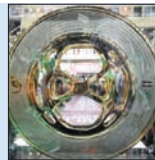




Iran will cooperate with any bloc taking power in Iraq **2**



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Terrorists should be cleaned out of Idlib: Zarif



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UK minister: We seek no covert operation in Iran, plan to build ties

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Mohammad Ghaderi & Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — UK's Minister of State for the Middle East, Alistair Burt, in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, reaffirms his country's support to the 2015 nuclear deal following the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the agreement, saying

the UK, along with the European Union, are doing all they can to provide the mechanism by which they can continue trade transactions with Iran.

He also stressed that the UK is prepared to pay the costs of maintaining economic relations with Iran in the face of U.S. extra-territorial sanctions, noting the importance of having an independent foreign policy from that of Washington. ➔13

2 large aluminum, copper plants to be put into operation by Mar. 2019

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced that two large plants for production of aluminum and copper will be put into operation in the country by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019).

Mehdi Karbasian also said that the

300,000-ton capacity aluminum plant in the south of the country will be the largest and most modern aluminum production plant in Iran, IMIDRO Public Relations Department reported.

This plant will need aluminum oxide and aluminum powder to be imported from other countries because there is not enough raw material in Iran, he mentioned.

'Army, IRGC air forces able to foil possible adventures'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) and the aerospace division of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) can together deal with any kind of threat posed by the enemies, IRIAF Commander Aziz Nasirzadeh said on Monday.

General Nasirzadeh made the re-

marks during a meeting with Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the aerospace division of the IRGC, Mehr reported on Monday.

Nasirzadeh also lauded the IRGC's aerospace division for its achievements in the field of aerospace, and called for cooperation among all military and civilian bodies for national progress.



ARTICLE

Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

Is Europe's opposition to America real?

Western media has recently published reports on the new approach of European authorities over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has officially opposed to her Democrat Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas recently mentioned that Europe and the U.S. "have been drifting apart for years" and urged Europe to "assume our equal share of responsibility" in order to "form a counterweight when the U.S. crosses the line," pull "our weight when America retreats ... [and] start a new conversation."

Among his bolder suggestions on how to do this, he came with the suggestion of an independent system of financial transactions that would protect European companies seeking to do business with Iran. In response, Merkel stated that there are many barriers to the formation of such a system, and in the meantime, U.S. and Europe's security cooperation can't be ignored. Many analysts believe that the U.S. and EU's opposition over the JCPOA remains strong, although there's no guarantee that Europe would remain committed to the nuclear deal in the future.

Accordingly, a review on the Atlantic's recent article is worth noting. Emphasizing that Donald Trump and his advisers have a consistent record of confronting and threatening Iran, most prominently by withdrawing from the nuclear deal, the article reads that Trump expanded the threats against Iran to all those who do business with the country, declaring on Twitter they "will NOT be doing business with the United States."

If taken literally, this would mean a new front in America's economic battle with the Europeans, who have remained in the nuclear agreement—not to mention many other countries around the world determined to do business in Iran.

Regarding what the Atlantic and other American sources say (on the battle of the United States and Europe over the JCPOA), there are some points that should be taken into consideration. ➔7

EU help to Iran is not serious: Hunter

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Shireen Tahmaasb Hunter, a professor of political science at Georgetown University, tells the Tehran Times that that "Europe wants to keep Iran committed to JCPOA, and thus makes some vague promises, but it is not willing to give Iran serious help."

"It was recently reported that the EU will offer 18million euros for some projects in Iran. This is not serious," Hunter tells the Tehran Times.

She adds the Europe does not want to escalate confrontation with America for the sake of Iran.



Following is the text the interview:

■ Some argue that the European Union laws does not have an effect to protect Iran against the

impact of U.S. sanctions. In other words, the law is a new version of the "Blocking Statute" that the European Union approved in 1996 to protect Cuba against U.S. sanctions. In your opinion, how much this law is effectiveness to protect Iran against U.S. sanctions?

A: The current laws are not very effective in countering American sanctions. Moreover, the real issue is that Europe does not want to escalate confrontation with America for the sake of Iran. Economic relations between U.S. and Europe are very extensive and any gain with Iran cannot compensate for the loss of U.S. markets. ➔13

Pakistan continues to rebuff U.S., supports Iran's stand on JCPOA

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

TEHRAN — Much to the chagrin of hawks in Washington and Riyadh, neighbors Iran and Pakistan have reaffirmed their commitment to bolster bilateral ties and open a new chapter in their relationship.

The ties between the two countries, although historic, have been marked by ambiguity in recent years, especially during the previous government led by Nawaz Sharif, who was seen heavily tilted towards Riyadh. With the new government in Islamabad now, led by the charismatic cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan, Iran-Pakistan ties are expected to become stronger.

As a sign of growing proximity between the two countries, Iran's foreign minister Javad Zarif became the first foreign official to visit Pakistan this week since the change of guard in Islamabad. Zarif, who has been to Pakistan eight times, held

wide-ranging deliberations with the top political and military leadership of Pakistan, including prime minister, foreign minister, army chief and parliament speaker.

In a tweet, the social media-savvy foreign minister termed the meetings "fruitful", in which the two sides laid emphasis on "expanding bilateral, regional, and global partnership", adding that neighbors were Iran's "priority". Zarif's visit to Pakistan came at a crucial time when the relations between Islamabad and Washington are undergoing a tectonic shift, and Pakistan is finally coming out of the ominous shadow of U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

Imran Khan led government has made a great start by outlining its foreign policies very clearly. On Friday, following the meeting between Zarif and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Pakistan said it supported Iran's "principled stance" regarding

its nuclear deal with major world powers. "Pakistan stands with Iran in this hour of need," Qureshi said, joining the growing league of countries that have backed Iran's peaceful nuclear energy program and refused to buckle under the U.S. pressure to cut trade ties with Tehran.

An official statement issued by Khan's office said the prime minister received the Iranian foreign minister for a meeting, who conveyed to him the greetings and best wishes of the people and leadership of Iran on assuming office.

Zarif stated that Iran wished continued progress and prosperity to the people of Pakistan and delivered a message of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, inviting Khan for the upcoming Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) summit in Iran in October 2018. Both Pakistan and Iran are members of ACD and Iran currently holds the chair of the organisation. ➔6



ARTICLE

Mudasir Sheikh
Researcher and writer from Kashmir

Iran's key role in fight against America's economic terrorism

The America's economic terrorism against the Islamic Republic of Iran has assumed alarming proportions lately. But Iran stands unfazed. On August 20, 2018, Iran's central bank-affiliated website took off U.S. dollar as a standard of measuring the average rate of Iran's most tradable currencies. In February, Iran had switched from US dollar to Euro as the official reporting currency of the nation.

Recently President Hassan Rouhani announced a 'secondary currency market' and other comprehensive measures to tackle the devaluation of Rial. According to experts, Trump's hostile stance towards Iran is a major contributing factor for the devaluation of Rial, but President Rouhani's recently announced policies are going to effectively counter this economic warfare.

The monopoly of US dollar in global trade has been effectively exploited by Washington to unleash its terror on sovereign states and to feed its unlimited deficits as beautifully explained by F. William Engdahl in his book 'A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics.'

It is easy to picture that Iran is not alone in this battle against American economic terrorism but it is on the forefront. China's objective is also to push the global economy away from the slavery of petrodollar into the levers of real influence. This century has witnessed a ten-fold growth in Chinese economy thus claiming the status of world's second-largest economy but Beijing is highly annoyed by dollar's hegemony in the global financial system.

