans to improve the figure up to 15 million tons by 2025.

Minerals, mining exports at over \$3.7b during 4 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The value of Iran's minerals and mining exports stood at \$3.763 billion during the first four months of current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), according to data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

As the annual exports from this sector is planned to reach \$10 billion in the current year (ends on March 20, 2019), the four-month export materialized 37 percent of the planned figure, IRNA reported on Saturday.

IRICA data put the minerals and mining exports at 20.917 million tons during the first four months of the current year, with Iraq, China and United Arab Emirates as the main export destinations accounting for 40 percent of the total exports.

The worth of Iran's minerals and mining exports stood at \$9 billion in the past Iranian calendar year, according to Mehdi Karbasian, the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization

(IMIDRO).

As Karbasian announced in late February, by the end of the present Iranian year, about \$6 billion of new projects will be inaugurated in Iranian mining sector.

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries where 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world's largest deposits of copper, zinc and iron ore, which are tempting international investors after the lifting of economic sanctions against the country in January 2016.

Over 512m tons of commodities worth \$288m traded in IME in a week

ECONOMY TEHRAN — During the five dealing days (Saturday-Wednesday) of the past Iranian week ended on Friday, approximately 512,158 million tons of commodities worth over \$288 million were traded in Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

Last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 116,152 million tons of various products worth near \$55 million were traded, IME Public Relations and International Affairs Department reported on Saturday.

On this trading floor, 82,500 million

tons of steel, 30,000 million tons of sponge iron, 3,500 million tons of copper, 2 kilograms of gold bullion, 12 million tons of precious metal concentrates as well as 140 million tons of molybdenum concentrates were traded by the customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 343,586 million tons of different commodities with the total value of \$204 million were traded.

On this trading floor, more than 135,979 million tons of bitumen, 59,381 million tons of polymer products, 70,000 million

tons of VB feed stock, 35,000 million tons of lube cut oil, 39,573 million tons of chemical products, 1,890 million tons of sulfur, 1,050 million tons of insulation as well as 713 million tons of oil were traded.

Moreover, on the agricultural trading floor of IME, 50,872 million tons of various commodities worth over \$26.5 million were traded. On this trading floor, 17,060 million tons of sugar, 33,805 million tons of wheat as well as 7,415 kilograms of saffron were traded by customers.

Furthermore, 86 million tons of mineral products and 531 million tons



of metal scrap were traded on the IME's side market.

New shipping companies ready for co-op with Iran: official



ECONOMY TEHRAN — Deputy head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) for ports and economic affairs said the country's new incentive packages has lured new shipping companies for cooperating with Iran.

"New support packages have been provided for foreign shipping companies and that made several new foreign companies express readiness to work with us," IRIB reported on Saturday quoting Mohammad-Ali Hassanzadeh-Mohammadi as saying.

According to the official, although a few insurance companies which work in the U.S. markets have refused to continue operating in Iran, several other companies with small markets in the United States are still working in Iran and a number of European and Asian companies have also expressed interest in cooperating with Iranian shipping lines.

Talks to be resumed on Sino-U.S. trade

A senior Chinese negotiator will visit the United States at Washington's invitation late this month to resume trade talks, the Ministry of Commerce said on Thursday.

It will be the first bilateral meeting since the Sino-U.S. trade dispute escalated in June, attracting lots of attention and high expectations.

On the invitation of the U.S., a delegation led by Wang Shouwen, vice-minister of commerce and China's deputy international trade representative, will meet with a team led by the U.S. Treasury's Undersecretary for International Affairs David Malpass, the ministry said in a statement.

The two sides will hold consultations on each other's concerns about Sino-U.S. economic and trade issues, the ministry said.

"The Chinese side opposes unilateralism and trade protectionism practices and does not accept any unilateral trade restriction measures," said the statement.

"China welcomes dialogue and communication on the basis of reciprocity, equality and integrity."

Beijing has retaliated after Washington slapped tariffs in goods since they held their last high-level meeting in June. The tension raised fears that their trade dispute will shake the global economy.

(Source: China Daily)

IN THE NAME OF GOD
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 97-05/155

Second Announcement

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Two-Stage Tender:
Preparation and Installation of Computer Room Air Handler Units (CRAH) (Tehran IRIB Center) according to the tender documents

Deadline of Receiving Documents:
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Saturday August 25, 2018.**

Place of Receiving Documents:
Secretariat of Tenders' Commission, Technical Purchasing (KALA) Dept., Media Technology and Development Deputy Office, Bldg. No. 2, IRIB, Jam-e Jam St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:
The amount of **USD 11,500** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than **15 p.m. on Tuesday September 25, 2018** and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m. on Saturday September 29, 2018** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.
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NEWS IN BRIEF



More than 300 killed in south India floods

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — In what has been described as the worst flood situation in over 100 years, at least 324 people have been killed in flooding in the southern Indian state of Kerala. The situation has become extremely grim with death toll mounting since Thursday.

Reports in Indian media said governmental and non-governmental rescue teams are battling torrential rains to save people trapped in the floods, with more than 200,000 people already rendered homeless.

All the 44 rivers in Kerala are overflowing at present. One of the main tourist attractions in India, Kerala has been battered by record monsoon rainfall this year.

The provincial government of Kerala said many of those who died were crushed under debris caused by landslides. With more rains predicted and a red alert in place, government has its task cut out.

India's home minister Rajnath Singh also termed it the worst floods in Kerala since 1924. In a statement, the ministry said more than 930 people have now died across India since the country's monsoon season began in June.



Imran Khan sworn in as 22nd Pakistani PM

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — Almost three weeks after emerging triumphant in the Pakistan general election, Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) chairperson Imran Khan was formally elected as the 22nd prime minister of Pakistan by the National Assembly on Friday. On Saturday, he took oath of office.

A total of 176 members of the National Assembly voted in favour of Khan while his opponent, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shahbaz Sharif, received 96 votes.

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the third largest party in the House that joined the PML-N and other parties in an opposition alliance against Khan's PTI, abstained from voting.

Imran, the former Pakistan cricket captain who took plunge into active politics more than two decades ago, commands massive following in Pakistan. But, the outcome of general election was marred by controversies related to vote rigging and manipulation.

"I am grateful to Almighty Allah and the nation for giving me the opportunity to bring a change which the nation wanted. The nation was longing for the change we will bring," Khan said, vowing to ensure "strict accountability" and to bring back the looted wealth of the country.



India to help build another dam in Afghanistan

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — After helping in the construction of Salma Dam in western Herat province of Afghanistan, which is known as Afghan-India Friendship Dam, India is now getting ready to aid the war-torn country in building the Shahtoot Dam situated in the Kabul river basin.

According to a report in Economic Times, the dam is planned on a tributary of the Kabul River, in Chahar Asiab district, and it is expected to provide potable water to two million individuals and aid the irrigation of 4000 hectares of agricultural land in Chahar Asiab and Khairabad.

India's decision to help build this dam was formally conveyed to Afghanistan during a meeting between senior officials of the Joint Working Group on Development Cooperation (JWG-DC), last week, said the report. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$300 million.

This cooperation between the two countries, the report noted, is likely to upset Pakistan and its new government led by Imran Khan, who extended a hand of friendship towards New Delhi weeks before taking the oath of office.

Pakistan has been urging Afghanistan to sign a bilateral treaty to share water between them, but Kabul has expressed reservations. The government in Afghanistan supposedly feels that signing such a treaty might make it difficult to construct irrigation and hydro-electric projects in the Kabul river basin, the report said.



Bangladesh PM accuses rival of killing nation's founder

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stirred hornet's nest by claiming that arch-rival Khaleda Zia was involved in killing her father and nation's founder Mujibur Rahman.

A report published in Daily Star quoted her saying that Zia was involved in the August 15 conspiracy to kill her father. "Zia's wife [Khaleda] brought self-confessed killer of the Father of the Nation [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman] to Parliament by rigging votes."

The Awami League (AL) chief made the remarks while addressing an event organised in connection with the 43rd anniversary of Mujib's assassination. "What does it mean? It was not only Zia but also his wife was involved in the conspiracy of the August 15 carnage. There is no doubt," Hasina said.

She said BNP founder Ziaur Rahman had obstructed a probe into the assassination. "Why did he obstruct the investigation if he had not been involved in the killing? Zia was fully involved."

Commenting on protests that have rocked Dhaka and other cities in recent weeks, Hasina said they were "instigated". "They wanted to create an abnormal situation in the country by instigating the students relentlessly," she said, adding that those orchestrating the protests included noted intellectuals and pundits who were 'Pakistani in spirit'.

Has Al-Qaeda withered fully from Indian sub-continent? No, says a UN report

1 → In addition to establishing a presence across Afghanistan, the report says ISIS also attempts to expand its network to other countries in the region, adding that in Afghanistan, the group persistently tried to expand its presence, despite pressure from the Afghan security forces, and the international coalition.

The report further says that the group is "ideologically inclined" to carry out attacks inside India but its capability is believed to be low and is relatively isolated owing to increased security measures. However, the group has a small base in Kashmir, the troubled northern province of India, where Zakir Musa-led Ansar Ghazwat ul Hind has pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda.

An earlier report had stated that fighters of AQIS operate as advisers and trainers of the Afghan Taliban, especially Haqqani Network, with 150 to 180 operatives present in southern and eastern Afghanistan. They recruit personnel from remote areas of India and Bangladesh.

"Al Qaeda is in hibernation mode, and it has taken a back-seat while the ISIS and Taliban are carrying forward their fight, but we must not write them off completely," says Haroon Barakzai, an Afghan analyst. "They still see their role in Afghanistan and the region."



For Pakistan's new PM, the biggest challenge is tottering economy

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

TEHRAN — The long cherished dream of cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan finally became a reality on Saturday when he was sworn in as the new prime minister of Pakistan, more than 20 years after joining active politics. It is believed to be one of the most challenging roles in world politics but Khan has appeared confident and has vowed to build the foundation of 'Naya Pakistan' (New Pakistan).

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) won the most number of seats in July 25 Pakistan general election but fell short of the absolute majority to form the single-party government. He will now be heading a PTI-led coalition government, which makes his job less easier.

His swearing-in-ceremony on Saturday saw a galaxy of eminent people from different fields in attendance, including the members of 1992 cricket world cup winning team and many foreign dignitaries. Khan had led Pakistan to World Cup win in 1992, which catapulted him to dizzying heights of fame and stardom in Pakistan.

The ceremony was also attended by services chiefs, members of civil society, bureaucrats, lawyers, and senior leaders of the various political parties of Pakistan. It was a simple ceremony, devoid of any extravaganza, in sync with Khan's poll promise of bringing austerity and combating corruption.

Although he fumbled over some of the words of his oath administered by President Mamnoon Hussain, Khan cannot afford to falter on some of the pressing issues facing Pakistan today. According to pundits, the biggest challenge for his government will be the flailing economy.

The fiscal deficit between imports and exports has reached a record high, around USD 35 billion that speaks a lot about Pakistan's trade policies, stagnant export base and the liberal imports policies, the Express Tribune reported.

How Khan turns around the economy of Pakistan will eventually determine his success or failure as the premier of Pakistan, believe experts. Having promised an 'Islamic welfare state', Khan's task is cut out.

He has been optimistic so far about the country's future despite the "grave economic crisis" and rampant corruption. In his message on Pakistan's Independence Day on August 14, Khan said he is filled with the "greatest optimism" on this day. "Despite our grave economic crises, due to corruption and cronyism, I know if we are united in our resolve, we will rise to the challenge and Pakistan will become the great nation envisaged by our Quaid and Iqbal," he said, referring to the vision of Pakistan's founding fathers Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Sir Mohammad Iqbal.

But he inherits an economic situation that his own finance



minister Asad Umar has described as "dire", and he has to rebuild most of the institutions that have broken down and weakened over the years.

Reports about Pakistan approaching the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a bailout have been doing rounds over the past few weeks, but no final decision has been taken yet. Last week, Umar was quoted saying that Pakistan will decide by the end of September if it will go to the IMF or not. "By the end of September, we should make our decision," Umar said.

In an interview with Tehran Times, scholar and former lawmaker Farahnaz Ispahani said Pakistan needs both immediate and long term relief. "Even if the IMF program is obtained it will involve onerous conditions," she said. "Pakistan needs to break out of its cycles of boom and bust but for that serious reform, not gimmicks and temporary solutions, are needed."

Ayesha Siddiq, a military scientist and political commentator, agreed that the new government must address economic woes before anything else. "Pakistan desperately needs money to survive. The Americans have put pressure on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) not to give Pakistan a bail out," she told Tehran Times, referring to the recent statement of U.S. Secretary of

State Mike Pompeo.

Pompeo had strongly objected to the idea of IMF loan being used by Pakistan to pay back Chinese loans, as U.S. and China are currently locked in a bitter trade war. "Make no mistake," Pompeo said. "We will be watching what the I.M.F. does."

So, it is still not clear whether or not Pakistan will approach the IMF for a bailout, and if it does, will IMF turn down the request under the U.S. pressure. It will be Pakistan's 13th bailout from IMF.

But there is also speculation that Pakistan will approach its new ally China, from which it has borrowed heavily in recent years to finance the CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor), a \$62 billion ambitious project currently underway.

The immediate dilemma for the new Pakistani prime minister is to choose between Chinese help or the IMF bailout. But, in both cases, the hindrance will be the U.S.

"Because of its ongoing trade and tariff war with China, U.S. is punishing Pakistan by objecting to the IMF bailout," said Mohammad Qadir Gilani, Islamabad-based analyst. "Imran Khan must tread cautiously but without compromising country's sovereignty and independent foreign policy."

U.S. faces isolation in global community by sanctioning Iran

1 → China is Iran's largest crude oil importer and because of Iran's crucial role in Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China cannot let Iran to lose its influence into the region. Iran's high chances of joining Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), deal with Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and as a member of International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) provides it with a much broader importance in the affairs governing eastern part of the world.

In addition to the economic and strategic importance of Iran, its military cooperation is vital in maintaining the security and peace in the region. According to TASS news agency, intelligence officers from Russia, China, Pakistan, and Iran recently conducted a secret meeting in Islamabad to formulate a strategy for countering the rise of ISIS in Afghanistan. It has come as an embarrassment for Washington and Kabul because of their failure in finding a tangible solution to the Afghan problem.

Thus a consensus on Afghan problem among eastern countries has created a wide gap between the interests of east and US, and once again Iran has shown its importance on a global stage.

Eastern powers are not alone in criticizing

Iranian sanctions but the U.S. is also facing the European backlash, as the French Finance Minister Bruno Le Marie recently stated that they are not obliged to act as a vassal of the U.S. and they have a right to defend their economic sovereignty. He proposed a strategy to nullify U.S. sanctions on EU firms in accordance with EU regulations passed in 1996. This first link in the proposal is to set up a European finance house that will facilitate Euro denominated transactions with Iran. The French president also showed respect for Iran due to its commitment to JCPOA when he said: "As long as the Iranians respect their commitments, the EU will, of course, stick to the agreement of which it was an architect."

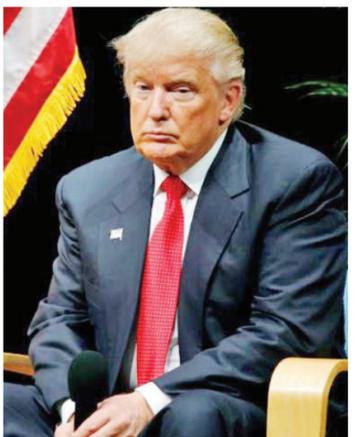
Jean-Yves Drian, the French minister of foreign affairs, described the U.S. sanctions as unacceptable, thus European businesses need not to comply with U.S. foreign policy diktats.

The recent meeting between Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zaffar and his European counterparts in which he advised them to take practical steps without any preconditions regarding business deals with Iran was significant. The German finance minister Peter Altmaier issued a statement

to help affected firms of Germany through legal and other means in order to ensure the continuation of business with Iran. Nathalie Tocca, the Deputy Director of Istituto Affari Internazionali Italy, criticized the unilateral withdrawal of U.S. from JCPOA and said it is an unjustified betrayal of Europe and thus needs proportionate reprisals. David Thorne, the former U.S. ambassador to Italy, also expressed his concerns regarding the rifts that may result due to U.S. sanctions on Iran.

The 2013 mass popular unrest in Turkey, 2016 failed coup attempt of Erdogan in addition to an alliance between Syrian and Turkish Kurds has convinced Ankara to review its status as a NATO member. The recent decision of the U.S. to sanction Turkish interior minister and justice minister has proved to be a poisoned cherry on rotten cake. Turkey is perceiving disturbance from the West and an opportunity for development in the East as China is trying to fasten Ankara into its Belt and Road Initiative in addition to improving relations with Russia and Iran.

In a recent August 12, 2018 speech Erdogan said that the economic warfare of U.S. may trigger a geopolitical shift in NATO alliance and according to CNN security analyst Saman-



the Vinograd, Turkey is constantly getting closer to Iran on every front which is good for Tehran and bad for the Western empire. The writer is a Kashmir-based student and researcher. He can be reached at mudasir.shk01@gmail.com

Turkish economy will not collapse: Logoglu

1 → The case of Pastor Brunson on trial in Turkey for aiding and abetting terrorists in Turkey has been elevated to the top of the agenda by the Trump administration, demanding his release along with other Americans detained in Turkey. The evangelical circles in the USA, led by Vice-president Pence and Secretary of State Pompeo have turned the Pastor Brunson issue into a show case to win the millions of evangelical votes in the upcoming mid-term elections in November.

■ Is there possibility of deepening the crisis?
A: Yes, the crisis can get worse. It would first depend on the course the Turkish economy takes in the next few months. If the Turkish economy runs into more troubles, anti-American sentiments in Turkey would grow even stronger, compelling the Government to take an ever-stiffer stance against the USA. If on the other hand Turkey is able to ward off a deepening crisis in its economy, then there would still be a chance for diplomacy between the two allies.

Another reason is the prospect of additional American sanctions, particularly the exercise of a U.S. veto against extending credit or providing facilities to Turkey in international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. This could have a deleterious impact on the Turkish economy.

Yet another reason would be further sanctions against Turkey in the U.S. Congress, including but not limited to the sale of F-35 fighter jets.

At the end of the day however it would all depend on the actions and decisions of the leaders of the two countries. In this context President Trump, acting as a global bully, does not give much hope.



■ Is there possibility of collapse of Turkey's economy if the tensions continue? Can Turkey overcome the economic problems created by recent tensions? If yes, how?

A: No, Turkish economy will not collapse, despite the deep problems it is facing. The fundamentals of the economy are strong enough to avoid a melt-down. Indeed, Turkey has already taken a number of steps to shore up its economy. The free fall in the value of the Turkish lira has now been stopped. As the various structural and financial measures go into effect, the economy should start to recover despite the American sanctions. There is world-wide reaction against the U.S., east and west, leading perhaps to alternative international arrangements

to mitigate the effects of American bullying. Europe has been supportive of Turkey not just because they oppose Trump policies, but also because they know a failed Turkey would have serious consequences on their economies as well. Turkish cooperation with Europe and with others will work to Turkey's benefit.

Iran has also been very understanding toward Turkey, criticizing American policies. Continuing cooperation and solidarity between Turkey and Iran are important for both countries and for stability and prosperity of the region.

■ How can side settle their differences?
A: All alternatives to diplomacy, whether armed conflict or other variations of war, end with diplomacy.

■ Can possible collapse of Turkey's economy result in political changes in Turkey? Or affect the regional developments to the benefit of the U.S. regional goals?

As I said earlier, the Turkish economy will not collapse. The country has weathered economic crises before and it will do so this time again. On the other hand, there is a need for change in Turkish policies in the region irrespective of Turkey's relations with the U.S. On Syria, Turkey must open channels of communications with the Syrian government and invest more effort in the Geneva peace process. Ankara must also redefine a new relationship matrix with the Kurds of the region, one based on mutual respect and reciprocal benefits.

As for the U.S., the best course of action is for it to leave the region and let the peoples of the region determine the course of their lives on their own. The same applies to all other foreign actors operating in the region.

Fusion of Horizons based on shared and cherished values: Tamara Sonn

TEHRAN — Tamara Sonn is Professor in the History of Islam in the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding in the School of Foreign Service. She works on Islamic intellectual history. Her publications have been translated into Arabic, Bengali, Portuguese, and Russian. She has lectured in North America, Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Her research has been supported by the American Council of Learned Societies, Fulbright, and the U.S. Department of State, among others. She served as senior editor of the Oxford Dictionary of Islam (2003), and associate editor of Oxford's Encyclopedia of the Islamic World Past and Present (2004). She is senior editor of Oxford Islamic Studies Online, and of Oxford's Encyclopedia of the Islamic World, as well as Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion. Sonn is also founding editor-in-chief of Oxford Bibliographies Online—Islamic Studies, and of Wiley-Blackwell's online journal of Religious Studies Religion Compass.

■ The Islamic Revolution of Iran took place in a society dominated by a secular regime which was a loyal ally of the USA and which had started a modernization project. What message did this phenomenon have for international relations? Was it indicative of a global resurgence or awakening of religion?

A: Like all revolutions, the Islamic Revolution in Iran was not named until after the fact. Opposition to the Pahlavi regime came from diverse sectors, and developed over decades, directly proportionate to the regime's lack of economic, political, and social inclusivity. It was a popular revolution against an authoritarian regime. Ayatollah Khomeini's voice echoed the themes of diverse reformers, religious and secular. It came to symbolize and synthesize the overwhelming opposition to authoritarianism and injustice. It is important, therefore, to recognize both the commonalities among the diverse voices of opposition and the diversity even among religious voices; Islam is not monolithic. I believe, in other words, it is important not to reduce the revolution to the simplistic secular v. religious polarity. To do so is to submit to the dominance of Euro-American modernist discourse, the source of that constructed polarity. Instead, speaking in the context of Islamic discourse, the resonance of Ayatollah Khomeini's voice across diverse sectors of Iranian society and beyond reflects two consistent themes in Islamic history. First is the broad expectation that legitimate political powers fulfill at least minimally the objectives of Shari'ah — protection of people's fundamental rights to religious freedom, human dignity, the sanctity of life and family, and the right to private property. Second is the role of religious authorities in channeling popular discontent when political powers fail to fulfill those expectations/obligations. In that sense, Ayatollah Khomeini and other religious authorities who spoke out, warning political powers of their failures, were playing their traditional roles.

I therefore do not see the revolution as reflecting a resurgence of religion — as Euro-American observers often put it — but rather an example of the traditional role of religious authorities in Islamic societies. After all, the 'ulama' also figured highly in the tobacco protests of the 1890s and the constitutional revolution in the first decade of the 20th century. The end of monarchy in Iran in 1979 was revolutionary, but the prominence of religious authorities and Islamic terms of reference in revolutionary discourse was not.

■ Postivist theories of political sciences and international relations couldn't predict the Islamic Revolution and even after its oc-



Professor of the History of Islam in Georgetown University

currence, they continued to ignore it and tried to pretend that this phenomenon was an exception which couldn't be generalized and would meet its demise in the not too distant future. What deficiencies do you find with such Western theories which have failed to understand and explain the power of religion?

A: Political Science is a modernist discipline, constructed upon modernist paradigms of the separation of religious authority from political power, and the notion that religion properly affects primarily the private sector. Weber's modernization theory and its corollary, the secularization hypothesis, foundational to the discipline, hold that as societies industrialize and democratize, religion will "privatize." That prediction was assumed to be an inevitability. The idea that a society could be technologically advanced and democratic, with religion still functioning in the public sphere, simply did not fit the theory. Many political scientists thus made the classic error of allowing theory to come before fact. (This is reminiscent of a humorous poem written by the famous physicist Edward Teller:

"A fact without a theory is like a ship without a sail...a boat without a rudder...a kite without a tail. A fact without a theory is an inconclusive act, but if there's one thing worse in this confusing universe, it's a theory without a fact.") The key weakness in modernization theory was that it was based on a limited data set, one derived from European experience alone.

Rather than adjusting the theory to account for data derived from outside Europe, many political scientists simply ignored that data. In particular, they ignored the experience of Muslim-majority regions, in whose history religious authorities were not viewed as problematic. Religious authorities had not, for the most part, been integral to authoritarian governments that modern societies overturned in favor of democracy.

As noted above, in fact, religious authorities often voiced popular opposition to governments viewed as unjust. Had political scientists accounted for the different role played by religious authorities in Muslim societies, they may well have been able to gain clearer understanding of Iran's Islamic Revolution. Ironically, quintessential modernist Samuel Huntington himself at one point questioned modernization theory. In his famous *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996), he claims that modernization theory's predictions were incorrect, in view of what he terms the "global revival of religion." But,

again, instead of questioning the theory, he concluded that societies in which religious discourse had a place in the public sphere were simply stuck in pre-modernity.

■ Ayatollah Khomeini presented a new model of governance to the international arena which seemed unknown and peculiar because Western thinkers and scholars were not accustomed to seeing a leader who was both political and spiritual. What is your perception of Khomeini and his influence on world politics?

A: Ayatollah Khomeini may have been unknown outside of Iran and the Middle East more broadly, but that reflects another failing on the part of the modernist Euro-American political scientists: the tendency to marginalize not only religious authorities as representatives of civil society, but civil society itself. Focusing on what governments do when trying to analyze a country is perhaps a reasonable approach if the governments are in fact representative democracies and therefore reflect the views of civil society. But when governments are deeply unpopular, as was the case in Pahlavi Iran, such observers are bound to be surprised by revolution. Those observers who focused on the study of religion, society, and culture, on the other hand, were not surprised by the Islamic Revolution. In fact, the works of reformers using Islamic discourse, from Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb to Ali Shariati, Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr and Ayatollah Khomeini, were readily available, well known, and widely discussed by people dissatisfied with authoritarian governments and those who studied them.

That being said, Ayatollah Khomeini's particular formulation of *vilayat-e faqih*, is novel, a step beyond the widely accepted notion of jurists' responsibility to advise and guide society and government. While it is not a universally accepted interpretation, the success of the Islamic Revolution in overthrowing a deeply unpopular, secular government, and replacing it with a government clearly inspired by Islamic principles of social justice, has been immensely influential.

It inspired reformers and activists throughout the Muslim-majority world to continue their struggles for representative governance in accordance with core Islamic values. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, in fact, the presence of Islamic terms of reference in political discourse has become mainstream, and many scholars recognize the fallacies of modernization theory. Sociologist of Religion Jose Casanova, for example, notes that Western Europe's privatization of religion

resulted from the unique circumstances of European history and therefore should not be taken as a model for other societies. ("Civil Society and Religion: Retrospective Reflections on Catholicism and Prospect Reflections on Islam." *Social Research* 68:4/2001:1040-1080.)

■ Ayatollah Khomeini challenged some of the well-established rules and norms of international relations and the free world when he endorsed the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran and when he declared a fatwa against Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*. Do you consider his narrative of political Islam as a menace to liberalism and free world values or do you think a kind of coexistence, mutual understanding and fusion of horizons between Islam and the West is possible?

A: Actually, I reject the Cold War polarities reflected in terminology such as "free world," which was meant to contrast with Communist countries. The euphemistic character of that terminology is evident in light of the fact that such bastions of the "free world" maintained colonial empires in which people were decidedly not free.

"Liberalism" is a similarly loaded term, and one that is a source of heated debate even in Euro-America. In today's climate of right-wing populism in Western Europe and the U.S., "liberalism" has a distinctly negative connotation.

"Islam and the West" is also a misleading bifurcation, given the fact that significant minorities of "Western" countries are, in fact, Muslim and have been for well over a century. (England's first mosque was established in 1889, the oldest extant mosque in the U.S. was established in 1907, and France's first mosque was established in 1926.) What is more, even Samuel Huntington doesn't count all of Europe as part of "the West"; he sees Orthodox Christian countries of Eastern Europe as more akin to Muslim-majority countries than to Western Christian countries. More importantly, I don't see the occupation of the U.S. embassy in Tehran — either the first time, in early 1979, when authorities ushered the occupiers out of the embassy, or the second time later in that year, when authorities appear to have been preoccupied internally with forming a new government and externally with instability in neighboring Afghanistan resulting from the Soviet invasion — as representative of the ideals of political Islam. Similarly with the pronouncement of a death sentence on Rushdie.

Rather, I consider Ayatollah Khomeini's stress on the integrity of values across social sectors, private and public, and the centrality of justice to those values, to be the basis of his popular appeal and lasting impact. Human efforts to articulate and implement those values are, by nature, fallible and frequently in need of reassessment. But the centrality and integrity of values remains consistent. And in that context, I appreciate your reference to Gadamer's "fusion of horizons." Euro-Americans never meant for the "separation of church and state" to result in the removal of values from the public sphere.

The goals included removing coercive power from the hands of religious authorities beholden to unjust governments and those who might violate religious freedom. The imperative of social justice and religious freedom are enshrined in the Qur'an (4:135 and 2:256) and guide political Islam. The Christian-dominated Euro-American historical experience and that of Muslim-majority countries differ, but their "horizons" meet in the shared, cherished values of social justice and religious freedom.

(Source: *Asr-Andishe* magazine)

Can U.S. government do without friends in long run? No

1 → The refusal so far by Erdogan to release this sketchy "pastor" (and a handful of other Americans in Turkish prisons), who reportedly preached (or something) to a congregation of less than 30 followers and Allah alone know who they were and why any of them were in Turkey, has gotten Donald Trump all in a hissy fit of some sort whereby he's pulling all the strings he can grab onto to drag Turkey down, as Iran has already been dragged down by Trump's abrogation of the JCPOA and the reinstatement of harsh sanctions against Iranians and Iran's economy. The JCPOA abrogation alone was entirely illegal, as is much the U.S. has been doing for decades outside the U.S., and lately, inside, too.

Iran may be the prime target of the Trump Administration currently along with his gaggle of insane Neocon advisers, but Iran is not alone under attack by the U.S. Trump has added to the various sanctions against Russia and Russians over the Skripal affair in the past month, infuriating Sergei Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister, and no doubt Putin himself. Other countries are under sanction attack, too, and Trump has been threatening to apply sanctions against ANY country that buys Iranian oil after November.

It's interesting that a former top editor of the Wall Street Journal, and a high up appointment in the U.S. Treasury Department when Ronald Reagan was President, Paul Craig Roberts, who is now an independent writer and pundit, has had some things to say about a host of stupid moves by the Trumpists.

For example, Roberts, who is extremely wise, wonders why Putin is so damn nice towards the U.S. when, he claims, both Russia and China hold all the cards in the sanction wars. For one thing, Roberts says neoliberal economics is a hoax, but neither the Chinese nor the Russians get this yet.

Roberts believes all the lies and provocations against Russia would come to a halt if Putin said the U.S. would be destroyed if they continue with the provocations, and in fact Russia could wipe out the U.S. physically. A milder response would have Russia, among other things, stop selling rocket engines to the U.S., stem the flow of energy to Europe, ban overflights of U.S. aircraft and stop altogether the use of the U.S. dollar for oil trade.