So China has now agreed on bilateral trade agreements with other victims of American economic terrorism like Pakistan, Turkey, Russia, and Iran. The People's Bank of China and European Central Bank have agreed on a currency swap to facilitate bilateral trade between EU and China, thereby dumping about 500 million Euros worth of U.S. dollars to add Yuan in their reserves. China has also developed a Yuan-based oil future contract bypassing the U.S. Dollar dominated Brent and West Texas Intermediate benchmark. ➔6



© Tehran Times/Mohammadreza Abbasi

OANA holds meeting in Tehran

Executive Board Meeting of the Organization of Asia-Pacific (OANA) News Agencies started its 43rd session in Tehran on Monday. Aslan Aslanov, the incumbent president of the media alliance, called for holding educational forums and workshops on the sidelines of OANA meetings in cooperation with non-OANA members.

Zia Hashemi, the managing director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), delivered the inaugural speech at the event participated by the heads of 18 news agencies.

OANA was founded in 1961 with the goal of facilitating information dissemination in the region, supported by the United Nations cultural entity UNESCO.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rostami named head of Leader's representatives at universities

POLITICS TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday appointed Mostafa Rostami as head of his representatives in universities.

In a decree, Ayatollah Khamenei said the appointment was proposed by the council of representatives. He also hailed Rostami's enthusiasm and his familiarity with the atmosphere in universities, Mehr reported.

The Leader also thanked Mohammad Mohamadian, who resigned from his job as head of the representatives, for his compassionate efforts and kind behavior while at the job.



'Iran is the only country fully committed to JCPOA'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has said that Iran's cooperative approach has had many benefits for European countries, underlining that Iran is the only country that is fully committed to its obligations under the nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA.

On the other hand, the U.S. has exited the JCPOA and European countries have not fulfilled their obligations regarding banking transactions and oil trade with Iran, Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh said, the YJC said on Monday.

He said the European countries are just trying to save certain parts of the deal which are to their own benefit, criticizing Iran's Foreign Ministry for not confronting them about the issue.



MPs visit Natanz nuclear facility

POLITICS TEHRAN — Members of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Monday morning visited the Shahid Ahmadi Roshan Research Center at the Natanz nuclear facility.

The lawmakers visited different sections of the uranium reprocessing facility and talked with the center's experts, Mehr reported.

Back in June, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) announced that it has begun work to prepare the infrastructure for building advanced centrifuges at the Natanz enrichment facility, while respecting its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



Parliamentary team to meet European officials

POLITICS TEHRAN — An Iranian parliamentary delegation has left Tehran for Europe to hold meetings with European parliamentary officials.

The delegation is headed by head of the Parliament Research Center Kazem Jalali, who is also the vice president of Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mehr reported.

Lawmakers in the team includes Gholamreza Tajgaroon, Kamal Dehghani Firoozabadi, Siamak Morasadeh, and Zahra Saei.

The delegation is expected to meet with European Parliament officials as well as lawmakers from Belgium and Luxembourg.



Bishop Davidian: Armenians enjoy full religious freedom in Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Reacting to claims by U.S. officials that there is no religious freedom in Iran, chief of Armenian Catholic diocese of Iran Bishop Sarkis Davidian said on Monday that the Armenians enjoy full religious freedom in Iran, emphasizing that such claims are "biased" and "baseless".

In a statement, Bishop Davidian said the U.S. officials' viewpoint about minorities in Iran is in "opportunist" one which is primarily aimed to meet the wishes of Washington, IRNA reported.

He also said the Armenian Catholics, like the entire world, are concerned about the reimposition of sanctions, which will affect the Iranian nation, including its religious minorities.



UNHCR boss hails Leader for his order to educate Afghans

POLITICS TEHRAN — United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi has praised Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei for his permission and order to the Education Ministry to pave the ground for the Afghan students to study in Iran.

"In my view, the order by the Islamic Revolution Leader for the Afghan children to study in Iran is considered as one of the most progressive policies in providing service to the refugees and is an admirable measure," Grandi said, while visiting a refugee center in Tehran on Monday, Fars reported.

Appreciating Iran's special efforts to give service to the refugees, he said, "Iran has special policies to this end and can turn into a role model for other countries."

Iran says will cooperate with any political bloc taking power in Iraq

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Monday that Tehran will continue cooperation with Iraq no matter what political faction will form the administration.

"Our cooperation with the future Iraqi government will continue no matter which faction will form the administration," Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi told a regular press briefing.

Qassemi added, "We are neighbors and we should respect good neighborliness and protect territorial integrity of each other."

He also said, "We respect the views of Iraqis and other people in the regional countries. Iran's general policy is non-interference in regional countries' affairs and we do not allow others to interfere in our domestic affairs."

Iraqi parliamentary elections were held in May.

According to the Iraqi constitution, the parliament elects the president and the prime minister from among the candidates by a two-thirds majority of its members. Then, the elected president will ask the largest alliance to form a government within 30 days, according to the constitution.

The 329-seat legislature was to come together on Monday to elect a speaker and start the government formation process.



Iran optimistic about Syria summit in Tehran

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also expressed optimism over the outcome of the summit meeting between the presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey over Syria, which will be hosted by Tehran.

The summit is in line with a series of the Astana talks on Syria.

"I am optimistic that this summit can be a successful and effective summit for the entirety of the region, the people of Syria, and fighting terrorism," he remarked. Qassemi said the Astana talks have proven to be a successful process to end the conflict in Syria and surely the leaders' summit in Tehran can help take further steps in this respect.

Iranian, Russian, Turkish presidents to meet on Syria in Tehran Friday

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian and Turkish counterparts, Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, will discuss various issues related to the Syrian crisis in a summit in Tehran on Friday. The topics of discussion will include provocations with the alleged use of chemical weapons, a Putin adviser said.

Speaking to the Izvestiya newspaper, Yuri Ushakov pointed to the agenda of the Tehran summit saying the trilateral meeting will cover a wide range of issues related to the settlement of the Syrian crisis and aggravating points, including preparations for provocative moves through using chemical weapons in a residential area of Idlib Province.

The Kremlin aide further said on the sidelines of the summit, Putin will hold separate bilateral meetings with his Iranian and Turkish counterparts.

The remarks came as some Israeli reports said Tel Aviv believes that the fate of Idlib will be determined



in the Tehran summit.

In April, the presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey -

the three guarantor states of de-escalation zones in Syria - held a meeting in Ankara to discuss ways for peaceful settlement of the crisis in Syria.

The three countries have so far held several rounds of peace talks in Kazakhstan's Astana and elsewhere to help end the conflict in Syria. The fourth round of those talks in May 2017 produced a memorandum of understanding on de-escalation zones in Syria, sharply reducing fighting in the country.

Diplomatic efforts to end fighting in Syria gained momentum in 2017 with the announcement of a ceasefire in the Arab country in early January.

According to a report by the Syrian Center for Policy Research, the conflict has claimed the lives of over 470,000 people, injured 1.9 million others, and displaced nearly half of the country's pre-war population of about 23 million within or beyond its borders.

Kerry defends Iran deal, censures Trump for 'making things up'

Former U.S. secretary of state John Kerry has censured Donald Trump's claim that the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran was the "worst ever", saying the U.S. president makes things up and does not often make decisions based on fact or advice.

"Unfortunately — and I say this sadly — more often than not, he really just doesn't know what he's talking about," said Kerry, who led the American team in nuclear negotiations with Iran.

"He makes things up. And he's making that up, as he has other things," the former top diplomat said in an interview with CBS's "Face the Nation" aired Sunday.

Kerry angered Trump in May after reports said he had secretly met with world leaders in a bid to salvage the nuclear deal

ahead of Trump's withdrawal of the U.S. from the agreement.

Trump slammed the ex-diplomat on Twitter, saying "John Kerry can't get over the fact that he had his chance and blew it! Stay away from negotiations John, you are hurting your country!"

Commenting on the attack and whether he wanted "to say something at the time, tweet back at him," the former State Department head said, "I haven't yet."

"I think America and our democracy are more thoughtful than dishonest tweets," he added.

Kerry also denied Trump's claim that the Iran agreement is weak and harmful to the U.S., saying the allegation is false and disruptive to the possibilities of inter-

national nuclear policy.

"Just saying that doesn't make it that," he said of Trump's criticism of the accord. "This is the toughest agreement in terms of inspection, accountability — no country has had to do what Iran did in order to live up to this. But to just walk away?"

Kerry noted that China, France, Germany and Britain have all tried to protect the nuclear pact and even some of Trump's administration officials supported it.

"Only the United States walked away. Only Donald Trump," he said. "His defense secretary thought he should keep it, his intelligence people thought he should keep it. The fact is this agreement is working."

Kerry added that his defense of the

policy was not a hit at Trump, but was in the best interest of U.S. involvement in a positive policy.

"I was trying to have the policy of the United States of America, which is part of the agreement, to continue, and common sense to continue," he said.

Trump announced U.S. withdrawal on May 8, pledging to reinstate sanctions on Iran and impose "the highest level" of economic bans on the country, jeopardizing the survival of the landmark accord.

Washington reinstated a series of unilateral sanctions against Iran in early August and would re-impose a second batch in November, primarily aimed at undermining Tehran's oil exports.

(Source: Press TV)

Terrorists should be cleaned out of Idlib, Zarif says



POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Monday that terrorists should be "cleaned out" of Idlib.

The remarks by Zarif comes as the Syrian army is preparing to recapture Idlib from the hands of terrorists.

"In line with the Astana process meeting that we will have on Friday in Tehran, we will discuss these issues, as well as how to treat the remaining extremist groups, especially the al-Nusra Front in the remaining parts of Idlib," he told reporters upon his arrival at Damascus airport.

The presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey will hold talks on Syria in Tehran on Friday. The summit meeting is in line with the continuation of the Astana talks aimed at bringing an end to the conflict in Syria.

'Time has come to start reconstruction efforts in Syria'

Zarif also said, "Considering the very

good victories of resistance forces against extremist and terrorist groups, the time has come to start the reconstruction process in Syria and end conflicts and take care of humanitarian issues in Syria as well as the return of refugees."

In his visit to Damascus, the Iranian foreign minister also held a meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, discussing bilateral ties, regional developments and the return of refugees.

Zarif also separately met with Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem. Zarif said that Iran supports the Syrian government and people in fighting terrorists.

Muallem praised Iran's support for Syria in the war against terrorists.

In a separate meeting with Syrian Prime Minister Imad Khamis, Zarif said that the private sector in Iran is ready to participate in projects to rebuild Syria.

Foreign Minister Zarif added Iranian and Syrian embassies are duty bound to facilitate the activities of Iranian private companies in Syria.

Official deplores U.S. for halting aid to Palestinian refugees



A senior international adviser to the Iranian parliament speaker condemned a recent move by the Donald Trump administration to end funding for the UN agency responsible for providing education, health care and other services to Palestinian refugees.

In remarks released on Monday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, who is also the secretary general of the International Conference on Supporting Palestinian Intifada (Uprising), denounced the U.S. move to halt the Palestinian refugee aid as Trump's yet another crime against the Palestinian people and "a blatant violation" of the refugees' rights.

He further warned the U.S. government of the consequences of its support for the Israeli regime's crimes and the deteriorating situation of five million Palestinian refugees.

Amir Abdollahian also said the U.S. should be held accountable for the move that is against humanity and human rights.

The U.S. State Department said on Friday that it would no longer support

the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which operates in the occupied territories as well as Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. It described the organization as "irredeemably flawed".

The announcement sparked anger and concern, even though it had been widely anticipated. Critics see the move as part of a concerted plan to undermine core Palestinian demands in peace negotiations and say it could further destabilize the Middle East.

The decision means the U.S., by far the biggest UNRWA donor, will withhold \$300m in annual funds, which it had agreed to provide only last December. Donald Trump had already axed \$200m in bilateral aid for Gaza and the West Bank.

Palestinians have condemned the U.S. decision to halt the funding the UN agency that helps educate, feed and provide healthcare for more than 5 million Palestinian refugees across several countries as a "flagrant assault" on their rights.

(Source: Tasnim)

Saudi regime military denies killing schoolchildren despite admitting ‘mistakes’

The House of Saud regime says a school bus targeted in an airstrike in Yemen last month was a “legitimate target” after finally admitting “mistakes” which took the lives of scores of children.

Colonel Turki al-Maliki, the spokesman for the Saudi regime-led troops in Yemen, also denied that the vehicle hit in the airstrike was a school bus full of children, despite much evidence to the contrary.

Maliki told CNN in an interview on Sunday that intelligence information showed the bus was “not a school bus because there is no school at that time when the incident happened.”

His allegations came on the same day Human Rights Watch called the macabre August 9 attack in a busy market in Yemen’s northern Sa’ada an “apparent war crime.”

“We never observed any kids on the bus,” al-Maliki said, adding the “coalition conducted the attack against Houthi (Ansarullah) commanders and some Houthi element fighters in that bus.”

The bus attacked was “a legitimate target,” he added.

His remarks appeared to clash with those by Mansour al-Mansour, spokesman for the investigative Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT), who earlier said a probe into the incident had found errors prior to the strike which “caused collateral damage.”

“There was an obvious delay in equipping the fighter jet at the right place and at the right time, which caused missing the opportunity to target the bus -- which was a military target -- in a clear and open area, to avoid such collateral damages,” Mansour said on Saturday.

The Saudi regime air raid hit the school bus as it drove through a market in the town of Dhahyan, killing a total of 51 people, among them 40 children, and injuring 79 others, mostly kids. The kids reportedly had been on a much-anticipated field trip marking their graduation from summer school.

Maliki claimed that intelligence information showed that the bus was “not a school



bus because there is no school at that time when the incident happened.”

On Sunday, Human Right Watch urged an end to all weapons sales to Saudi Arabia after it was revealed that a United States-made bomb was used in the attack.

The Saudi regime attack “on a bus full of young boys adds to its already gruesome track record of killing civilians at weddings, funerals, hospitals, and schools in Yemen,” Bill Van Esveld, a senior children’s rights researcher at HRW, said in a statement.

Since the war began, there have been numerous Saudi strikes conducted “in violation of the laws of war” and without adequate follow-up investigations, HRW said.

It also said that it had identified U.S.-made munitions at the sites of at least 24 other “unlawful coalition attacks” in Yemen, warning Washington to “immediately stop weapons sales to Saudi Arabia” or “risk being complicit in future atrocities.”

■ **British gov’t ‘concerned’ by**

civilian deaths in Yemen, keeps mum on Saudi regime arms deals

Meantime, the British government has voiced “serious concern” over the rising numbers of civilian casualties from the House of Saud regime’s years-long military aggression against Yemen, even as London refuses to end its extensive arms deals with Riyadh.

“The Government expresses serious concern at the tragic loss of life in Yemen over the last month. In the first two weeks of August alone, over 400 Yemenis lost their lives, including young children, and many more continue to face egregious violations of their basic human rights,” read a statement by Prime Minister Theresa May’s office on Sunday.

Since the beginning of the unprovoked war in March 2015, Riyadh had enjoyed the unconditional support of its Western allies as the Royal Saudi Air Force and its regional peers kept pounding what they claimed were positions of the Ansarullah (Houthi)

Movement across Yemen.

However, the Saudi regime found itself in hot water last month when a surge in civilian casualties following a series of brutal attacks on undeniably civilian targets made it too costly for others to stay silent.

The U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis even sent a representative to discuss the attack and threaten Riyadh with withdrawing support if such attacks continued.

Britain took a more cautious line with Saudis back then and only reacted in the form of tweets posted by Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

In his posts, Hunt called for investigations into the attack but defended London-Riyadh ties.