China could nationalize U.S. corporate operations inside China, such as Apple Computer, says Roberts, and dump its holdings of U.S. Treasury bonds. U.S. corporations would demand that the U.S. be subservient to China, not the other way around. Also, says Roberts, Turkey is a perfect opportunity for Russia and China to step forward and remove Turkey from NATO, and offer membership in the BRICS, trade deals and mutual security treaties.

But Iran is neither Russia nor China and has nothing of the military power, relatively, nor the economic power to challenge the U.S. as, for examples, Russia and China could, if only the two countries' leaders had the balls to do so. However, what Iran CAN do is deepen its ties with both Russia and China and its Caspian Sea neighbors (as it has of late), and even more importantly, maintain a cool demeanor and internal accord and resistance to any pressures for "regime change" by both the U.S. and the Zionists.

And perhaps Iran is trying this now, carefully. One can only hope. For, in fact, the U.S. is not making friends, it seems, anywhere outside Saudi Arabia and Israel, and increasingly is perceived as simply a bully. The road ahead to a truly multipolar world is long and hard, but that's the task for all the rivals of the U.S. and it can be achieved for the betterment of the planet as a whole.

And that includes Iranians of course. No country like the U.S. can maintain such vast power that the U.S. has enjoyed for decades, and for long misused with malice and cruelty, if it has few or no friends any longer. It's time for the major powers like Russia and China to come to the aid of lesser powers like Iran and to begin to think about ways the U.S. can be sanctioned, too.

New wave of Afghans headed to Europe from Iran



1 → Mehr News Agency's reports from reputable sources indicate that many Afghan citizens living in Iran are trying to find an opportunity to move to Europe. Except for those who have relatives and acquaintances in Europe, many are planning to illegally cross the borders to Europe and this has led to the reopening of the market for smugglers in countries like Turkey.

Ahmed, a 26-year-old Afghan who lives in Mazar-e-Sharif, lives in the suburbs of Tehran, has said to a Mehr correspondent: "Many friends and acquaintances who work in Iran are looking for a way to go to Europe. We will not return to our country because there is not enough security there. And unfortunately, the continued presence of the foreigners, especially the American military and its support for the terrorists, has exacerbated this turbulent situation."

The rise of Afghans migrating to Europe is taking place while the Unified Europe has failed to address the crisis. We saw this with the beginning and the intensification of the crisis of asylum seekers in Europe in 2015 and 2016, a crisis that the single European Union could avoid.

Currently, hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers in Europe are illegally there. Under such circumstances, Europe will certainly not drag out a new immigration crisis, but, any severe European confrontation with the flow of Afghan refugees will have unforeseen costs and consequences in Europe.

It is estimated that between 800,000 and a million of Afghan citizens living in Iran will be moving to Europe in the near future. In this case, the European Union will see the presence of a huge number of Afghans who want to stay in Europe, along with the problems caused by the presence of additional asylum seekers headed to Europe. Leaders such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron will be challenged to manage a fresh influx to their countries. They have not been able to stem the crisis caused by the presence of those refugees and asylum seekers already in Europe.

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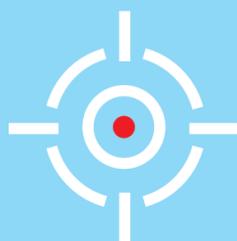
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This is how many carbs vegetarians and meat eaters should really be eating

Carbs have been on the receiving end of a lot of criticism in recent years, with many people wrongly believing that eating them is an unhealthy course of action.

However, a major study conducted in the U.S. has found that following a low carbohydrate diet can drastically reduce your lifespan, particularly if you're substituting carbohydrates for meat and dairy products.

So, what does 'low carb' actually mean, how does a low carb diet actually affect your wellbeing if you're a meat eater, vegetarian or vegan and how many carbs should you actually be eating?

According to Kirsty Bamping, registered dietitian and media spokesperson for The British Dietetic Association, carbohydrates are a necessary component in all people's diets, regardless of whether they eat meat or not.

"The government's healthy eating advice recommends that just over a third of your diet should be made up of starchy foods, such as potatoes, bread, rice and pasta, and another third should be fruit and vegetables," Bamping tells The Independent.

"This means that over half of your daily calorie intake should come from starchy foods, fruit and vegetables. This applies whether you are a meat eater, vegetarian or vegan."

The NHS recommends that individuals eat at least 260g of carbohydrates a day.

However, according to Perfect Keto, a website that promotes the controversial ketogenic diet, a person following the low carb keto diet would usually attribute five per cent of their daily calorie intake to carbohydrates, which can lead to a daily carb intake of 20 or 40g.

This is evidently far less than the daily carb intake recommended by the NHS.

Bamping explains that carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy as part of a nutritious, balanced diet, as they're broken down into glucose when eaten before being absorbed into the bloodstream.

When the body is low on glucose, this can lead to ketosis and you may experience symptoms such as feeling dehydrated, faint and weak as a result.

The study, which was published in the Lancet Public Health on Thursday, states that



"We all know that reducing our intake of processed carbohydrates and refined sugars is a good thing. But having these as part of a balanced diet is not a bad thing, so be flexible and keep a considered eye on your average calorie intake per day."

meat eaters are more at risk of developing harmful health conditions when following a strict low carb diet, as they're more likely to substitute carbohydrates for fats and proteins such as meat, cheese, butter and milk.

This can increase their risk of developing cardiovascular disease and various forms of cancer in future.

However, vegetarians and vegans may opt to eat foods that are high in fibre when following a low carb diet instead, with fibre proven as being extremely beneficial for one's health.

While vegetarians and vegans may be able to sustain a low carb diet more efficiently than meat eaters, according to personal trainer and co-founder of fitness company LDN Muscle Max Bridger, reducing one's carb intake or cutting out carbs completely can be very detrimental.

"There is no need to cut out carbs for the

majority of us, for health or body composition based goals," he tells The Independent.

"This demonises a wide variety of foods, isolates the individual and ultimately sets them up to fail."

Bridger explains that cutting out carbs for a vegan would be a very harmful thing to do, as it would eliminate the majority of foods that they can consume.

"Vegetarians could have more wiggle room, but again cutting out carbs would limit their intake to a tiny amount of foods. This would lead to malnutrition and a host of physical, mental and social problems.

"We all know that reducing our intake of processed carbohydrates and refined sugars is a good thing. But having these as part of a balanced diet is not a bad thing, so be flexible and keep a considered eye on your average calorie intake per day."

Following any sort of diet is inadvisable

if you haven't spoken to a health or nutrition expert first in order to assess your personal needs, as nutritional therapist Olivier Sanchez from Click For Therapy explains.

"Most people blindly follow diet recommendations without consulting a health practitioner and often are not aware of what they are doing wrong, especially how to replace the foods they are eliminating," he tells The Independent.

Despite the widespread belief that reducing one's carb intake can help them reduce weight, nutritionist Rhiannon Lambert has explained why this is a massive misconception.

According to Lambert, eating the right type of carbs and focusing on the nutritional benefits of your diet rather than the quantity of your meals can help you lead a healthier lifestyle.

(Source: The Independent)

Prediabetes: Being a 'night owl' may lead to weight gain

New research has revealed that having a preference for evening activities, going to bed late, and not getting enough sleep may lead to weight gain among people with prediabetes.

Prediabetes affects around 84 million people in the United States.

That is, 1 in 3 U.S. individuals are living with the condition, and 90 percent of them are not aware that they have it.

In prediabetes, blood sugar levels are higher than what is considered normal, but not high enough to warrant a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.

Prediabetes is a serious condition in its own right, putting people at risk of not only type 2 diabetes, but also stroke and heart disease.

Insufficient sleep or a disrupted sleep pattern are also known risk factors for obesity and diabetes. Previous research has suggested that being a "night owl," or having a preference for activities in the evening and going to bed late, raises the risk of being overweight, as well as having type 2 diabetes and dying prematurely.

So, researchers led by Dr. Sirimon Reutrakul, an associate professor of endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolism in the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine, set out to examine whether being a night owl influenced body mass index (BMI) among people with prediabetes.

BMI is a measure of body fat in relation to a person's height and weight.

Thunyarat Anothaisintawee is the first author of the paper, which was published in the journal *Frontiers in Endocrinology*.

■ Sleep patterns, BMI, and prediabetes

Dr. Reutrakul and colleagues examined 2,133 people with prediabetes who were 64 years old, on average.

Using a questionnaire, the scientists assessed the participants' "eveningness" and "morningness" — that is, their preference for going to bed late and waking up early, respectively.

The scientists also assessed social jetlag, or the difference in sleep timing and duration between weekdays and weekends, in the participants.

Higher levels of social jetlag were found to correlate with a higher BMI. In people older than 60, eveningness was associated with a higher BMI as well. However, this effect was due to not having enough sleep, not to social jet lag.

"In patients with prediabetes," explain the study authors, "more evening preference was directly associated with higher BMI and indirectly through insufficient sleep duration."

"These data could inform further interventional studies to reduce BMI in this high-risk group," add Anothaisintawee and colleagues. Dr. Reutrakul also comments on the significance of the findings.

"Diabetes is such a widespread disease with such an impact on quality of life," she says, "that identifying new lifestyle factors that might play into its development can help us advise patients with an early stage of the disease on things they can do to turn it around and prevent prediabetes from becoming full-blown diabetes."

(Source: Medical News Today)

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Iran to be guest of honor at Vienna travel fair



TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran has been designated as a guest of honor for the Ferien Messe Wien, an international fair for holidays, travel, and leisure, running in Vienna from January 10 to 13, 2019.

The invitation was announced during a recent meeting between CEO Benedikt Binder-Kriegelstein and Tehran's ambassador to Vienna Abdollah Molaei in which avenues to deepen cooperation were explored, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Over the past two years, Iran took part in the event with selects of artists, musicians, craftspeople and tourism associates.

According to the organizers, the fair is expected to offer vast infotainment with more than 800 exhibitors from over 70 countries presenting popular holiday destinations, best-kept secrets, recommended means of traveling, great bargains and competitions to name a few.

Egyptian papyrus reveals rare details of ancient medical practices

Ancient manuscripts that were previously untranslated have revealed a rare and fascinating glimpse of scientific and medical practices in Egypt thousands of years ago.

Experts working with the texts recently discovered that the papyrus scrolls included the oldest known medical discussion of the kidneys, as well as notes on treatments for eye diseases and a description of a pregnancy test, the science news site ScienceNordic reported.

The manuscripts are part of the Papyrus Carlsberg Collection, housed at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, where an international team of researchers is collaborating to interpret the unpublished documents, according to the project website.

Along with medical information, the documents contain references to astronomy, botany and astrology, researchers told ScienceNordic.

The extensive Papyrus Carlsberg Collection includes approximately 1,400 manuscripts, most of which date from 2000 B.C. to A.D. 1000, collection manager Kim Ryholt, a professor with the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies at the University of Copenhagen, wrote on the Carlsberg Foundation website. Most of this ancient Egyptian scientific literature has remained untranslated since its donation to the university in 1939, according to the collection's website.

(Source: Live Science)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Wet Tropics of Queensland

The Wet Tropics of Queensland, or Wet Tropics, stretches along the northeast coast of Australia for some 450 kilometers.

Encompassing some 894,420 hectares of mostly tropical rainforest, this stunningly beautiful area is extremely important for its rich and unique biodiversity.

It also presents an unparalleled record of the ecological and evolutionary processes that shaped the flora and fauna of Australia, containing the relicts of the great Gondwanan forest that covered Australia and part of Antarctica 50 to 100 million years ago.

All of Australia's unique marsupials and most of its other animals originated in rainforest ecosystems, and their closest



surviving relatives occur in the Wet Tropics.

These living relicts of the Gondwanan era and their subsequent diversification provide unique insights to the process of evolution in general.

They also provide important information for the interpretation of fossils of plants and animals found elsewhere in Australia, and about the evolution of Australia's sclerophyll flora and marsupial fauna in particular.

The property supports tropical rainforests at their latitudinal and climatic limits, and unlike most other seasonal tropical evergreen equatorial forests, is subject to a dry season and to frequent cyclonic events.

Many of the distinct features of the Wet Tropics relate to its extremely high but seasonal rainfall, diverse terrain and steep environmental gradients.

In addition to its complex array of species and life forms, the Wet Tropics is also recognized as an area possessing outstanding scenic features, natural beauty and magnificent sweeping landscapes.

(Source: UNESCO)

Education Ministry gives initial approval for winter break

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran's Ministry of Education has given initial approval to bids from tourism authorities to put winter holidays on the school calendar, ILNA reported.

"The winter holiday is one of the important schemes that can help to achieve an equal distribute of tourism through different parts of the country," said Ali-Asghar Mounesan, director of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

"We have secured an initial approval from the Ministry of Education but if the parliament is to explore the issue, its implementation will not be achieved this year," he explained.

The winter break aims to fairly distribute domestic travels throughout the year and the country. It also is expected to make an upswing in tourism in the warmer areas of the country.

During the summertime high season, majority of holidaymakers opt for visiting mountainous, moderate-temperature areas or the southern coasts of the Caspian Sea.

The winter break may fuel tourism across the southern strip, which usually remains unpopular during the summer.

Back in June, the official announced that a total of 1,700 tourism-associated projects are/were being carried out across the country, adding "Iran plans to construct 2,000 new eco-lodges... over half of which to be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019) and the rest will come on stream by 2021."



People visit the ruins of Arg-e Rayen, an ancient adobe citadel in Kerman province, southeastern Iran.



Historical site found in southern Tehran

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Tehran province's cultural heritage director on Saturday said that traces of a historical site have been revealed near a southern sector of Imam Ali Highway that leads to the city of Rey.

Speaking to IRNA, Delavar Bozorgnia said "A historical area has recently been discovered by the experts of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization."

The official said that some of wall units are yet to be unearthed.

Up to the moment, no ancient relics have been unearthed and the precise date of the site will be determined when archaeological

surveys are completed, he explained. "We still don't know about the exact extent of the site," he added.

In the 11th and 12th centuries Rey (also known as Shahr-e Rey) was one of the capitals of the Seljuk Empire. It was devastated in the 13th century when the Mongols swept through and, these days, has been swallowed up by the urban sprawl of Tehran.

Rey, however, retains enough history to give it a different sensibility, its key sight is the elaborately decorated Shah Abdol Azim Shrine. Beside the shrine complex is a lively bazaar, while further afield are a couple of minor historical attractions.

Urmia to host crafts exhibit



HERITAGE TEHRAN — A sales exhibition of handicrafts is due to open on Monday in the northwestern city of Urmia, the capital of West Azarbaijan province.

"Up to the moment craftspeople from 29 provinces [out of 31] have been set to take part in the event, which will be held for the 5th consecutive year," a provincial cultural heritage official said, CHTN reported.

"A total of 140 stands have been designated to this exhibition yet amenities and accommodation for all exhibitors have been taken into consideration," Afaneh Ranjbar-Qasemi said.

The official expected the event to be highly welcomed as it will be held concurrently with a tourism fair in the same venue.

Patchworks of Kilim, leatherwork, traditional textile, glasswork, semi-precious stone, personal ornamentation and woodwork will be among the very handicrafts to be put on show, at the event which will come to an end on August 24.

Iran exported \$280 million worth of handicrafts in [the previous Iranian calendar] year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018).

3000-year-old seeds unearthed



HERITAGE TEHRAN — A team of Iranian archaeologists has recently found some wheat and weed seeds which are estimated to date from some 3,000 years ago.

The team unearthed an earthen bowl that contained some wheat, weed and probably barley seeds during a stratigraphy project in the centuries-old Sardar Castle located in Bukan, northwestern province of West Azarbaijan, ISNA reported on Thursday.