The new statement from London used a tougher language and even included references to another attack on August 23, which killed 31 people, most of them women and children.

To tone down its criticism of Saudi allies, London welcomed alleged Saudi investigations into the attacks and blasted the Ansarullah for conducting retaliatory missile attacks against Saudi Arabia.

What the British government failed to address in its statement though were its continued sales of missiles, bombs and aircraft to Saudi Arabia, which have increased manifolds in the face of international criticism.

Faced with a pending exit from the European Union that will shutter most EU markets on Britain, Britain views the Saudi regime and other repressive Arab regimes as lucrative post-Brexit markets for British weapons and goods, even though many of them have been blacklisted by the Foreign Office for human rights violations.

May and his ministers have toured the Middle East on several occasions over the past two years looking for possible customers.

The House of Saud regime is currently the largest purchaser of British weapons. British officials have time and again justified the deals, arguing there is not enough evidence that Saudi Arabia is using them against civilians.

China to provide \$60 bln in financial support to Africa: Xi

China will provide \$60 billion in financial support to Africa, President Xi Jinping said Monday at the opening of a major China-Africa summit. The support will be provided in the form of government assistance as well as investment and financing by financial institutions and companies, Xi said in a speech carried live on state television.

China will also expand its imports from Africa, especially for resources products, and will facilitate African financial institutions’ bond issuances in China, Xi added.

■ **colonialism**

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa Monday delivered a stinging rebuttal to criticism of China’s development aid in Africa, following a pledge by Chinese President Xi Jinping to invest \$60 billion in the continent.

Speaking at a summit on China-Africa cooperation, Ramaphosa said the meeting “refutes the view that a new colonialism is taking hold in Africa, as our detractors would have us believe.”

(Source: daily star)

10 shot at apartment complex in San Bernadino, California

Ten people including children were shot at an apartment complex in San Bernadino, California Sunday night, police said, with three people in dire condition.

“We got a call about 10:45 p.m. for shots fired,” said San Bernadino spokesman Capt. Richard Lawhead. “We found 10 victims down at the scene. Three are extremely critical.”

The shooting happened on a hot holiday weekend in the city that is about 96 kilometers east of Los Angeles.

People were gathered outside playing games in a common area of an apartment complex of about 100 units, police said.

Lawhead said that as of early Monday, detectives do not have a suspect or a motive in the shooting. No weapons were recovered at the scene, he said.

The shooting took place a week after a gunman shot nine people and killed two competitors at a video game tournament in Jacksonville, Florida on Aug. 26.

(Source: AP)

UNRWA chief defends refugee criteria for millions of Palestinians

Millions of Palestinian refugees “cannot simply be wished away”, the head of a UN support agency said on Monday, hitting back at a U.S. aid cutoff and allegations its work only perpetuates their plight.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) provides services to about 5 million Palestinian refugees across Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank and Gaza. Most are descendants of some 700,000 Palestinians who were driven out of their homes or fled fighting in the 1948 war that led to Israel’s creation.

The growing refugee count was cited by Washington, UNRWA’s biggest donor, in its decision last week to withhold funding, and has potential ramifications for the Palestinians’ pursuit of a right of return to land now in Israel.

Successive Israeli governments have ruled out such an influx, fearing the country would lose its Jewish majority.

“I express deep regret and disappointment at the nature of the U.S. decision,” UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl said in an open letter to Palestinian refugees and the agency’s staff in which he pledged its operations would continue.

Appearing to echo Israel’s view that descendants of the 1948 refugees should not share that status, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert criticized UNRWA on Friday over its “endlessly and exponentially expanding community of entitled beneficiaries”.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described UNRWA on Sunday as “the refugee perpetuation agency” whose money “should be taken and be used to really help rehabilitate the refugees, whose real number is a sliver of that reported by UNRWA”.

But Krahenbuhl said “the protracted nature of the Palestine refugee crisis” was not unique. He said the children and grandchildren of long-displaced refugees in Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Congo and elsewhere are also recognized as refugees and assisted by the United Nations.

■ **Schools open**

“No matter how often attempts are made to minimize or delegitimize the individual and collective experiences of

Palestine refugees, the undeniable fact remains that they have rights under international law and represent a community of 5.4 million men, women and children who cannot simply be wished away,” he said.

The United States paid out \$60 million to UNRWA in January, withholding another \$65 million, from a promised \$365 million for the year. Krahenbuhl said Persian Gulf states had injected funds but UNRWA still needed more than \$200 million.

In Lebanon on Monday, UNRWA opened its school year as scheduled. Studies in UNRWA-run schools in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip got under way on Wednesday.

Claudio Cordone, director of UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon, told Reuters that funds would last only until the end of the month but the agency would continue to raise money to ensure the schools remain open.

Washington’s move against UNRWA was the latest in a series of U.S. and Israeli policy decisions that have angered Palestinians and raised international concern.

They include Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital in December, the moving of the U.S. Embassy to the contested city in May and Israel’s adoption of a “nation-state” law in July that says only Jews have the right of self-determination in the country.

(Source: Reuters)

Iraq factions announce alliances to form new government

Iraqi political factions, which did best in the country’s May parliamentary elections, announce separate alliances within the legislature, which they claim enables them to form the country’s new government.

On Sunday, lawmakers following senior cleric Muqtada Sadr and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi’s lead said they had created an alliance that would give them a majority bloc at the Parliament.

A rival grouping led by commander Hadi al-Amiri and former premier Nouri al-Maliki responded by saying it had formed its own alliance, asserting it featured the lion’s share of the seats at the legislature.

The 329-seat legislature is to come together on Monday to elect a speaker and launch the government formation process.

Sadr’s Sairoon bloc came first in the polls, while the Fatah (Conquest) Alliance led by Amiri, and Abadi’s Nasr finished second and third. A bloc led by Maliki ended in the fifth place.

A recount was called after the polls due to allegations of electoral fraud. The procedure delayed the process of government formation by three months, but confirmed the primary results with little change.

The Iraqi politics has long been vulnerable to the differences lying along the country’s major ethnic and sectarian fault lines.

Any new government has to move quickly to address the country’s chronic woes, including the poor quality of basic services as well as political and economic mismanagement. It would also have to face the mammoth task of rebuilding the country following three years of struggle against the Daesh Takfiri terror group.

(Source: Press TV)

Kremlin rejects Macron’s claim Putin wants to ‘dismantle’ EU

The Kremlin Monday rejected claims by French President Emmanuel Macron over the weekend that his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin wished to break up the European Union.

In an interview with the Swedish public broadcaster SVT, the French leader said: “I do respect Vladimir Putin... but [his] dream is a dismantling of the European Union.”

Spokesman Dmitry Peskov however told journalists the Russian president was in fact working to develop ties with member states and strengthen the union.

“With regards to respect, the president answers in kind. He has developed a very constructive working relationship, and good personal relationship [with Macron],” Peskov said.

“In terms of Putin’s relationship towards the EU, we unfortunately must argue that it is not Russia’s doing if this relationship is in rather a chilly situation,” he added.

“It is in our interests that the EU is prosperous and stable. President Putin has made this approach clear on several occasions and there is no plan to change it.”

Macron and Putin last met during the World Cup in Russia this summer when France won the tournament.

(Source: AFP)

Massive fire rips through 200-year-old Rio National Museum

A massive fire has engulfed Brazil’s 200-year-old National Museum in the city of Rio de Janeiro, putting its valuable collection of 20 million items, including human fossils and ancient Egyptian artefacts, under threat.

Firefighters and museum workers raced to save the historical relics from the blaze which broke out at 7:30pm (22:30 GMT) on Sunday.

The esteemed museum in the city’s north, which houses artefacts from Egypt, Greco-Roman art and some of the first fossils found in Brazil, was closed to the public at the time of the fire.

There were no reports of injuries, the museum said in a statement, and it wasn’t immediately clear how the fire began.

Roberto Robadey, a spokesman for the fire department, said 80 firefighters were battling the blaze and that by midnight local time it was “just about under control” and should be out within a few hours.

President Michel Temer called it “a sad day for all Brazilians”. “Two hundred years of work, research and knowledge have been lost,” Temer said in a statement.

Robadey said firefighters got off to a slow start fighting the blaze because the two fire hydrants closest to the museum were not functioning. Instead, trucks had to be sent to get water from a nearby lake.

But he added that some of the museum’s pieces had been spared. “We were able to remove a lot of things from inside with the help of workers of the museum,” Robadey told Globo News.

The museum was founded in 1818 by King Joao VI and is considered a jewel of Brazilian culture.

According to its website, the museum has a vast collection related to the history of Brazil and other countries, and many of its collections came from members of Brazil’s royal family.

The museum’s deputy director, Luiz Fernando Dias Duarte, voiced “profound discouragement and immense anger” as the treasured institution burned, accusing Brazilian authorities of a “lack of attention”.

He said the museum, a former palace that was once the official resident of the royal family, had never had necessary support.

The National Museum, which is linked to the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, had suffered from funding cuts.

As the fire raged researchers, professors and university students expressed a mix of sorrow and indignation, with some calling for demonstrations on Monday in front of the ravaged building.

Latin America’s largest nation has struggled to emerge from its worst recession in decades.

The state of Rio de Janeiro has been particularly hard hit in recent years due to a combination of falling world oil prices, one of its major revenue sources, mismanagement and corruption.

(Source: agencies)

Pakistan: U.S. aid cut was money owed, not assistance

The significance of United States cancelling \$300m in security assistance to the Pakistan has been downplayed by the country’s foreign minister who said the amount was a reimbursement and not assistance.

Relations between the U.S. and Pakistan have been increasingly frayed since January, when the U.S. President Donald Trump suspended more than \$1.1bn in security assistance to the country over allegations that it was not acting against armed groups such as the Afghan Taliban.

Pakistan denies the charge, saying it has conducted indiscriminate military operations against all armed groups operating on its soil.

On Sunday, Pentagon spokesperson Lt-Col Kone Faulkner confirmed that the U.S. would be finally cancelling \$300m in Coalition

Support Funds (CSF), which was part of the \$1.1bn suspended in January, reassigning the funds to other projects, “due to a lack of Pakistani decisive actions in support of the South Asia Strategy”.

“This \$300m was neither any aid nor assistance,” said Pakistan’s new Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Sunday evening.

“It is our share in CSF. This is the money which Pakistan has already spent through its own resources and [the U.S.] was to reimburse it to us.”

The U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, accompanied by the U.S. military chief General Joseph Dunford, is due for a visit to Islamabad on Wednesday.

Qureshi said that ties between Pakistan

and the U.S. are currently “almost non-existent”, but he hoped this would change after Pompeo’s visit.

“With the visit of the U.S. Secretary of State we have an opening and a beginning can be made, and we will try to build a consensus in areas of mutual interest,” he said.

“It is our shared objective to cleanse the region and the world of terrorism.”

“We will listen to their point of view, and we will present our position to them,” he said. “Our objective is that we move our relationship forward based on trust, respect and understanding.”

Pompeo and Dunford are expected to hold talks with the newly elected government, led by longtime opposition politician Imran Khan, and military chief General

Qamar Javed Bajwa.

For over a decade, Pakistan has received CSF assistance to reimburse its military for expenditures incurred in its war against armed groups, including the Pakistani Taliban.

Afghanistan and the U.S. accuse the country of offering safe haven to leaders of the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network, which have been waging a 17-year war since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

Pakistan denies that it has aided the Afghan Taliban and its allies.

In 2016, Akhtar Mansour, then-chief of the Afghan Taliban, was killed in a U.S. drone strike on Pakistani territory, while travelling in the southwestern province of Balochistan using Pakistani identity papers.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	135257.8
IFX	1527.16

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	48,700 rials
GBP	54,427 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: isna.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$69.76/b
Brent	\$78.11/b
OPEC Basket	\$75.72/b
Gold	\$1,200.00/oz
Silver	\$14.52/oz
Platinum	\$798.05/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Bank loans to agriculture sector rise 35% in 5 months on year

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The value of facilities that Iranian banking system paid to the agriculture sector rose 35.1 percent during the first five months of current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), the managing director of Iran's Keshavarzi Bank (literally meaning Agriculture Bank) announced in a press conference on Sunday.

Ruhollah Khodarahmi said 150 trillion rials (about \$3.5 billion) of loans have been paid for implementation of 361 agricultural projects in the country, IRNA reported.



ICCIMA to dispatch trade delegation to Bulgaria in mid-Sep.

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) will dispatch a trade delegation to Bulgarian capital city of Sofia in mid-September, ICCIMA website reported.

The Iranian delegation's visit will be concurrent with the meeting of Iran-Bulgaria Joint Economic Committee chaired by Iranian Transport Minister Abbas Akhoundi which will be held in Sofia from September 17 to 21.

The delegates to be led by ICCIMA Vice Chairman Hossein Selahvarzi are active in the fields of road building and urban projects as well as technical-engineering services.



Iran's largest CNG station put into operation in Isfahan Province

ENERGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's largest compressed natural gas (CNG) station was put into operation in Na'een County in Isfahan Province, Shana reported on Monday.

Mostafa Alavi, the managing director of Isfahan Province's Gas Company, put the capacity of this station at 10,000 cubic meters per hour and said the stations has been built at the cost of 130 billion rials (about \$3.09 million).

Asian stocks down for 3rd session as trade, EM worries persist

Asian stocks dropped for the third consecutive session on Monday, hit by worries over further escalation of the U.S.-China trade war and unstable emerging market currencies.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan .MIAPJ0000PUS fell 0.7 percent while Japan's Nikkei .N225 shed 0.6 percent though trade could be subdued due to a U.S. market holiday on Monday.

Most European shares are expected to fall with futures in Germany's DAX .GDAXI FDXc1 and France's CAC .FCHI FCEc1 falling about 0.2 percent. Britain's FTSE futures .FTSE FFIc1 bucked the trend to rise 0.15 percent.

"It looks almost certain that (U.S. President Donald) Trump will impose 25 percent tariffs on \$200 billion worth of imports from China," said Norihiro Fujito, chief investment strategist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities.

Trump said last week he was ready to implement the new tariffs as soon as a public comment period on the plan ends on Thursday, which would be a major escalation given the United States has already applied tariffs on \$50 billion of exports from China.

Shanghai shares .SSEC, which fell 5.3 percent last month on trade war worries, dropped 0.9 percent to 2,700, edging back at the 2 1/2-year low of 2,653 set two weeks ago.

"The markets tend to think ahead. After the tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese exports, they will worry what can come next. Unless the trade war anxiety is dispelled, you cannot rule out the possibility of shares falling further," said Shenshen Wan, strategist at Tokai Tokyo Research.

On the other hand, U.S. stocks - especially technology shares - have fared better, thanks in part to the strength of current economic data and corporate profits.

(Source: Reuters)

Austria supports expansion of economic, industrial ties with Iran: envoy

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Austrian Ambassador to Tehran Stefan Scholz said his country supports expansion of economic and industrial relations with Iran.

Making the remarks in a meeting with Mansour Moazami, the head of Industrial Development and Revolution Organization (IDRO) of Iran, at the place of IDRO in Tehran on Sunday, the envoy put emphasis on the more progress of joint projects between the two countries, IDRO published on its

official website.

"Austrian government sees no problem in continuing trade ties with the Iranian sides and when it comes to the Austrian companies some strategies and resolutions should be presented so that the two sides can continue cooperation despite the U.S. sanctions", Scholz further noted.