A stone mortar and pestle were also recovered next to the bowl, the report added. Earlier this month, the project also yielded vestiges of architectural elements, potteries and stone tools estimated to date from the Iron Age.

Bukan and its surroundings embrace variety of historical sites and monuments, most of which inscribed on the National Cultural Heritage list.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, the term Iron Age in Iran is employed to identify a cultural change that occurred centuries earlier than the time accorded its use elsewhere in the Near East, and not to acknowledge the introduction of a new metal technology. "Iron artifacts, in fact, were unknown in Iran until the 9th century BC," the encyclopedia suggests.

Why tourism in Africa is on the upswing

Thanks to low-cost airlines, new tourism infrastructure, and visa rule changes, Africa is becoming more accessible.

The World Tourism Organization sees a bright future for Africa. Over the next dozen years, it projects that the number of tourist arrivals on the continent will jump from about 50 million to 130 million. A growing number of African countries and regional blocs are taking steps to make travel there easier to plan, safer and more streamlined. Low-cost airlines are making inroads, and in the process, they're making it simpler to travel around Africa on a tighter budget.

What stands in the way of this development? In the past, when something happened in one part of the continent, it cast a shadow on other parts as well. Take the Ebola crisis of 2014-2015 as an example. The outbreak was in West Africa, but the entire continent saw a drop in tourism.

■ Bouncing back from negative events

But the Ebola outbreak, as well as terror attacks in Egypt and Tunisia, proved something else: the tourism industry in Africa is more resilient now than it has been in the past. In the years following the tragic events in West and North Africa, tourism arrivals have rebounded.

When PricewaterhouseCoopers issued a report on Africa's hotel sector earlier this year, the firm's hospitality industry leader for Southern Africa, Pietro Calicchio, said this resiliency

goes beyond recovering from the such high-profile events; the industry has also been successful at handling less-than-helpful government policies and economic troubles.

"Tourism to the African continent has proven to be resilient in the face of economic and political uncertainty, impacts of droughts and other regulatory changes," Calicchio said. "The opportunities are plenty for this industry to enjoy further growth albeit at a more modest pace."

The report singled out the continent's most populous country, Nigeria, as a place poised for growth along with Kenya, Tanzania and the island nation of Mauritius.

■ Safer and easier to visit

Kenya, one of the continent's most well-known tourist destinations, has seen an increase in tourists from the United States and Europe, as well as people connecting from elsewhere in Africa (thanks to cheaper and more plentiful air travel options). Security was once a major issue for the East African country, with several high-profile attacks by Somalia-based Al Shabaab causing tourist numbers to drop. Foreign offices had issued travel warnings, but the largest attacks didn't target tourists. The security situation has improved in major tourist destinations such as Mombasa and Nairobi over the past couple of years, leading to the lifting of these travel advisories by the U.S. State Department and other foreign offices.

Kenya and its neighbors are also at the forefront of a movement to make travel in this region easier by offering a single visa for Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda. Kenya is also trying to increase travel from other African countries by providing visa-on-arrival services for nationals from any country on the continent.

If you try to travel across Africa now, you may run into different visa regulations, with some countries offering a visa on arrival and others requiring a lengthy wait for visa processing through a consulate or embassy. As a result, visiting multiple countries — as a traveler might do inside the European Union — isn't always possible in Africa without careful planning and research, but Kenya and other leading destinations are working on changing that.

■ Cheaper airfares

It's now easier and cheaper to fly between African countries, meaning tourists from North America, Europe, and elsewhere can invest in a transcontinental airfare and then move around cheaply once they arrive on the continent. This air travel change, which airlines have long lobbied for, is due to an "open skies" agreement called the Single African Air Transport Market. The agreement ends protectionist policies of national airlines in 23 countries (roughly half the continent), and it means that airfares will be as much as 25 percent lower in the future.

(Source: mnn.com)

Heat waves occur in our oceans, too — and they're getting worse

Heat waves do not just happen on land. Even the oceans are not spared from the phenomenon and are currently experiencing breaking temperature records.

Scientists reported that off the coast in San Diego, they have found record-breaking seawater temperatures, which is the highest it has been since daily measurements began in 1916.

"Just like we have heat waves on land, we also have heat waves in the ocean," stated Art Miller of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

The number of "marine heat waves" almost alarmingly doubled between 1982 and 2016. A study published on August 15 affirmed that similar cases are expected to become prevalent and high as the Earth becomes warmer.

Global warming

"This trend will only further accelerate with global warming," said Thomas Frolicher, author of the research. Frolicher is also a climate scientist at the University of Bern in Switzerland.

According to Frolicher's team, marine heat waves are intense events that happen when the sea-surface temperature goes beyond the 99th percentile of measurements for a certain location.

Oceans notably absorb and release heat slower rate than air. Because of this, heat waves in the ocean last for several days, or



even for weeks at times. "We knew that average temperatures were rising. What we haven't focused on before is that the rise in the average comes at you in

Although many sea critters, bat rays, lobsters, and other free-swimming animals can get away with it, heat waves still pose a threat to the ocean because long warm periods can still be very damaging to stationary marine life such as kelp forests and coral reefs.

clumps of very hot days -- a shock of several days or weeks of very high temperatures," confirmed Michael Oppenheimer, a Princeton University climate scientist.

Although many sea critters, bat rays, lobsters, and other free-swimming animals can get away with it, heat waves still pose a threat to the ocean because long warm periods can still be very damaging to stationary marine life such as kelp forests and coral reefs.

Shallow water corals

Notably, around half of the Great Barrier Reef's shallow water corals died because of the high ocean temperatures in 2016 and 2017. The coral reefs are crucial for the lives of many creatures.

The research has based its findings on a satellite data and records of sea-surface temperatures that were obtained from buoys and ships. However, it did not involve the intense 79.5 degrees Fahrenheit that was measured off Scripps Pier in San Diego.

Miller spotted a school of bat rays off the pier this month. These animals usually gather in warm water. This drove the researcher to speculate that something was already happening.

Furthermore, variations in ocean circulation in warm water surfaces usually result in decreased production of phytoplankton, the important organisms that shape the basis of the food web in the sea.

(Source: Tech Times)

Astronomers detect iron and titanium on exoplanet for the first time

Astronomers have identified thousands of exoplanets with the aid of instruments like the Kepler Space Telescope, but we don't know much about most of those worlds. From a great distance, Earth and Venus would appear to be very similar, but of course, we know that Earth is quite habitable and Venus has clouds of sulfuric acid. Scientists have taken a step toward better understanding the environment of exoplanets by studying a gas giant called KELT-9b.

While Earth and Venus may look similar, there's no mistaking KELT-9b for an Earth-like planet. It's 2.88 times the mass of Jupiter and orbits the blue giant star KELT-9 every 1.5 Earth days. It also has a surface temperature of 6,740 degrees Fahrenheit (3,626 degrees Celsius).

Astronomers turned the Telescopio Nazionale Galileo in the Canary Islands toward KELT-9b last summer, observing as the planet transited in front of KELT-9. They collected the spectra of light shining through KELT-9b's atmosphere and then subtracted the signature of light collected just from the star. That left spectral lines of titanium and iron.

This marks the first time either element has been detected on an exoplanet. To make sure the readings were not from the star itself, the team identified a Doppler shift in the signal, indicating it came from the planet as it moved through space.

It's impossible with current technology to detect iron or titanium on Earth-like exoplanets because it's not a component of the atmosphere. A gas giant like KELT-9b is a very different story. This research gets us closer to proper characterization of exoplanets, which is essential to understanding whether they could support life.

(Source: extremetech.com)

Researchers create ultra-thin polyamide membranes for reverse osmosis

Researchers used electrospray technology to create ultra-thin, ultra-smooth polyamide membranes for reverse osmosis. This scalable process allows for better control of a membrane's fundamental properties, avoids the use of chemical baths, and can be applied to a variety of membrane separation processes.

Accessing the oceans for drinking water, however, requires desalination technologies that are complicated and expensive. The most commonly used technology for desalination is reverse osmosis (RO), a process in which seawater is forced through a membrane capable of removing salts and other small molecule contaminants. While the use of RO continues to rise around the world, many of its drawbacks, which include high energy consumption and a propensity for membranes to foul, continue to plague the industry.

In the current issue of Science, researchers at the University of Connecticut offer a new approach to membrane production that makes us rethink how to design and use RO membranes for desalination.

Using an additive manufacturing approach employing electrospraying, UConn scientists were able to create ultra-thin, ultra-smooth polyamide membranes that are less prone to fouling and may require less power to move water through them.

"Today's membranes for reverse osmosis are not made in a way that allows their properties to be controlled," says Jeffrey McCutcheon, associate professor of chemical & biomolecular engineering and the paper's corresponding author. "Our approach uses an 'additive' technique that allows for control of a membrane's fundamental properties such as thickness and roughness, which is currently impossible using conventional methods."

Conventional approaches to making RO membranes have not changed in nearly 40 years. The traditional approach to making these membranes is known as interfacial polymerization. This method relies on a self-terminating reaction between an aqueous phase amine and an organic phase acid chloride monomer.

(Source: Science Daily)

Scientists identify enzyme that could help accelerate biofuel production

Researchers at Tokyo Institute of Technology have honed in on an enzyme belonging to the glycerol-3-phosphate acyltransferase (GPAT) family as a promising target for increasing biofuel production from the red alga *Cyanidioschyzon merolae*.

Algae are known to store up large amounts of oils called triacylglycerols (TAGs) under adverse conditions such as nitrogen deprivation. Understanding precisely how they do so is of key interest to the biotechnology sector, as TAGs can be converted to biodiesel. To this end, scientists are investigating the unicellular red alga *C. merolae* as a model organism for exploring how to improve TAG production.

A study led by Sousuke Imamura at the Laboratory for Chemistry and Life Science, Institute of Innovative Research, Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo Tech), has now shown that an enzyme called GPAT1 plays an important role in TAG accumulation in *C. merolae* even under normal growth conditions -- that is, without the need to induce stress.

Remarkably, the team demonstrated that TAG productivity could be increased by more than 56 times in a *C. merolae* strain overexpressing GPAT1 compared with the control strain, without any negative effects on algal growth.

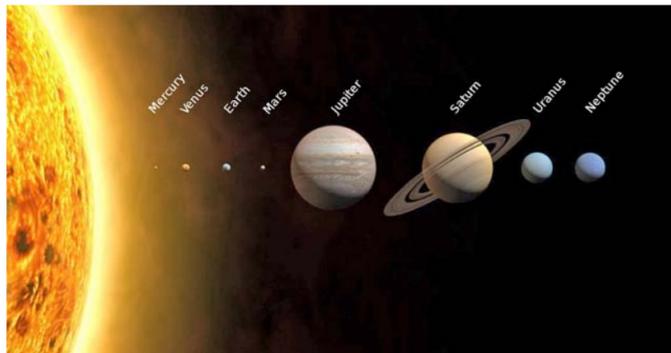
Their findings, published in Scientific Reports, follow up previous research by Imamura and others that had suggested two GPATs, GPAT1 and GPAT2, may be closely involved in TAG accumulation in *C. merolae*.

"Our results indicate that the reaction catalyzed by the GPAT1 is a rate-limiting step for TAG synthesis in *C. merolae*, and would be a potential target for improvement of TAG productivity in microalgae," the researchers say.

The team plans to continue exploring how GPAT1 and GPAT2 might both be involved in TAG accumulation.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

New Horizons just found hints of a huge structure at the edge of Solar System



Way out past Pluto, in the region of asteroid-filled space known as the Kuiper belt, NASA probe New Horizons just got a tantalizing hint of a long-sought structure in the outer Solar System.

An ultraviolet glow picked up by the probe's Alice UV spectrometer could be evidence of the 'hydrogen wall', a region of dense hydrogen on the boundary between the Solar System and interstellar space.

"We're seeing the threshold between being in the solar neighborhood and being in the galaxy," astronomer Leslie Young of the Southwest Research Institute and New Horizons team told Science News.

Although space has extremely low pressure, it still exists, and the solar wind exerts an outward pressure. At a certain point, however, that wind is no longer strong enough to push back against interstellar space.

This boundary is known as the heliopause, which marks the official edge of the Solar System.

Neutral hydrogen atoms

Just on the other side of the heliopause, neutral hydrogen atoms moving through interstellar space should, theoretically, slow down when they reach that barrier - a sort of neutral hydrogen "traffic jam" that causes a buildup next to the heliopause.

Between 2007 and 2017, New Horizons detected a distinctive ultraviolet glow called the Lyman-alpha line, produced by solar photons hitting the hydrogen atoms and scattering.

This occurs as sunlight travels through

the Solar System. But there's a mysterious background source in the signal detected by New Horizons, much farther away.

This was also detected by Voyager 30 years ago. New Horizons is the first probe in all that time that has had the same opportunity to take measurements of this phenomenon - and its best explanation is the hydrogen wall.

"Both sets of data are best explained if the observed ultraviolet light is not only a result of the scattering of sunlight by hydrogen atoms within the solar system, but includes a substantial contribution from a distant source," the researchers wrote in their paper.

"This distant source could be the signature of a wall of hydrogen, formed near where the interstellar wind encounters the solar wind."

The background glow could be something else, farther away out there in space; the only way to be sure is to do more sciences. Which means more Alice observations with New Horizons - around twice a year for the foreseeable future, according to the paper.

Voyager 1 has already moved on into interstellar space. It breached the heliopause in 2013, and is still beaming signals back to Earth as it moves farther and farther away into the infinite cosmos.

Voyager 2 is in the heliosheath, the outer reaches of the Solar System where the solar wind is slowed by interstellar gas. It's expected to cross the heliopause sometime before 2030.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Scientists seek new ways to combat Florida's growing 'red tide'



Scientists in Florida are on the cusp of developing promising methods to control toxic algae blooms like the "red tide" that has been killing marine life along a 150-mile (240-km) stretch of the Gulf Coast, the head of a leading marine lab said on Wednesday.

Michael Crosby, president and chief executive of the Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, welcomed a red tide emergency order issued this week by Governor Rick Scott, designating more state money for research, cleanup and wildlife rescues.

Interest in mitigation technologies has been heightened by a 10-month-long toxic algae bloom off Florida's southwestern coast that has caused mounds of rotting fish to wash up on beaches from Tampa to Naples.

The red tide also has been implicated in at least 266 sea turtle strandings and is suspected or determined to have caused 68 manatee deaths so far this year, according to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission figures.

Combating future outbreaks

In hopes of combating future outbreaks, scientists are field testing a patented process that would pump red-algae-tainted seawater into an ozone-treatment system and then pump the purified water back into the affected canal, cove or inlet, Crosby said.

A Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Harmful Algal Bloom scientist counts *Karenia brevis* (red tide) cells during water sampling processing in this photo taken July 31, 2018.

Tanks succeeded in removing all traces

of the algae and its toxins, with the water chemistry reverting to normal within 24 hours, he said.

Scientists also are studying the possible use of naturally produced compounds from seaweed, parasitic algae and filter-feeding organisms that could be introduced to fight red tides.

Red tides occur on an almost yearly basis off Florida, starting out in the Gulf of Mexico where swarms of microscopic algae cells called *Karenia brevis* feed on deep-sea nutrients and are sometimes carried by currents close to shore, usually in the fall.

The worst in decade

This year's Gulf Coast Florida bloom is the worst in more than a decade, originating last October and persisting well into the summer tourist season while spreading over 150 miles of coastline spanning seven counties.

"It's a bad bloom by any standard," said Richard Stumpf, an oceanographer who studies red tides for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

It remains to be seen whether a single year of altered wind patterns will turn out to be an isolated deviation or part of more long-term changes in climate, Stumpf said.

But scientists say red tides in and of themselves are a natural phenomenon observed as far back as the 1600s.