Moazami for his part stressed the role that Austria, which currently holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union, can play to strengthen EU ties with Iran and



called for more tangible and flexible measures in this due.

In early July, Iran and Austria signed four cooperation documents on water resources management, renewable energy, transport, and mining.

The documents were signed as President Rouhani was on a three-day tour of Europe which took him to Switzerland and Austria.

The documents were signed at the presence of Rouhani and his Austrian counterpart Alexander Van der Bellen.

China clamps down on cryptocurrency speculation, but not blockchain development



Chinese authorities have stepped up their pressure on domestic cryptocurrency activity in the last few weeks.

While Beijing supports the development of the underlying blockchain technology, it is still trying to limit speculation in digital currencies roughly one year since banning their sales in "initial coin offerings."

Blockchain technology creates a secure, basically permanent record of transactions between two parties, eliminating the need for a third-party intermediary such as a bank. Bitcoin is the first application of the technology, and hundreds of other cryptocurrencies have since emerged. Their prices skyrocketed last year as investors bet blockchain could transform the world as much as the internet did. While major companies and governments — including China's — are testing the technology, it has yet to prove itself on a large scale.

China used to dominate bitcoin trading, and still accounts for a majority of bitcoin creation through the "mining" process. But increased regulatory scrutiny, especially as bitcoin's price climbed, culminated in the country's central bank and other financial authorities prohibiting sales of new cryptocurrencies through so-called ICOs early last September. Beijing also effectively banned domestic bitcoin-yuan trading.

At the same time, Japanese, South Korean and U.S. investors became increasingly interested in bitcoin, which hit an all-time high above \$19,000 in December. Chinese blockchain projects sometimes moved their listed headquarters overseas, while development continued within mainland China. Trading among cryptocurrencies is still possible, while bitcoin can be bought with yuan through over-the-counter markets.

The persistent speculation has not gone unnoticed.

On Aug. 24, five government bodies — the People's Bank of China, the Banking Regula-

tory Commission, the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission, the Ministry of Public Security and the State Administration for Market Regulation — issued a warning about risks from illegal fundraising under the guise of "blockchain" and "cryptocurrencies." The announcement also called out those who used overseas servers while targeting Chinese investors.

On the same day, tech giant Tencent announced it will prohibit cryptocurrency-related transactions through WeChat pay, the mobile payments function of its popular Chinese messaging app. Tencent has also blocked some official WeChat accounts that allegedly published information relating to initial coin offerings and cryptocurrency trading that violated government policy on instant messaging services, the company said in a statement to CNBC. Official WeChat accounts share articles and news updates with subscribers for free. Caixin first reported the block on Aug. 22.

On Aug. 17, Beijing's Chaoyang District, which includes the central business area,

issued a ban on shopping areas, hotels and office buildings hosting promotional events for cryptocurrencies. Chinese news site National Business Daily reported last week that a special economic development zone in the southern city of Guangzhou announced a similar ban.

The Chinese government wants to maintain financial stability, and will regulate activity such as soliciting money from ordinary people for investment, according to Jack Lee, managing director at HCM Capital. The company is an investor in many blockchain projects and the private equity arm of Foxconn, best known as Apple's iPhone manufacturer in China.

HCM doesn't expect regulators to ease restrictions around cryptocurrency investing even though the government has embraced blockchain technology, Lee said.

In a speech in May, Chinese President Xi Jinping called blockchain a "breakthrough" technology. The Communist Party also published in August a book whose title translates roughly as "Blockchain — a reader for cadre

leaders."

Several local governments including that of Hangzhou — home to tech giant Alibaba — Shanghai and Nanjing have announced blockchain investments. That makes for a total of about \$3.57 billion since 2016, according to estimates published Aug. 28 on news site SupChina by Miryam Amsili, a member of the global development team for Shanghai-based Neo Blockchain and a graduate student at Peking University.

Throughout the regulatory changes affecting cryptocurrency, private investment in blockchain remains steady.

BlockVC, which counts Beijing among its main offices, is investing in 40 to 50 blockchain-related projects, according to Mingxuan Li, its chief operating officer and co-founder. He said the company's focus is more on underlying technological development.

Anecdotaly, he said, it's typical for a Chinese person to have one or two friends involved with blockchain and that they will not hesitate to try to convince you to join them. As a result, he said he thinks the development of blockchain will spread rapidly in the country, especially since China's large population offers the opportunity to test applications at scale.

Cryptocurrency prices have dropped sharply from their peak late last year and early this year. But they have remained relatively steady despite the flurry of Chinese government announcements, pointed out Feng Jun, who co-founded cryptocurrency news website Hecaijing last year in Beijing. To many, it sounds like more talk than action so far, he said.

Bitcoin's price against the dollar lost 9 percent last month and was trading near \$7,300 Sunday evening New York time, according to CoinDesk's bitcoin price index. That's up from an August low below \$6,000.

(Source: CNBC)

Brexit has already cost UK more than 2% of GDP

The Brexit vote has already cost Britain more than 2 percent of economic output, even before the nation formally exits the European Union, according to analysis by UBS Group AG.

In a note published Monday, the bank estimated that gross domestic product is already 2.1 percent lower than where it would have been had the UK voted to remain in the EU, while investment is 4 percent weaker, inflation 1.5 percent higher and consumption 1.7 percent lower.

While the UK has avoided the recession forecast by some in the wake of the 2016 referendum, growth has lagged behind most of its major peers. UBS said that a pickup in the global economy in the past two years has helped mask some of the worst impacts of Brexit, allowing "growth to move sideways rather than dive lower."

Still, "to put that 2.1 percent cumulative decline in real growth into context, that's roughly a quarter to a third of the total Brexit costs estimated in the most pessimistic

assessments done prior to the EU referendum and almost equal to the full costs of some of the more optimistic assessments," wrote UBS analysts including Pierre Lafourcade. "But the UK has not even left the EU yet!"

UBS compiled the figures by comparing the UK's current economic data with that of a "doppelganger" made up of the data from other countries not affected by Brexit, in way that mimics the UK's performance before that vote.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Amid a currency crisis, Turkey's central bank vows to step in to contain rampant inflation



meeting in view of the latest developments," it added.

■ 'Enemy of interest rates'

The news came just after official data

showed inflation rose to 17.9 percent year-on-year in August, comfortably beating market expectations and marking its highest level since late 2003.

Many emerging market participants will expect Turkey's central bank to raise interest rates next week in order to tame rampant inflation in the country. However, the bank opted to keep rates unchanged at 17.75 percent in July, mystifying investors and sending the lira sharply lower.

Meanwhile, President Recep Erdogan — who has previously described himself as an "enemy of interest rates" — wants to see lower benchmark rates to keep credit-fueled growth on track.

Turkey's lira was trading at around 6.6154 against the dollar at 12:40 p.m. London time (7:40 a.m. ET), recovering some of its losses immediately after the central bank's announcement.

(Source: CNBC)

Euro zone manufacturing growth eases on trade war worries

Euro zone manufacturing growth slowed to a near two-year low in August as optimism dwindled amid growing fears of an escalating global trade war, a survey showed on Monday.

However, this edition of the survey should be treated with some caution. It only represents about 70 percent of the usual sample size as swathes of European factories take a break over the summer months.

IHS Markit's August final manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index dropped to a 21-month low of 54.6 from July's 55.1, unchanged from an initial reading, yet still comfortably above the 50 level that separates growth from contraction.

An output index, which feeds into a composite PMI

due on Wednesday and is regarded as a good gauge of economic health, nudged up to 54.7 from 54.4.

"Euro zone factories reported a further solid production gain in August, but prospects dimmed further as growth of new orders hit a two-year low and worries about the outlook deepened," said Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit.

Forward-looking indicators such as employment, optimism and new orders all fell, suggesting there would be little if any pick-up in activity this month.