For humans, exposure can cause respiratory difficulties, burning eyes and skin irritation. The toxins are often fatal to marine life.

(Source: Reuters)

Cats have a killer impact on reptiles, new research shows

Reptiles are losing more than just their tails to cats. In fact, new research shows that entire reptile populations may be dropping due to the presence of invasive felines.

Research has shown that domestic cats and their feral counterparts are capable of huge impacts to bird populations -- one house cat and its offspring were purportedly all it took to push a bird that lived only on Stephens Island in New Zealand into extinction.

But a study published recently in Biological Conservation and conducted in Australia shows that reptile populations may also suffer from cat predation.

To get a picture of what a landscape free of cats would mean for reptiles, researchers created cat-free zones for two years in Kakadu National Park in Australia's Northern Territory.

The researchers fenced some areas and left others of equal size open. They placed camera traps around the fenced plots to make sure cats weren't getting in, and had to remove only one feline intruder during



the experiment.

Unfenced areas

Meanwhile, cats were detected in each of the unfenced areas at least once during the study period, and across the whole area

at a density of about one cat per every two square miles, a number a little lower than the national average.

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"These findings indicate that, even at relatively low densities, feral cats are exerting considerable predatory pressure on small reptile populations," the authors noted.

They found that cat-free zones experienced a "significant increase in reptile abundance" over the course of the two-year experiment, with roughly two more reptiles in each fenced plot compared to the unfenced plots.

Since many of the species caught were small lizards such as geckos, skinks, and agamas (and at least one snake), the authors believe that new generations in the species occur every year or less, meaning that two years without cats would be enough to see population differences.

Peter Marra, director of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, says that the study was "wonderful." While not involved in this research, he has conducted other work on the impact domestic cats have on a variety of species.

(Source: nationalgeographic.com)

Iran, Netherlands sign MOU on food safety

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran and the Netherlands inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enhance cooperation within the framework of a food safety program, IRNA reported on Saturday.

The MOU was signed between Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (SBUMS) and the Netherlands' Wageningen University & Research.



Mohammad Aqajani, chancellor of SBUMS, explained that national program on ensuring food safety is scheduled to be implemented in a collaborative initiative between the Vice-presidency for Science and Technology, Iran's Food and Drug Administration (IFDA), SBUMS and Wageningen University & Research, he said.

As per the MOU, a training course for food and drug control laboratories will be held on Saturday at SBUMS in cooperation with IFDA and the Rikilt Institute of food safety affiliated to the Wageningen University, he noted, adding that the main aim of this course is to promote food standards throughout the country.

Food, water and oxygen constitute the biological system of the human body, so, people may be exposed to food contaminants, Aqajani said, adding that one of the main duties of the governments is to ensure food safety, which has been assigned to the Ministry of Health in partnership with other related organizations in Iran.

Referring to universities of medical sciences being the executive arms of the Ministry of Health to control food safety in the provinces throughout the country, he noted that the SBUMS has always been pioneer in the field of food safety, as it has taken important measures in this regard.

One of the major measures taken so far is expanding ties with the Netherlands' Wageningen University, he stated.

He further explained that the cooperation first started with co-running courses with participation of Wageningen university scientists, which is currently ongoing with joint research projects, student exchange and holding workshops.

The collaboration between the two universities has reached a level where bigger steps can be taken to expand cooperation in different fields including food safety, he also added.

Pointing to the fact that food safety is a global issue, he noted that food fraud is a growing problem worldwide, and this has become a national concern in Iran, as well.

So, the Ministry of Health; the Food and Drug Administration; and universities of medical sciences in the country are responsible to eliminate the concerns of people about food safety, he highlighted.

He also added that "it must be noted that some of the news spread about contaminants and food fraud are not reliable and others can be prevented or resolved."

Also, two other MOUs will be signed in the field of scientific research and technology transfer to prevent food fraud, he concluded.

Iran, UNDP prepare draft for Conservation of Asiatic Cheetah

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Iran's Department of Environment (DOE) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have jointly drawn up the draft of the Conservation of Asiatic Cheetah Project (CACP) phase III.

Hamid Zohrabi, deputy environment chief for DOE's natural environment and biodiversity directorate said on Saturday that the project will go into effect by the end of 2018.

According to UNDP, the cheetah project is about reversing the drastic decline of the endangered Asiatic cheetah and conserving it from extinction. It is now estimated that fewer than 50 Asiatic cheetahs are living in the wild in Iran.

The Asiatic cheetah mainly inhabits the desert areas around Dasht-e Kavir in the eastern half of Iran, including parts of the Kerman, Khorasan, Semnan, Yazd, Tehran, and Markazi provinces. Most live in five protected areas, Kavir National Park, Touran National Park, Bafq Protected Area, Dar-e Anjir Wildlife Refuge, and Naybandan Wildlife Reserve. The cheetah has been listed as critically endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List since 1996.

The cheetah/livestock interactions and the presence of human beings and guard dogs in cheetah's habitats, road accidents and habitat fragmentation are of the main threats making the cheetah's future uncertain.

Phase I of the CACP was co-funded by



the Global Environment Facility between 2001 and 2008.

Phase II implementation commenced in 2009. It aimed to assist the Department of the Environment to fulfill its commitments to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity under Iran's Program of Work on Protected Areas (PA).

The ultimate goal was to achieve sustainability of protected areas and the Asi-

atic Cheetah population within them. The project built on the achievements of the CACP Phase I by strengthening the current protected area management in selected cheetah habitats.

In November 2017, Anne Marie Sloth Carlsen, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Iran announced that UNDP is not extending the project and that they believe Iran is capable of running the project

single-handedly. She explained that due to the challenges UNDP is facing, they cannot continue funding the project and this does not only affect Cheetah Project.

However, Zohrabi has explained that the project, devised in collaboration between experts and volunteers to address the threats and come up with measures to protect the species, will be implemented for 5 more years.

"After final approval of the draft agreement the project will launch with financial support from Department of Environment and international entities," Zohrabi highlighted.

"In the third phase of the project we will not only focus on protected areas supervised by DOE, but also cheetah's migration corridors will be observed more closely.

"Moreover [the project] underscores the importance of local communities' collaboration and the need to take their sustainable livelihood into consideration.

"Additionally better conservation plans for Asiatic cheetah conservation, and its prey by training the rangers, increasing the quality of captive breeding, raising public awareness, drawing up plans for alternative jobs for sustainable agriculture, livestock breeding and eco-tourism by soliciting public participation, and decreasing human-wildlife conflict are of the other objectives of the third phase of the project."

Zohrabi finally explained that the third phase of the project will be financially assessed once the agreement is final.

Iranian ships to carry message of preserving Caspian seals

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Given Caspian seals, the sole marine mammals inhabiting the Caspian Sea, have fallen into a drastic decline pushing the specie towards extinction, Iranian ships in the Caspian Sea will display Caspian seal image, deputy environment chief for marine affairs has said.

By doing so, Iran spread the message of "the need for preserving the Caspian seal" to the world, ISNA quoted Parvin Farshchi as saying on Saturday.

Due to the importance of preserving the precious species, and the sympathy and cooperation between the maritime organizations, the project has been jointly implemented by the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines Company and the Department of Environment, she said.

Pointing to the precious animal being in serious danger of extinction, she noted that the Caspian seal population which stood at about one million in the 90s, wouldn't have decline, if serious measures have been taken to preserve them.

"Neither Iran nor any other littoral countries were or are authorized to fish Caspian seal."

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times in November 2017, Farshchi said that poaching activities in other Caspian Sea littoral countries and also bycatch in Iran are of the threats pushing the precious animals towards extinction with 90 percent decline in the population density.

Referring to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), she said that Caspian seals were included on Appendices I and II of the Convention by Iranian Department of



Environment (DOE) efforts.

As per the Appendix I of the Convention, poaching and illegal fishing activities is banned to save the animals from extinction, while Iran has not had a share in illegal fishing of the species since the very beginning, she concluded.

Over the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CMS COP12) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), administered by UN Environment on October 28, 2017, Caspian seals were included on Appendices I and II of the Convention.

According to the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals Website, Appendix I comprises migratory species that have been assessed as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

Appendix II covers migratory species that have an unfavorable conservation status and that require international agreements for their conservation and management, as well as those that have a conservation status which would significantly benefit from the international cooperation that could be achieved by an international agreement.

Zoos to be monitored online

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — The Department of Environment (DOE) will launch an online monitoring system in zoos across the country, the Department of Environment's director general for hunting and fishing has said.

"Putting in place the necessary infrastructure for this plan is underway; newly constructed zoos are supposed to have an online monitoring system, and the old ones must launch the system as soon as possible," IRNA quoted Ali Teymouri as saying on Saturday.

Teymouri stated that all provincial departments of environment must supervise the zoo online systems to register all animal species entering or leaving the zoo, casualties and causes.

The necessary infrastructure has been prepared to some extent in two zoos, and the rest of the zoos will launch the in the near future gradually, he added.

There are about 80 zoos, animal rehabilitation centers and bird gardens in the country, he said, adding that according to a memorandum of understanding signed between the DOE and the Veterinary Organization, the organization is tasked with monitoring animal's health and diseases in all centers.

Referring to some 15 zoos active in the country, he stated that when the DOE decides to issue a permit for the construction of a zoo or garden, the Veterinary Organization must approve it.

He further explained that "since most of the zoos were operating without any licenses or permits in the country, the DOE started to work on zoology within



past three years, and with many efforts made the zoos to live up to the required standards set by the department."

During the aforesaid period, zoo directors have worked well toward the development of species conservation and health regulations in addition to acquiring licenses, he highlighted.

He went on to say that zoo directors are working to achieve the required standards defined by the Department of Environment, hence the conditions are improving, but it takes long to meet the internationally defined levels.

During the past three years, all those zoos and bird parks which didn't achieve the required standards, have been restricted from keeping some animal species, and 7 centers which didn't live up to the standards during this period, were shut down accordingly, he also explained.

If the centers are investigated for not having the standard conditions, in addition to being banned from admitting new animal species, the animals residing in these zoos will be transferred to standardized centers, he concluded.

Dry waste collection in Tehran up 20% in 7 months

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — While the average dry waste collection rate has been 3 percent in the past, it will increase by 20 percent by the end of the [current Iranian calendar] year (March 20, 2019), the mayor of Tehran's district 22 has said.

In the past, dry waste collection rate in the city was 3 percent, which has risen to 9 percent in recent years, IRIB quoted Ali Nozarpour-Baqeri as saying on Saturday.

Moreover, it is planned to increase the rate by 20 percent over the course of 7 months, he highlighted.

According to a report published by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in October 2016, waste generation per capita in Iran's urban areas is



about 658 grams per day while Iranian waste generation per capita in rural areas is about 220-340 grams per day. Average Iranian waste generation per capita amounts to some 240 kilograms per year.

In Tehran alone waste generation per capita is estimated at 750-800 grams per day and each Tehrani citizen generates about 270-450 kilograms of waste per year.

The report continues that unfortunately only 7 percent of the waste is separated at the source, 13 percent is recycled and only 2.5 percent of them end up in formal or sanitary landfills and some 77.5 percent of the waste will be burnt or buried in informal landfills located in the countryside or deserts near cities.

LEARN ENGLISH

At The Car Dealership

A: Hi there! I am looking for a new car. I have this old Ford Pinto that I would like to **trade in**.

B: I see. You are in luck this month because all of our models are on sale! it is a perfect time to buy a new car since it's the end of the year.

A: Perfect! I like this one.

B: That is the Ford Focus. A very light but powerful vehicle. It comes with dual side airbags, power steering and power windows, tinted windows and your choice of either automatic or manual transmission.

A: Sounds like a good car! How many **miles** to the gallon?

B: It is a very **fuel** efficient vehicle giving you about 34 miles in the city and 40 on the highway.

A: That is really convenient. Especially now that fuel prices are so high! What's under the hood?

B: A very powerful 2.5-liter turbocharged engine, trust me, this car is fast!

A: Now for the most difficult question. What is the price tag for this lovely vehicle?

B: Very affordable sir. You can take it out of this lot today with 0% **down payment** and no **interest** for the first year! You can test drive it now and we can sign the papers when we get back.

A: Great! Let's do it!

Key vocabulary
trade in: something that you sell as part of payment for new **miles:** unit measuring distance
fuel: something that can be turned into energy
down payment: first payment that you pay when buy something
interest: money paid by a borrower for the borrowed money

Supplementary vocabulary
lemon: something that is sold, that seems like a good deal but actually does not work the way it should
warranty: a guarantee on something sold, that would pay for a certain amount of damage
limited time offer: a promotion that is only available for a certain amount of time
rip off: to give someone a bad deal



Without water, everything withers

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"-ism"

Meaning: action, manner, condition, beliefs or prejudice
For example: **Optimism** is a frame for how you view the world.

PHRASAL VERB

Jump at something

Meaning: to eagerly accept the chance to do something
For example: I jumped at the chance of a trip to Hong Kong.

IDIOM

Cat in hell's chance

Explanation: no chance at all
For example: Because of the blizzard, the pilot didn't have a cat in hell's chance of landing safely.

100 qanats dried up in southeastern Iran during summer

Recurrent droughts this summer, have caused hundreds of qanats and springs in the southeastern province of Kerman to dry, director for rural water and wastewater company of Kerman province has said.

"Some 158 wells are also under pressure, suffering severe water shortage in the province," IRNA quoted Ali Rashidi as saying on Wednesday.

تابستان امسال ۱۰۰ رشته قنات در استان کرمان خشک شد

مدیرعامل شرکت آب و فاضلاب روستایی استان کرمان گفت: خشکسالی در تابستان سال جاری موجب خشک شدن یکصد رشته قنات و چشمه روستاهای این استان شده است. علی رشیدی روز چهارشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: حدود ۱۵۸ حلقه چاه نیز دچار کمبود آب شدید و در حال خشکیدگی است.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan dies at age 80

Kofi Annan, one of the world's most celebrated diplomats and a charismatic symbol of the United Nations who rose through its ranks to become the first black African secretary-general, has died. He was 80.

His foundation announced his death in Switzerland Saturday in a tweet, saying that he died after a short unspecified illness.

"Wherever there was suffering or need, he reached out and touched many people with his deep compassion and empathy," the foundation said in a statement.

Annan spent virtually his entire career as an administrator in the United Nations. His aristocratic style, cool-tempered elegance and political savvy helped guide his ascent to become its seventh secretary-general, and the first hired from within. He served two terms from Jan. 1, 1997, to Dec. 31, 2006, capped nearly mid-way when he and the UN were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001.

During his tenure, Annan presided over some of the worst failures and scandals at the world body, one of its most turbulent periods since its founding in 1945. Challenges from the outset forced him to spend much of his time struggling to restore its tarnished reputation.

His enduring moral prestige remained largely undented, however, both through charisma and by virtue of having negotiated with most of the powers in the world.

When he departed from the United Nations, he left behind a global organization far more aggressively engaged in peacekeeping and fighting poverty, setting the framework for the UN's 21st-century response to mass atrocities and its emphasis on human rights and development.

"Kofi Annan was a guiding force for good," current UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said. "It is with profound sadness that I learned of his passing. In many ways, Kofi Annan was the United Nations. He rose through the ranks to lead the organization into the new millennium with matchless dignity and determination."

Even out of office, Annan never completely left the UN orbit. He returned in special roles, including as the UN-Arab League's special envoy to Syria in 2012. He remained a powerful advocate for global causes through his eponymous foundation.

Annan took on the top UN post six years after the collapse of the Soviet Union and presided during a decade when the world united against terrorism after the Sept. 11 attacks – then divided deeply over the U.S.-led war against Iraq. The U.S. relationship tested him as a world diplomatic leader.

"I think that my darkest moment was the Iraq war, and the fact that we could not stop it," Annan said in a February 2013 interview with TIME magazine to mark the publication of his memoir, "Interventions: A Life in War and Peace."

"I worked very hard – I was working the phone, talking to leaders around the world. The U.S. did not have the support in the Security Council," Annan recalled in the videotaped interview posted on The Kofi Annan Foundation's website.

"So they decided to go without the council. But I think the council was right in not sanctioning the war," he said. "Could you imagine if the UN had endorsed the war in Iraq, what our reputation would be like? Although at that point, President [George W.] Bush said the UN was headed toward irrelevance, because we had not supported the war. But now we know better."

Despite his well-honed diplomatic



skills, Annan was never afraid to speak candidly. That didn't always win him fans, particularly in the case of Bush's administration, with whom Annan's camp spent much time bickering. Much of his second term was spent at odds with the United States, the UN's biggest contributor, as he tried to lean on the nation to pay almost \$2 billion in arrears.

Kofi Atta Annan was born April 8, 1938, into an elite family in Kumasi, Ghana, the son of a provincial governor and grandson of two tribal chiefs.

He shared his middle name Atta – "twin" in Ghana's Akan language – with a twin sister, Efuia. He became fluent in English, French and several African languages, attending an elite boarding school and the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi. He finished his undergraduate work in economics at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1961. From there he went to Geneva, where he began his graduate studies in international affairs and launched his UN career.

Annan married Titi Alakija, a Nigerian woman, in 1965, and they had a daughter, Ama, and a son, Kojo. He returned to the U.S. in 1971 and earned a master's degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management. The couple separated during the 1970s and, while working in Geneva, Annan met his second wife, Swedish lawyer Nane Lagergren. They married in 1984.

Annan worked for the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Ethiopia, its Emergency Force in Egypt, and the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva, before taking a series of senior posts at UN headquarters in New York dealing with human resources, budget, finance, and staff security.

He also had special assignments. After Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, he facilitated the repatriation from Iraq of more than 900 international staff and other non-Iraqi nationals, and the release of western hostages in Iraq. He led the initial negotiations with Iraq for the sale of oil in exchange for humanitarian relief.

Just before becoming secretary-general, Annan served as UN peacekeeping chief and as special envoy to the former Yugoslavia, where he oversaw a transition in Bosnia from UN protective forces to NATO-led troops.

The UN peacekeeping operation faced two of its greatest failures during his tenure: the Rwanda genocide in 1994, and the massacre in the Bosnian town

of Srebrenica in July 1995.

In both cases, the UN had deployed troops under Annan's command, but they failed to save the lives of the civilians they were mandated to protect. Annan offered apologies, but ignored calls to resign by U.S. Republican lawmakers. After became secretary-general, he called for UN reports on those two debacles – and they were highly critical of his management.

As secretary-general, Annan forged his experiences into a doctrine called the "Responsibility to Protect," that countries accepted – at least in principle – to head off genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes.

Annan sought to strengthen the UN's management, coherence and accountability, efforts that required huge investments in training and technology, a new whistleblower policy and financial disclosure requirements.

In 1998, he helped ease a transition to civilian rule in Nigeria and visited Iraq to try to resolve its impasse with the Security Council over compliance with weapons inspections and other matters. The effort helped avoid an outbreak of hostilities that seemed imminent at the time.

In 1999, he was deeply involved in the process by which East Timor gained independence from Indonesia, and started the "Global Compact" initiative that has grown into the world's largest effort to promote corporate social responsibility.

Annan was chief architect of what became known as the Millennium Development Goals, and played a central role in creating the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the UN's first counter-terrorism strategy.

Annan's uncontested election to a second term was unprecedented, reflecting the overwhelming support he enjoyed from both rich and poor countries. Timothy Wirth, president of the United Nations Foundation, which disburses Ted Turner's \$1 billion pledge to UN causes, hailed "a saint-like sense about him."

In 2005, Annan succeeded in establishing the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. But that year, the UN was facing almost daily attacks over allegations about corruption in the UN oil-for-food program in Iraq, bribery by UN purchasing officials and widespread sex abuse by UN peacekeepers – an issue that would only balloon in importance after he left office.

It emerged that Annan's son, Kojo, had not disclosed payments he received from his employer, which had a \$10 million-a-

year contract to monitor humanitarian aid under the oil-for-food program. The company paid at least \$300,000 to Kojo so he would not work for competitors after he left.

An independent report criticized the secretary-general for being too complacent, saying he should have done more to investigate matters even if he was not involved with the awarding of the contract.

World leaders agreed to create an internal UN ethics office, but a major overhaul of the UN's outdated management practices and operating procedures was left to Annan's successor, Ban Ki-moon.

Before leaving office, Annan helped secure a truce between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, and mediated a settlement of a dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula.

At a farewell news conference, Annan listed as top achievements the promotion of human rights, the fighting to close the gap between extreme poverty and immense wealth, and the UN campaign to fight infectious diseases like AIDS.

He never took disappointments and setbacks personally. And he kept his view that diplomacy should take place in private and not in the public forum.

In his memoir, Annan recognized the costs of taking on the world's top diplomatic job, joking that "SG," for secretary-general, also signified "scapegoat" around UN headquarters.

Former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke called Annan "an international rock star of diplomacy."

After leaving his high-profile UN perch, Annan didn't let up. In 2007, his Geneva-based foundation was created. That year he helped broker peace in Kenya, where election violence had killed over 1,000 people.

He also joined "The Elders," an elite group of former leaders founded by Nelson Mandela, eventually succeeding Desmond Tutu as its chairman after a failed interlude trying to resolve Syria's rising civil war.

As special envoy to Syria in 2012, Annan won international backing for a six-point plan for peace. The UN deployed a 300-member observer force to monitor a cease-fire, but peace never took hold and Annan was unable to surmount the bitter stalemate among Security Council powers. He resigned in frustration seven months into the job, as the civil war raged on.

Annan continued to crisscross the globe. In 2017, his foundation's biggest projects included promotion of fair, peaceful elections; work with Myanmar's government to improve life in troubled Rakhine state; and battling violent extremism by enlisting young people to help.

He also remained a vocal commentator on troubles like the refugee crisis; promoted good governance, anti-corruption measures and sustainable agriculture in Africa; and pushed efforts in the fight against illegal drug trafficking.

Annan retained connections to many international organizations. He was chancellor of the University of Ghana, a fellow at New York's Columbia University, and professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore.

In his memoir, Annan recognized the costs of taking on the world's top diplomatic job, joking that "SG," for secretary-general, also signified "scapegoat" around UN headquarters.

Annan is survived by his wife and three children. Funeral arrangements weren't immediately announced.

(Source: AP)

Syria warns of Saudi plots as ISIL 're-emerges'

Syria has blasted Saudi Arabia for giving money to the U.S.-led coalition to press ahead with what Damascus has described as "destabilization plots" in the war-torn country.

A Foreign Ministry official on Friday urged the kingdom to abandon its "dangerous policies" in the region amid fears of the re-emergence of the ISIL (Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group.

On Friday, Saudi Arabia announced that it had contributed \$100 million to northeast Syria for "stabilization projects" in areas formerly held by Daesh.

The Saudi Embassy in Washington said the contribution "will play a critical role in the coalition's efforts to revitalize communities, such as Raqqa, that have been devastated by ISIL (Daesh) terrorists."

The U.S. State Department welcomed Riyadh's move, calling on Washington's allies "to do their share in this effort that helps bring greater stability and security to the region."

However, an official source at the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates told SANA news agency that the Saudi aid to the "criminal" U.S.-led coalition came in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions regarding the crisis in the Arab country.

He also accused the coalition of seeking "to fragmentize the region and impose Zionist hegemony on all its countries."

The source further described the Saudi contribution as "morally unacceptable," saying it is meant to prolong the Syria conflict, prevent the army from gaining ground against terrorists in the country's north and support the militants who threaten Syria's unity and territorial integrity.

"Syria condemns these despicable policies of the Saudi authorities and demands them to stop these terrible and dangerous policies," he said. "Syria reiterates its call on all the coalition's member states to withdraw from it without delay because it serves only terrorists and murderers and threatens security and peace in the region and the world."

The U.S. and its allies have been bombarding what they call Daesh positions inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate.

The aerial assaults, however, have on many occasions resulted in civilian casualties and failed to fulfill their declared aim of countering terrorism.

The Pentagon says there are about 2,000 U.S. troops in Syria. Washington is also supporting Kurdish militants operating in Syria's northern regions.

Similarly, Riyadh is a staunch supporter of anti-Damascus militants, who are inspired by Wahhabism, a Takfiri ideology dominating Saudi Arabia and freely preached by Saudi clerics.

Daesh re-emerges in areas held by U.S.-backed forces

In a relevant development, the UN Security Council's Sanctions Monitoring Team warned in its latest report that Daesh had gained "breathing space" in parts of Syria held by U.S.-backed forces.

Daesh which was "defeated militarily in Iraq and most of the Syrian Arab Republic during 2017, rallied in early 2018. This was the result of a loss of momentum by forces fighting it in the east of the Syrian Arab Republic," the report said.

The slow-down, it added, gave Daesh "breathing space to prepare for the next phase of its evolution into a global covert network."

The terror outfit also regained "access to some oil fields in northeastern Syria and was able to 'extract and sell some oil, and to mount attacks, including across the border into Iraq,'" according to the report.

(Source: Press TV)

Brazil's Lula should have political rights : UN Human Rights Committee

The UN Human Rights Committee said it had requested that the Brazilian government allow imprisoned former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to exercise his political rights.

Lula is the presidential candidate for his Workers Party and leads polls ahead of the October ballot but is widely expected to be banned from running by an electoral court. He was jailed in April on a corruption conviction.

(Source: Reuters)

Chinese President Xi to visit North Korea next month

Chinese President Xi Jinping is set to visit Pyongyang next month at the invitation of North Korea leader Kim Jong Un to attend the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of North Korea's founding.



It will be the Chinese leader's first visit to the North Korean capital since he took power in 2012, and 13 years after the last visit by a Chinese President, when Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao visited in 2005, the newspaper said on Saturday.

The Straits Times did not say where it obtained the information and the Chinese foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

North Korea's celebrations are set to take place on Sept. 9 and the Straits Times said that Xi's visit could still be subject to last-minute changes.

China is the reclusive country's most important trading partner and Kim has visited China three times so far this year during which he has held talks with Xi on improving cooperation between the two countries and economic reforms.

The United States has stepped up sanctions on North Korea to pressure Pyongyang to give up its nuclear program. This week, the United States imposed sanctions on Chinese firms for exporting alcohol and cigarette products to North Korea in breach of those sanctions.

(Source: Straits Times)

UN chief proposes military force to protect Palestinians under Israeli occupation

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has put forward options meant to protect Palestinian civilians, among them the deployment of an armed military or police force to the occupied territories.

Guterres outlined four proposals in a 14-page report released on Friday in response to a request in a UN General Assembly resolution.

The resolution, adopted on June 13, condemned "Israel's excessive and disproportionate use of force" against protesters in the blockaded Gaza Strip and asked the UN chief to recommend an "international protection mechanism" for Palestinian civilians.

Guterres' proposed options include creating a civilian observer mission in the occupied lands, sending more UN humanitarian aid to the region and providing a "more robust UN presence on the ground" with rights monitors and political officers to report on the situation.

The fourth proposal is deploying an armed military or police force under a UN mandate to provide physical protection to Palestinian civilians.

"The combination of prolonged military occupation, constant security threats, weak political institutions, and a deadlocked peace process provides for a protection challenge



that is highly complex politically, legally and practically," Guterres said.

He further stressed that the UN was already undertaking many protection initiatives but that "these measures fall short" of the concerns raised in the UN General Assembly resolution.

The resolution garnered a strong majority of 120 votes in the 193-member assembly, with 8 votes against and 45 abstentions. It was put forward by Algeria, Turkey and

Palestine after the United States vetoed a similar resolution in the UN Security Council earlier.

Elsewhere in his report, the UN chief underlined the need for a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, adding however that "until such a solution is achieved, member-states may further explore all practical and feasible measures that will significantly improve the protection of the Palestinian civilian population."

Three Palestinians killed

On Friday, Israeli forces killed three Palestinians, two in Gaza and another one in Jerusalem al-Quds.

Tensions have been running high near the Gaza fence since March 30, which marked the start of a series of protests demanding the right to return for the Palestinians driven out of their homeland.

The Gaza clashes reached their peak on May 14, marking the 70th anniversary of the Nakba Day (the Day of Catastrophe), which this year coincided with the U.S. embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem al-Quds.

At least 167 Palestinians have been killed and over 18,000 others wounded in the fresh wave of violence, according to the latest figures released by the Palestinian Health Ministry.

(Source: AP)

Interim coach rings in big changes for Argentina

Italian-based strikers Lautaro Martinez and Giovanni Simeone are among the 20 new faces in Argentina's squad for upcoming friendlies against Guatemala and Colombia, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) said on Friday.

Martinez, who joined Inter Milan from Racing earlier this summer, and Simeone, the Spain-born striker who plays for Fiorentina, are included up front alongside Paolo Dybala, Angel Correa and Cristian Pavon.

Mauro Icardi, the Inter striker who was surprisingly left out of Argentina's World Cup squad, also returns, but there is no place for Gonzalo Higuain, Sergio Aguero or Angel Di Maria.

Lionel Messi was left out after requesting an unspecified time out from international duty.

Only nine of the 23 players who went to the Russia World Cup are included for the games against Guatemala in Los Angeles on Sept. 7 and Colombia in New Jersey four days later.

Franco Martinez, the Sevilla midfielder who played two friendlies for Italy in 2015, is among the new names in the 29-man squad, as is Gremio centre-half Walter Kannemann.

Interim coach Lionel Scaloni also gave call-ups to uncapped Stuttgart midfielder Santiago Ascacibar and Real Sociedad goalkeeper Gerónimo Rulli.

Argentina disappointed in Russia, drawing with Iceland, losing to Croatia and then qualifying for the knock-out stages with a win over Nigeria.

However, they were dispatched by eventual winners France 4-3 in the last 16 and coach Jorge Sampaoli left soon after.

(Source: Reuters)

Tite brings in young blood for Brazil friendlies in USA

Manchester United's Andreas Pereira and Barcelona's Artur are among the new names in a much-changed Brazil squad for upcoming friendlies against the United States and El Salvador, coach Tite said on Friday.

Pereira, the 22-year-old attacking midfielder who spent last season on loan at Valencia, is one of two Manchester United players in the squad, along with Fred.

Artur, who was called up but not used before the World Cup, is also included after a promising start to the season with Barcelona.

Lucas Paqueta, Flamengo's highly rated young attacking midfielder gets his first call up, as does Pedro, the 21-year-old Fluminense striker, Gremio's 22-year-old left winger Everton, and Porto centre back Felipe.

Among the regulars left out are Real Madrid's Marcelo, Miranda of Inter, Guangzhou Evergrande midfielder Paulinho and Manchester City pair Fernandinho and Gabriel Jesus.

Tite said he left out several senior men to give younger players a chance to show what they can do at the highest level.

"This is Pedro's time, as he is playing well," Tite said. "Paqueta is one of the best players at Flamengo. (And) Everton, who is one of the best players in his team."

Manchester City goalkeeper Ederson was left out for personal reasons and replaced by Flamengo reserve Hugo, who was included as part of an experiment to give one under-20 player experience in every squad, Tite said.

Brazil face the United States in New Jersey on Sept 7 and then play El Salvador in Washington four days later.