The future output index, which measures optimism, fell from 62.4 to 61.0 - its second lowest reading since late 2015. Manufacturers are increasingly concerned about a growing

global trade dispute. U.S. President Donald Trump has told aides he is ready to impose tariffs on \$200 billion more in Chinese imports.

So to try and drum up demand, factories increased prices at the weakest rate in a year. Official data on Friday showed inflation in the bloc eased to 2.0 percent last month, supporting the European Central Bank's assessment that a recent spike may only be temporary.

Still, price pressures have built up enough for the ECB to curb some of its measures. The central bank plans to end its bond purchase programme this year, although interest rates are expected remain unchanged for another year.

(Source: euronews)

Oil steady on high OPEC supply ahead of Iran sanctions

Oil prices steadied on Monday, weighed down by rising supply from OPEC and the United States but supported by concerns that falling Iranian output will tighten markets once U.S. sanctions bite from November.

Brent crude oil LCOc1 was up 20 cents at \$77.84 a barrel by 0745 GMT. U.S. crude CLc1 was unchanged at \$69.80.

The two benchmarks have risen strongly over the last two weeks with Brent gaining around 10 percent on expectations that global supply will tighten later this year.

"The contracts are in a strong uptrend, but one that looks at the moment to be a bit tired," said Robin Bieber, technical chart analyst at London brokerage PVM Oil Associates.

Output from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries rose 220,000 barrels per day (bpd) in August to a 2018 high of 32.79 million bpd, a Reuters survey found.

Production was boosted by a recovery in Libyan production and as Iraq's southern exports hit a record.

U.S. drillers added oil rigs for the first time in three weeks, energy services firm Baker Hughes reported on Friday, increasing the rig count by 2 to 862.

The high rig count has helped lift U.S. crude



oil production C-OUT-T-EIA by more than 30 percent since mid-2016 to 11 million bpd.

But investors are looking ahead to later this year when U.S. sanctions are expected

to curb exports from Iran, the third biggest producer in OPEC.

Stephen Innes, head of trading for Asia-Pacific at brokerage OANDA, said Brent was

"supported by the notion that U.S. sanctions on Iranian crude oil exports will eventually lead to constricted markets".

Edward Bell, analyst at Emirates NBD bank in Dubai, agreed:

"Iranian production is already showing signs of decline, falling by 150,000 bpd last month ... (as) importers of Iranian barrels will already be moving away from taking shipments."

Meanwhile, trade disputes between the United States and other major economies including China and the European Union are expected to hurt oil demand if they are not settled soon.

China's manufacturing activity grew at the slowest pace in more than a year in August, with export orders shrinking for a fifth month and employers cutting more staff, a private survey showed on Monday.

OANDA's Innes said it was too early to say whether economic slowdown would put a serious dent in oil prices.

"It isn't at all clear that such type of economic headwinds will topple oil prices given ... the constant barrage of supply outages," Innes said.

(Source: Reuters)

The biggest threat to the oil and gas industry

By Nick Cunningham

Trump's trade war is taking a toll on the oil and gas industry.

There has been some eleventh-hour drama over the renegotiation of NAFTA, but the energy industry is likely going to dodge a bullet on that front, with the most contentious issues revolving around agriculture and automobiles.

But even if the NAFTA renegotiation succeeds, the oil and gas industry has already taken a hit from Trump's broader trade war.

The most obvious impact comes from the 25 percent steel and 10 percent aluminum tariffs that the Trump administration has placed on a variety of countries, which have pushed up the cost of steel in the U.S., leading to cost inflation for oil and gas projects. Worse, the application system for waivers is cumbersome and time-consuming, and some companies are angry because precisely who obtains an exemption from the federal government seems to be arbitrary.

For instance, as Reuters reported, Chevron received a waiver for importing a 4.5-inch steel pipe used for oil exploration while a small company called Borusan Mannesmann Pipe saw its application rejected by the U.S. Commerce Department for a similar steel pipe used in well casing. The Commerce Department has been accused of not providing adequate information on why it rejects certain cases, offering only vague language such as the availability of domestic steel. A common thread in the rejections seems to be opposition submitted from steel producers.

Reuters says that Commerce has received over 37,000 applications for waivers from U.S. companies, but the agency has only issued decisions on 2,871 of those requests as of August 20. Roughly two-thirds of the applications were approved, but nearly 1,100 were rejected. "The Commerce Department is now hard-pressed to spend more than a few minutes reviewing each application," said Bernd Janzen, a partner in Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, told Reuters. In the case of Borusan, which saw its application rejected, the company expects its operating costs to rise from \$25 to \$35 million because of the tariffs.

A few weeks ago, Plains All American also was rebuffed by Commerce for imported steel for its Cactus oil pipeline in Texas. The CEO of Plains called the tariffs a "\$40 million tax." The Cactus pipeline is seen as particularly important because it will help relieve the midstream bottleneck in the Permian when it comes online.

Needless to say, steel and aluminum are crucial materials to oil and gas projects, and

while the Trump administration is aiming to revive domestic manufacturing, users of those components will pay the price. The costs will reverberate throughout the energy industry, from upstream producers, to oilfield services, refiners, LNG exporters and the endless array of related suppliers and servicers.

Still, things could soon get much worse. The Trump administration is reportedly on the verge of moving ahead with the proposed \$200 billion in tariffs on Chinese goods, according to Bloomberg. The proposed duties have to go through a public comment period, but that period ends on September 6, clearing the way for Trump to proceed.

Some even view the progress on NAFTA as a worrying sign for the U.S.-China dispute. "So as far as China and Asia are concerned, this new Mexico deal solves nothing," ING Bank NV in Singapore wrote in a note after the U.S.-Mexico bilateral deal was announced. "It strengthens the U.S. position to play hardball with China. This doesn't look good for the region."

The personnel making up the Trump administration are often described as being divided into two camps, those in favor of free trade and those that are more nationalistic, spoiling for a trade fight with China. The latter group, seems to have had the upper hand as of late. "The hawks are certainly in the ascendancy on China trade policy," Amy Celico, Principal of Albright Stonebridge Group said on Bloomberg TV.

That does not bode well for a resolution to the trade fight. China has signaled that it won't back down and will try to match U.S. tariffs with levies of their own. Up until now, China has refrained from slapping tariffs on U.S. crude oil and LNG exports, but there is a good chance that the next phase will ensnare oil and gas.

At that point, the trade war could start to affect global growth. "The scale is enormous and once the tariffs materialize, they will definitely send jitters through financial markets," Gai Xinzhe, an analyst at the Bank of China's Institute of International Finance in Beijing, told Bloomberg.

Implementation of the \$200 billion in tariffs is not a foregone conclusion. The Trump administration could impose tariffs in increments, delay them or hold off altogether. But should Trump choose to take the trade fight to the next level, he will be doing so at a time when emerging markets are rattled by currency turmoil, global growth looks shaky, and a growing number of economists see rising potential for a recession in the U.S. over the next two years. (Source: oilprice.com)

UK's biggest energy suppliers losing more customers to startups

The latest threat to the dominance of Britain's six biggest energy suppliers is coming from small technology companies that automatically switch consumers to the cheapest deal.

Their emergence couldn't come at a worse time for the industry, which is already beset by lawmakers capping rates and suffering from perennial mistrust by consumers. On top of that, utilities are getting squeezed by surging wholesale natural gas and power prices.

A record 5.5 million customers switched electricity supplier last year. So far, price comparison websites have provided the easiest way for consumers to compare different tariffs. But now, companies like Labrador Ltd. and Look After My Bills Ltd. have taken it a step further. They move clients to the best tariff automatically.

"What we do is put pressure on the big suppliers to be competitive," Labrador's Chief Executive Officer and founder Jane Lucy said in an interview. "The real challenge we have is consumer disengagement -- to get people to set aside three minutes to sign up is still our hurdle."