Although they will play more friendlies before the end of the year, Brazil's next competitive matches are not until June 2019 when they host the Copa America.

(Source: Eurosport)

Jürgen Klopp tells unhappy Liverpool players to up their game



Jürgen Klopp has said any player unhappy at being overlooked at Liverpool has a responsibility to force his way back into the manager's plans on the training ground.

Klopp admitted last week he had "no explanation" for why Alberto Moreno and others did not make the squad for the Premier League opener against West Ham. Dominic Solanke, Curtis Jones and Ragnar Klavan, who joined Cagliari for £2m on Friday, also missed out and the competition for places will intensify when Dejan Lovren and Joël Matip regain fitness.

"I cannot make people happy, I never could," said Klopp, whose team visit Crystal Palace on Monday. "Whatever happens on 31 August there will be a specific point where it is clear that is the squad for the next four months until January. Who cannot be happy in these four months being part of the squad at Liverpool I cannot help.

"Everyone who trains on his highest level – because the decision has already been made that they are good enough to play for Liverpool – has a big chance to be an important part of the team, to stay in the team and all these things.

"There are more difficult things in life than not being in a match-day squad. I see it like that and you always have a chance to change the situation when you are part of the squad. It is not about my decision. I made the last decision but before that there are plenty of things the players are responsible for."

(Source: Guardian)

Bolt lands Down Under for 'real' soccer mission



Olympic sprint champion and aspiring footballer Usain Bolt touched down in Sydney on Saturday, declaring himself ready to prove to the world that his Australian soccer adventure is "real".

The eight-times Olympic gold medallist will train with Central Coast Mariners for the first time on Tuesday after being granted an open-ended trial with the struggling A-League club.

Draped in a Mariners scarf, Bolt arrived on a red-eye flight from Los Angeles and was greeted by a few dozen fans and a huge media pack. "This is real, I've said it since my last season of track and field I want to play football. I know what I'm capable of, I know what I can do, so I'm thankful to the Mariners for giving me this opportunity to show what I'm capable of," Bolt told reporters.

"I always put my best foot forward and I'm just going to show the world what I'm made of."

The Mariners' tie-up with Bolt has proved polarising in Australia, with critics dismissing it as a publicity stunt to boost the profile of a team that has failed to make the playoffs for the last four seasons.

The Mariners finished bottom of the 10-team league last season and operate in one of the country's smallest soccer markets about an hour north of Sydney in eastern New South Wales state.

Jamaican Bolt, who retired from athletics at the world championships in London last year, has previously trained with Germany's Borussia Dortmund, South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns and Norway's Stromsgodset in his bid to win a professional football contract.

His first Mariners training session will

coincide with his 32nd birthday on Tuesday.

Despite Bolt's thin soccer pedigree, he has been welcomed with open arms by the Mariners, who have carved a huge lightning bolt on the turf of their home Central Coast stadium.

Bolt could play his first match on Aug.

31 against a Central Coast representative side made up of the region's top amateurs.

The Mike Mulvey-coached Mariners are in talks to have the trial broadcast on TV, pending Bolt's selection, local media reported.

Mariners CEO Shaun Mielekamp said last week that Bolt had already bought into

the low-profile club's community ethos, including agreeing to live in the sleepy coastal region like his team mates, rather than in more vibrant Sydney.

"As you all know I love Australia, so I'm happy to call Australia home for now," said Bolt.

(Source: Reuters)

Lopetegui focused on Getafe game, not transfer targets



Real Madrid coach Julen Lopetegui batted away talk about the club's possible transfer targets ahead of his side's first La Liga game of the season against Getafe on Sunday, insisting he is happy with the squad he has.

"Right now we're focusing on getting the best out of the squad we have which is a squad we love, we have a lot of talent and we're going to work with it," Lopetegui told a news conference on Saturday.

"We like the players we have and I have no doubts about the squad I have. Our players have a fantastic attitude, and people are going to see a Madrid side with a lot of talent. The important players are the ones that are here, not the ones that are not."

Madrid have yet to sign a replacement for all-time top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo after selling him to Juventus for 105 million euros (\$120.1 million). Their only new arrivals so far have been right back Alvaro Odriozola, goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and 18-year-old Brazilian forward Vinicius Jr.

Important back up players Theo Hernandez and Mateo Kovacic meanwhile have been loaned out to Real Sociedad and Chelsea respectively.

Lopetegui, however, said the main thing on his mind was getting off to a strong start in the league as Madrid look to compensate for their woeful last campaign, when they finished 17 points behind champions Barcelona and below Atletico Madrid.

Madrid have already started the season on the back foot by losing 4-2 to Atletico in the UEFA Super Cup on Wednesday.

"We have to focus on our games right now because the three points tomorrow are worth the same as all the other games, so we have to realize the season is starting now," added the former Spain coach, who faces a daunting task following Zinedine Zidane's trophy-laden two-and-a-half-year tenure.

"I'm really impressed with the enthusiasm the players have to revindicate themselves and with the talent they have."

(Source: Mirror)

Mourinho: Manchester City film showed lack of class



Jose Mourinho has accused Manchester City of lacking class after their behind-the-scenes documentary appeared to poke fun at his Manchester United team.

The eight-part film, "Manchester City: All or Nothing," which premiered in Manchester last week, documented their Premier League title triumph last season.

During it, narrator Ben Kingsley describes City's 2-1 win over United at Old Trafford in December as "Guardiola versus Mourinho once more; possession vs. defence; attacking football vs. park the bus" – and that did not go down well with Mourinho. "You can have a fantastic movie while respecting others," the United manager told Sky Sports. "You don't need to be disrespectful to have a fantastic movie."

"You can be a rich club and buy the best players in the world but you cannot buy class and they showed that clearly, that was really obvious."

Despite avenging the derby defeat at Old Trafford with a 3-2 win over City at the Etihad Stadium in April, United finished

19 points behind Pep Guardiola's side.

Mourinho takes his team to Brighton on Sunday as he looks to challenge for this season's title, but warned supporters that they may have their work cut out.

"Last season we put ourselves in a difficult position, because to do better we can only finish first," he said.

"When I read sometimes and watch sometimes it looks like we finished sixth or seventh and everybody did better than us. We finished second."

"Liverpool are trying to win the title with their amazing investment. Chelsea have a fantastic squad, Manchester City have a fantastic squad too, Tottenham made an incredible investment by keeping their players, that's the best investment you can make. They could be spending £200 million, but if they lose Harry Kane or Christian Eriksen ... the biggest investment was keeping all their best players. Arsenal will be better even though they lost their first match. I think it's going to be a very hard season."

(Source: ESPN)

Could De Bruyne injury have quick Silva lining for City?

Pep Guardiola was quick to acknowledge just what a "big miss" Kevin de Bruyne will be for the champions once it was confirmed on Friday that the Belgian's knee injury will keep him out of action for probably three months.

Yet Guardiola's enthusiasm for two more of his midfield maestros suggests that despite the cloud that the loss of the brilliant De Bruyne has left hanging over the Etihad, he can see a "Silva lining".

This could be Bernardo Silva's moment after his scintillating start to the season to make the grade from City's favourite luxury item on the bench to the main man.

And with David Silva potentially ready to rejoin the fray for Sunday's visit of Huddersfield Town, Guardiola believes the 32-year-old Spaniard also still has a key role to play now that he has hung up his international boots.

Naturally, De Bruyne, who scored eight goals, set up 16 more and created the lion's share of chances in City's landmark 100-point season, is going to be missed. After all, no player in Europe's top five leagues provided more goal assists.

Of course too, City are spoiled for midfield choice as Juergen Klopp, manager of rivals Liverpool, noted on Friday when he told Sky Sports how sorry he was about De Bruyne's misfortune.

"They still have options of course, like they always do,"



said Klopp. "They have brought in Riyad Mahrez, but they can all play in different positions. Nobody need worry about Man City and their quality, there's still a lot there."

Guardiola's ability to bring the best out of intelligent players even when moving them into new, unaccustomed positions makes his City side perhaps the most flexible the Premier League has seen.

Yet even amid the bewildering array of midfield talent that Guardiola still has at his disposal with the likes of Ilkay Gundogan, Fabian Delph and Mahrez on board, Bernardo Silva had already staked his claim to taking the reins.

He was superb in the Community Shield win over Chelsea and opening league victory at Arsenal, with his performance in the Wembley curtain-raiser hailed as a "masterpiece" by Guardiola.

He also noted that currently it was "Bernardo and 10 players more" such was his level of play. "He is so intelligent, he is clever, he is a fighter, a competitor," gushed the manager.

Last season, Silva played 35 league matches, but started only 15, a figure that should rise considerably this season, particularly in light of De Bruyne's injury.

But Guardiola believes David Silva too could be rejuvenated now that he has decided to end his distinguished World Cup-winning international career.

"Big congratulations to him," said Guardiola, reporting that Silva had overcome a slight knock that kept him out of the Arsenal match and was back in contention for Sunday's game.

"More than 100 games, winning the World Cup, two European Championships as one of the most fascinating, incredible players in the history of Spain."

"Nobody pushed him, he decided to finish his international career so he could rest a little bit more with his wife, family and his little boy while continuing to play with us."

(Source: Star)

Carlos Queiroz a candidate to coach Mexico – report

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran national football team coach Carlos Queiroz has been added to the list of candidates for the vacant Mexico national team job.

Following the departure of Juan Carlos Osorio as Mexico national football team coach, the Mexican Football Federation's managing director Guillermo Cantu has met with Queiroz, FOX Sports reported.

Queiroz has coached Portugal, the UAE, South Africa, and most recently, Iran in the 2014 and 2018 World Cups.

The Portuguese also served as an assistant to Alex Ferguson at Manchester United for some time, while worked as a coach at Real Madrid, Sporting Lisboa, NY Metrostars, and Nagoya Grampus Eight.

The news of the interest for Queiroz comes after Tigres coach Ricardo "Tuca" Ferretti seemed to have taken his name out of the list of potential candidates.

Mohammad Reza Davarzani, Iran's deputy sports minister, has recently said Queiroz would lead Team Melli in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup in the UAE.

Queiroz has yet to extend his contract with Iran national football team.

He had been already linked with Algeria, South Korea and Colombia.

Under guidance of him, Team Melli earned a shock win over Morocco and impressed against Spain and Portugal.



Fan banned for life after Persepolis supporters knife attack



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Naft Masjed Soleyman fan who appeared to hit Persepolis supporters with knife has been banned for life.

He was caught on cameras in Tehran's Azadi Stadium holding a big knife in his right hand.

The man has been arrested and charged in connection with the incident.

The violence has increased at the stadiums in Iran.

Last week, the Esteghlal Khuzestan

supporters threw stones at the Persepolis' players in Ahvaz's Ghadir Stadium.

The match was stopped several times for this incident.

Also, Tractor Sazi's supporters clashed with Esteghlal's fans in Tehran's Azadi Stadium and destroyed the chairs.

Iranian coaches and players have launched a campaign in recent days to fight violence at the stadium but it seems more effective actions should be applied.

Iran not underestimating Myanmar: Zlatko Kranjcar



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran U23 football coach Zlatko Kranjcar insisted that they will not underestimate Myanmar in the 2018 Asian Games.

On Monday, Iran will face Myanmar at the Patriot Chandrabhaga Stadium in Bekasi, Indonesia.

Myanmar have a little chance of qualifying for the next stage.

"We had a good performance against DPR Korea but we are not allowed to under-

estimate any team. We will take nothing for granted against Myanmar," Kranjcar said.

Iran started the campaign with a goalless draw against Saudi Arabia.

The Persians defeated DPR Korea 3-0 in their second match.

Now, Iran will face Myanmar to determine the group winner.

Iran have a strong legacy in men's soccer, having won gold on four occasions.

Zlatko Kranjcar's footballers will look to end a drought that extends back to 2002.

Morteza Pouraliganji joins KAS Eupen

KAS Eupen have signed Iranian international center-back Morteza Pouraliganji.

Pouraliganji has 30 caps for Iran and has played full matches against Morocco, Spain and Portugal in the group stage of the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

KAS Eupen's new signing has had a career spanning 124 championship games for the first division in Iran, China and, most recently, for Al Sadd in Qatar. The 26-year-old Iranian has played 9 times in the Asian Champions League.

Pouraliganji has signed a 2-year contract with KAS Eupen with an option for another year.

Morteza Pouraliganji is highly motivated by the new stage in his career at KAS Eupen: "In the course of my career so far, I have been able to prove myself in different countries and at different levels. Playing in Europe has always been



my goal and my dream. I am looking forward to this new challenge and would like to thank KAS Eupen for their trust and their belief in me. I am fully motivated and always want to improve and win. I will do my best to become a valuable player for KAS Eupen. I'm looking forward to my new club and to being able to train and play with the KAS Eupen team."

KAS Director Christoph Henkel is delighted with the signing of Morteza Pouraliganji: "As a key player in the Iranian national team and in several clubs in the top division in Asia, Morteza Pouraliganji has proven his skills and, despite his young age of 26, has already managed to gain considerable experience. We are glad that Morteza has decided to join KAS Eupen and we believe that he will help shore up our defence. We welcome our new KAS Eupen player to Belgium."

(Source: As-Eupen.be)

Two Koreas march together at Asian Games opening ceremony

North and South Korea marched together behind the Korean Unification flag at the Asian Games opening ceremony on Saturday (Aug 18), in the latest demonstration of their rapprochement.

South Korean women's basketball player Lim Yung-hui carried the blue and white flag as the Korean athletes paraded into Jakarta's Gelora Bung Karno stadium.

It is the second such symbolic gesture this year by the two Koreas, who also walked together at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics opening ceremony - an event that heralded an unprecedented warming of ties.

The North and South, still technically at war, are also joining forces in women's basketball, canoeing and rowing during the 40-sport, two-week regional Olympics.

The weeks and months leading up to the tournament have been dogged by worries over poor air quality, terrorism and Jakarta's notorious traffic.

But organizers insist they are ready, and 4,000 dancers and a 100-piece orchestra got the party started in Jakarta at a ceremony which organizers said would be watched by billions of people across Asia and beyond.

The main Gelora Bung Karno stadium will be transformed into a verdant mountain, organizers said ahead of the ceremony, and Indonesian celebrity singer Anggun Cipta Sasmi will take to the stage.



The Games website says the ceremony will show the world Indonesia is capable of hosting an international event - but the jury is still out.

On Thursday the online ticketing system crashed, just days after the country admitted a series of malfunctions have been plaguing the light rapid transit system in Palembang, which is co-hosting the games with Jakarta.

A brutal police crackdown on petty crime in the run-up to the Games has also caused alarm, with Amnesty International warning at least 31 suspects had been killed under a "shoot first and ask questions later" operation in Jakarta and south Sumatra.

■ "ONCE IN A LIFETIME"

Just a few hours before the opening on Saturday, national police chief Tito Karnavian visited the GBK stadium, telling journalists that more than 8,000 security officials would be deployed for the ceremony.

"We are giving special attention to security," he said at the arena, where more than 300 CCTV cameras with facial recognition technology have been installed.

Around 50,000 people are expected inside the stadium, Games organizing committee INASGOC said Saturday, adding that tickets - which range in price from to US\$50-US\$350 - had sold out.

Indonesian Gunawan Tri Wasisto, who works in finance, said tickets were costly but worth it.

"This is the moment, we are the host. A bit expensive but for a once-in-a-lifetime event, it doesn't matter," he told AFP.

Some locals turned up at the stadium on Saturday morning, hours before the 7pm (1200 GMT) start to soak up the atmosphere.

Bani, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, arrived with his wife and two kids, telling AFP he wanted "to feel the euphoria, see the preparations".

"The people are also involved," Bani, 36, added. "You can see people are decorating their neighborhoods with the Games' logos."

Jakarta might be stealing the limelight but several thousand athletes, officials and VIPs are also expected at a welcome evening Saturday staged in the huge Sports City complex of Palembang.

As well as performances by local and international musicians, Jakarta's opening ceremony will be broadcast live on a huge screen outside the main stadium of the city that will host 13 of the sporting events, including shooting, bowling and beach volleyball.

About 18,000 athletes and officials from 45 Asian countries will be at the Asiad, organizers said, looking to make their mark across a range of sports including bridge, jetski, paragliding and sepak takraw, as well as nearly the full Olympic program.

(Source: AFP)

Vahid Amiri a key part of Iran side in Asian Cup

Iran international winger Vahid Amiri would be a key part of Carlos Queiroz's side determined to end a four-decade long wait to win the AFC Asian Cup, the-afc.com wrote.

To call Amiri a late bloomer would be an understatement; the winger's rise to prominence over the past few years has been nothing short of spectacular. Until the age of 25, Amiri had never played in the top division in Iran.

Five years later, he has already won two league titles with Tehran giants Persepolis, helped them reach the 2017 AFC Champions League semi-final, and impressed for Team Melli at the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

His excellent form was rewarded with a European move as he joined Turkish side Trabzonspor over the summer.

The pacy winger is a key part of Carlos Queiroz's Iran side determined to end a four-decade long wait to win the AFC Asian Cup, and he will be hoping a strong start to life in the Turkish Super Lig will help him deliver a strong showing in the UAE in January.

(Source: the-afc)



IPL: Persepolis held by Naft Masjed Soleyman

TASNIM — Persepolis football team were held by a goalless draw against Naft Masjed Soleyman at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran on Friday.

It was the Reds' successive draw in Iran Professional League (IPL). Persepolis had played out a goalless draw against Esteghlal Khuzestan last week.

Furthermore, Sepahan defeated Zob Ahan 2-1 in Isfahan's derby, Sanat Naft drew 2-2 with Esteghlal Khuzestan in Abadan and Tractor Sazi earned its first IPL win, beating Saipa 1-0 in Tabriz.

At the end of week 4, Padideh sits top of the table with nine points, followed by Sepahan and Persepolis with eight points.

Avicenna Int'l Chess Tournament kicks off in western Iran

IRNA — The 15th Avicenna International Chess Tournament 2018 kicked off in western city of Hamedan on Friday with participation of 390 Iranian and foreign players.

Speaking to the Islamic Republic News agency (IRNA), Head of Hamedan Chess Committee Ahmad Ali Babaei said that 16 prominent foreign players were participating in the event.

The tournament is underway in three A, B and C groups, he said. Ehsan Ghaem-Maghami, Iranian chess grandmaster did not take part in the event for personal reasons, he added.

Ukrainian grandmaster Stanislav Bogdanovich won the 14th edition of Avicenna International Chess Tournament.

Japan value China rivalry with Tokyo target in mind

Japan will go toe-to-toe with China at the 18th Asian Games, hoping sparring with the continent's most dominant sporting nation will boost their bid for a record medal haul in their home Olympics in 2020, its delegation chief said on Saturday.

Japan topped the medal standings in the first Asian Games in 1951 and continued their dominance until the 1982 New Delhi Games where China took over as the new leaders.

It will need a miracle to deny China a 10th successive Asiad at the top of the medal tally despite the inexperienced look of their 845-strong squad even though Japan will mount stiff competition in swimming, gymnastics, track and field, and table tennis.

"Not only these four sports, in various sports China is still number one in Asia," Yasuhiro Yamashita, who heads Japan's 1000-plus contingent, including 752 athletes, told a news conference.

"I'm looking forward to our athletes challenging China and performing well. If China and Japan perform at a high level, it will help bring up the Asian total sporting performance."

"In other sports as well, if China and Japan compete at a really high level, our athletes can learn a lot from the competition. I strongly believe those performance here will be beneficial for their own performance in two years' time in Tokyo."

Japan have set themselves a 30-gold target for the 2020 Olympics at home, which they believe will be enough to finish third in the medal standings. To achieve that, they need to do well in disciplines that have served them well and make the most of the new events, said Yamashita, a former Olympic champion judoka.

"We traditionally had high performance in judo, wrestling, gymnastics and swimming. Looking back, we (also) find a good foundation of team performance in badminton, table tennis, fencing, sailing, weightlifting," Yamashita said.

"On top of that, in Tokyo, there will be new events like karate, softball, baseball, surfing and sport climbing and in those sports we have very good athletes."

The 62-year-old also dismissed suggestions that Japanese athletes might go easy in Indonesia, saying such a move would risk their selection for the Tokyo Games.

"To become Olympic athletes, internally in Japan (there's) a big competition among the athletes. Those who have come here to compete, they cannot reserve their best for the future. They have to fight hard and compete seriously here," he said.

"I'm looking forward to high performance by our athletes here," said Yamashita who took over as the chairman of the sports committee of the Japanese Olympic Committee last year.

"Looking back to last one year, I found a lot to do. Now I must calm down and take a strategic approach to the Games in the remaining one year and 10 months."

While stressing the importance of doing well in the Asian Games ahead of a home Olympics, he also pointed out the coincidence that Tokyo last hosted an Olympics Games in 1964, two years after Jakarta hosted an Asian Games.

(Source: Reuters)

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Art expert asks galleries to lift ban on admitting children

A R T TEHRAN – Art expert and owner of Golestan Gallery in Tehran Lily Golestan who has asked her colleagues to lift the ban on children's entry to art exhibitions.

Speaking to the Persian service of MNA on Saturday, Golestan said, "I've never agreed with the ban on children and I have never prevented them from visiting art shows in my gallery."

"It's no matter if children come to galleries to make noise and even scream, because their presence at galleries makes them familiar with art and artistic spaces," she added.

Golestan, 74, who is the mother of three children, noted that she was accustomed to taking her children to art shows at galleries during their childhood.

"I accept all the hardships resulting from children's presence in my gallery that the children of my country become familiarized with art, and also to have this cultural move be institutionalized, therefore, I welcome children in my gallery," she stated.

Children conventionally are not allowed to go to galleries in Iran. Gallery owners argue that children may damage artworks by touching them.

However, Nader Seyhun, the owner of Seyhun Gallery in Tehran, said last week that going to art galleries should be turned into a cultural tradition from childhood.

"People should be familiarized with art and galleries from childhood and families should familiarize their children with the culture of going to galleries and visiting



Art enthusiasts visit an installation exhibition by Solmaz Lienhard at Ariana Gallery on August 3, 2018. (Honaronline/Ramona Mirian)

art shows," he told the Persian service of MNA.

"I grew up among artworks from

childhood," noted Nader who has been born into an artist family. His father, Hushang Seyhun, was an architect, sculptor and

painter and his mother, Masumeh Seyhun, was a painter and the former owner of Seyhun Gallery.

Rouhani offers condolences over death of actor Ezzatollah Entezami

A R T TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani has offered condolences over the death of Ezzatollah Entezami, the veteran actor of stage and screen, who died at the age of 94 on Friday.



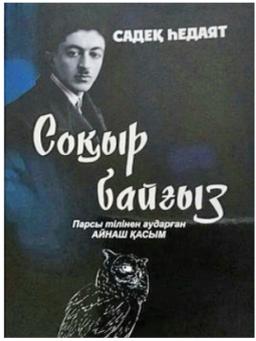
In a message published on Friday, Rouhani wrote, "The death of the veteran actor of our country, Ezzatollah Entezami, filled our hearts with grief and sorrow. This popular, hardworking and stylistic actor of stage and screen played a key role in elevating the art of our dear country, Iran."

"I offer my condolences upon the death of this popular artist to the Entezami family, the Iranian theater and cinema community, and all art enthusiasts. May God have mercy on his soul."

Many other top officials such Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi, First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri and Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani also offered their condolences over the death of Entezami.

"The Blind Owl" published in Kazakh

C U L T U R E TEHRAN – Iranian writer Sadeq Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" has recently been published in Kazakh.



Front cover of a Kazakh copy of Sadeq Hedayat's "The Blind Owl"

Ainash Kasymkyzy is the translator of the book, Hedayat's nephew, Jahangir Hedayat, told the Persian service of ISNA on Saturday.

Kasymkyzy's translation of Hedayat's "The Stray Dog" was previously published in several parts in a Kazakh newspaper in Almaty.

Sadeq Hedayat (1903-1951) was Iran's foremost modern writer of prose fiction and short stories.

"The Blind Owl" (1936) is about a painter who sees the presence of death in his murderous, feverish nightmares.

The book has so far been translated into numerous languages including French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Polish and Hindi.

Hushang Moradi Kermeni wins IIDCYA nomination for Astrid Lindgren Award



Writer Hushang Moradi Kermeni poses beside his picture signed by a number of officials and artists during his 72nd birthday celebration at the Imam Ali (AS) Religious Arts Museum on September 10, 2016. (Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

A R T TEHRAN – Best-selling Iranian author Hushang Moradi Kermeni has been nominated for the 2019 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award by Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA).

The institute has also selected its mobile library program that promotes reading in remote regions and villages as a nomination for the award, which is presented by Swedish government to promote children's and youths' literature in the world, the IIDCYA announced on Saturday.

Moradi Kermeni and the mobile library

program were nominated for the award several times over the past few years.

Moradi Kermeni, whose works also appeal to adults, is the author of numerous bestsellers such as "You're No Stranger Here", "The Water Urn" and "A Sweet Jam".

Iran's nominations for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award are selected every year by the IIDCYA, the Iranian Association of Writers for Children and Youth, and the Children's Book Council of Iran.

Earlier last week, the association nominated writer Jamshid Khanian and children's literature expert Ali-Asghar Seyyedabadi for the award.

Hamed Soleimanzadeh on panel of Dytiatko festival in Ukraine



Hamed Soleimanzadeh in an undated photo

A R T TEHRAN – Iranian stage director and film critic Hamed Soleimanzadeh has been selected for a jury of the 10th Dytiatko International Children's Television Festival.

Zoya Alfiorova from the Faculty of Film and Television Arts of the Kharkiv State Academy of Culture, and Peter Ahn from the Seoul Guro International Kids Film Festival are other members of the jury of the international competition of the festival, which will take place in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv from September 5 to 8, the organizers have announced.

The jury also includes Vassilis C.

Karamitsanis from the ASIFA Hellas and Natalia Morozova from the international children's festival of cinema and television – KINOSVET. Several Iranian films will also be competing with over 170 works from 47 countries during the festival.

"Secret of Butterflies" by Ali Tanhai and "Peace Carpet" by Ziba Arjang will be screened in the Animation Film for Children category.

"Are You Volleyball?!" by Mohammad Bakhshi, "Saad's Olive Tree" by Ahmad Zayeri and "Bachi" by Mohammad-Javad Heidari will be competing in the Short Film for Children category.

Marvel Comics mogul Stan Lee wins renewal of protect order

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) – Marvel Comics mogul Stan Lee won renewal of a protective order on Friday against a onetime business manager accused of subjecting the 95-year-old "Spider-Man" co-creator to elder abuse after taking charge of his affairs earlier this year.

Keya Morgan, a New York-based memorabilia collector who became involved with Lee following the death of Lee's wife last year, must stay least 100 yards (91.4 metres) away from the Marvel magnate for the next three years, the restraining order states.

The order further requires Morgan, also known as Keyrash Mazhari, to stay away from Lee's daughter, Joan Celia "C.J." Lee, 68, and his 86-year-old brother, Larry Lieber.

"Stan Lee and the Lee family are happy that the court saw fit to try to prevent further intrusion into the personal life and affairs of Mr. Lee," his lawyer, Jonathan Freund, told Reuters by phone.

Lee is co-creator of "Spider-Man", "Iron Man", "The Hulk" and dozens of other superheroes that have become mythic figures in U.S. pop culture with soaring success at the movie box office. Recognized by fans for his cameo appearances in each of Marvel's live-action films, Lee has an estate worth some \$50 million, according to previous court documents.

Freund said Los Angeles Superior Court Commissioner Laura Hymowitz granted the restraining order on the basis of evidence outlined in an earlier petition and a brief presentation he made in court on Friday. He said neither Lee or Morgan were present for the proceedings.

A previous restraining order issued in June against Morgan was dismissed in July over confusion about Lee's legal representation. Freund said Friday's action essentially renews and extends that order.

Slovenian comedian gets new role: prime minister

LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA (Euro News) – A comedian who used to impersonate the former Slovenian prime minister will now get a chance to play the part for real.

Marjan Sarec, a veteran stand-up comic and actor, was appointed prime minister designate on Friday after his party finished second in Slovenia's parliamentary election.

Sarec, 40, who is expected to propose a minority government made up of five center-left parties, was chosen by a 55-31 vote in Parliament.

The country's leftist parties allied to sideline the top party in the June 3 parliamentary vote, the right-wing Slovenian Democratic Party led by former Prime Minister Janez Jansa.

"We are a new party, [a] new generation in politics that is not burdened with the past," Sarec told NBC News. "We are here to work."

But analysts have predicted that Sarec's minority government could be unstable – and probably would not last long.

Sarec, who had served as mayor of the small Slovenian town of Kamnik since 2010, rose to political prominence when he unexpectedly forced incumbent Borut Pahor to a second round of votes in the October presidential election.

But his roots are in comedy. He won fame as a popular impressionist who mimicked Jansa, mocking the former leader's apparent



fondness for old Latin words and his shaky grasp of English.

Sarec was also well known for portraying a fictional character modeled on traditional peasants from northeastern Slovenia.

But he told NBC News that he will take his new role seriously. He said that is what he has done since he became a small-town mayor, when he made a "promise to conclude with the profession of actor."

"I kept this promise and assumed the position of a mayor with a great responsibility," Sarec said. "Today, I assume the function of the prime minister with a great responsibility towards all citizens."

Sarec also did stints as a volunteer firefighter and a journalist, working for the public broadcaster RTV Slovenia. He was among 571 journalists who signed a petition against censorship in 2005, during Jansa's tenure.

Aretha Franklin funeral set for August 31 in Detroit

NEW YORK (Reuters) – A funeral for the late recording star Aretha Franklin has been scheduled for Aug. 31 in Detroit, following a two-day public viewing of her casket, and her body will be entombed at a family gravesite, relatives announced on Friday through a publicist.

Franklin, the preacher's daughter who became the long-reigning "Queen of Soul" with such hits as "Respect" and "Chain of Fools", died at her home in Detroit on Thursday at the age of 76, after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

The Grammy-winning vocalist, who was born in Memphis, Tennessee, grew up in Detroit after moving there as a youngster with her family from Buffalo, New York. She got her start as a singer touring in her father's gospel show when she was a teenager.

A lifelong friend and musical compatriot, Motown great Smokey Robinson, recalled in a Reuters TV interview that he met Franklin when she was just 5 or 6 years old, and heard her sing and play the piano "almost like she did as an adult."

Franklin's body will be laid to rest at Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit on Aug. 31 following a funeral that morning at the Greater Grace Temple nearby, but attendance at the service will be limited to



A crown and flowers were placed on Aretha Franklin's star on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles, California, U.S., August 16, 2018. (Reuters/Mike Blake)

family and friends, the announcement said. Her coffin is to be "entombed" along with the remains of her father, the Reverend C.L. Franklin, and her brother, Cecil Franklin, and sisters Carolyne and Erma Franklin.

Before the funeral there will be a public viewing of Franklin's body Aug. 28 and Aug. 29 at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, according to the schedule.

Gwendolyn Quinn, a spokeswoman for the family, said she believed that the viewing would be open-casket but that those arrangements had not yet been finalized.