Power grab

A recent investigation into the energy markets by the Competition and Markets Authority found that 70 percent of customers of the "Big Six" were on the most expensive default tariff and could save 300 pounds (\$390) a year by switching. The findings led Prime Minister Theresa May to introduce a price cap on those contracts, starting by the end of the year.

The utilities are responding to the tougher trading environment after seeing their combined share of the electricity market drop to 78 percent in the first quarter from 100 percent seven years ago.

SSE Plc, the nation's second-biggest supplier, got approval on Thursday to merge its retail arm with Innogy SE's Npower to create the nation's second biggest power and gas distributor. The Scotland-based company has seen its customers drop to 14 percent of the total from 20 percent in 2011.

Centrica Plc, the largest supplier, says it's already committed to making switching faster and easier. "We let customers know on their bills and annual statements about cheaper tariffs available to them," the company said in a statement.

The automatic switching services are free for customers, instead charging suppliers a fee. Calculating how much money can be saved can be done using an old bill or, more accurately, a smart meter. The switch is only made once a threshold of savings is met,

which could be anywhere between 50 pounds and 80 pounds. Customers can also select whether they want to prioritize a green tariff or a supplier with good customer service.

Growing fast

Labrador declined to provide how many customers it has signed up, while Look After My Bills has about 50,000 subscribers after starting the service in January.

"We're growing very fast," co-founder Henry de Zoete said by email.

The number of smaller suppliers have also increased in recent years, encouraged to grab a slice of a market where traditional utilities have the lowest level of trust among consumer organizations, according to the UK government.

While there are now more than 70 suppliers in the market. Two of them went into administration in July and a third earlier this month, just as UK wholesale power prices surged to a two-year high and gas climbed to the highest level since December.

One of these, Iresa Ltd. with 100,000 customers, was offering some of the cheapest deals. But it also had the lowest score for customer service in a ranking carried out by consumer body Citizen's Advice.

"Price is not the only factor to consider when choosing an energy supplier," said Gillian Guy, CEO of Citizens Advice in London. To make sure customers get the best possible experience, these automatic services "should make sure the suppliers they recommend provide good customer service as well as an attractive price."

Government deadline

All of the big suppliers could gain new customers if they offered the cheapest deals. If households already have a smart meter or want one then they are valuable to some suppliers who are struggling to meet a government deadline to roll out the devices to everyone by 2020.

After already spending years and millions boosting their brands, some of the larger utilities may focus even more on standing out from their competitors in the increasingly competitive market.

The suppliers could be "concerned if they lose that direct relationship with their customers," said Lawrence Slade, CEO of lobby group Energy UK.

Automatic switching could go some way to addressing the problem of customers who just don't care enough to change provider. Even though more people than ever are switching, the number is still only 18 percent of the total market.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Has China really hits its carbon renewable targets 12 years early?

Research shows that China may have already hit its 2030 Paris Climate Agreement goal of reaching peak emissions, but is this the whole picture?

Publishing in the journal "Nature Geoscience", researchers from the University of East Anglia demonstrate that China's growth has slowed somewhat since the booming years of the early 2000s. This means that China's carbon emissions peaked at 9.53 gigatons of CO2 in 2013 and have declined by around 4.2 percent up to 2016, which was the last year of this study.

Under the Paris Agreement, which became effective in 2016, one of China's self-asserted targets was to hit its emissions peak by 2030 and ensure reductions in emissions from then on. This latest research suggests that China has already hit that peak, but it's critical to put this in perspective.

"They [China] are able to manage quite significant economic growth, but have been able to stabilize their emissions over the past few years," lead research Dabo Guan told the Daily Beast. "I wouldn't call it a significant decline, but it's stability."

The researchers do warn, however, that their retrospective analysis includes a period of slowed economic growth thanks to the 2009 financial crisis. Globally, economic growth patterns stalled as a result of that financial meltdown. It appears that China's CO2 emissions stabilizing is one such impact of that slowdown.

But what happens when the economy recovers? Well the economy is recovering, and the news — at least in terms of CO2 output — isn't good.

Earlier this year Greenpeace warned that, after looking at official data compiled by the Chinese government, it appears there has been a dramatic surge in CO2 output through the first few months of 2018, around four percent higher than



the same period in 2017. Using that rate and forecasting ahead, analysts have predicted that overall emissions output could rise by five percent, the largest increase in seven years.

This is largely being driven by renewed fossil fuel production.

The picture is muddled somewhat, as this appears to stem from what was intended to be a short term stimulus drive whereby the Chinese government allowed the fossil fuel industry to ramp up production. This was meant to be a boost for the economy and not a long term plan, but the drive has continued, resulting in this emissions increase.

Does this mean that 2013 was a so-called "false peak" as the Independent dubs it? That is a possibility.

Certainly, we can see how China's CO2 emissions could continue to rise well into the next decade. And let's be clear: if China, as the biggest emissions producer in the world, doesn't cut its output, we have no hope of hitting our Paris Agreement targets and keeping global temperature rise below the 2C (35.6F) threshold needed to avoid the extreme weather phenomena that scientific models predict.

This may cloud what at first seemed like very good news. However, there is still reason to be optimistic. As the researchers in this study point out in a press release, "A recent Chinese policy directive to cap coal at four billion metric tons per year requires its proportion in the energy mix to decrease from 64% in 2015 to around 58% by 2020."

China would therefore be looking at decreasing its output and holding its carbon footprint more steady.

In addition, China has invested heavily in renewables, so much so that it stands to become a world leader in renewable energy within the next 50 years, so long as it continues down that path. This offers a neat get-out clause for China's economic growth to continue to rise because it means that, should China end its fossil fuel-heavy stimulus now and instead bank on renewables, it may yet see the kind of growth it is clearly chasing while helping to keep the mission of the Paris Agreement alive.

In effect, China could choose to sacrifice short-term gains for longer-term environmental security, and the economic payoff could still be substantial.

Will Chinese authorities do that? That remains to be seen, but the opportunity for a new and more sustainable future of economic growth without a massive carbon footprint seems tantalizingly close for this leading nation.

(Source: care2.com)

Brazil's Petrobras to meet with presidential candidates' aides: report

Executives from Petróleo Brasileiro SA will meet with economic aides to presidential candidates this month to discuss their agenda for the state-controlled oil company, newspaper Estado de S.Paulo said on Sunday.

Executives Nelson Silva, Rafael Grisolia and Eberaldo de Almeida Neto will schedule meetings this month to showcase the firm's debt-cutting and divestment efforts, the report said, without specifying how it obtained the information.

Petrobras, as the company is known, was cast to the center of political debate in the wake of a sweeping corruption scandal ensnaring well-known executives and high-ranking politicians.

All candidates in this year's presidential elections, the most hard-to-predict in decades, have presented some sort of plan for the oil firm. Most, Estado said, would support the sale of some or all of Petrobras' refineries.

Petrobras representatives did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

(Source: Reuters)

Saudi Arabia may maintain Oct. light crude prices for Asia cargoes

Saudi Arabia is expected to keep prices for the light crude grades it sells to Asia largely unchanged in October from the previous month to keep its oil competitive against other suppliers, several trade sources said on Monday.

Saudi Arabia has cut the prices for Arab Light and Arab Extra Light to Asia over the past two months as it fends off competition from other Middle East oil suppliers, Europe and the United States.

Since June, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-OPEC producer Russia have increased production to make up for falling output from Venezuela, Libya and ahead of U.S. sanctions on Iran.

The rise in exports from the Middle East and Russia, plus arbitrage flows from Europe and the United States, has kept Asia well-supplied, especially in light grades.

"Calculations based on the Saudi price formula point to a small increase but because there are so many light grades coming from other regions, we expect Saudi to maintain or cut its prices to stay competitive," a source at a North Asian refiner said.

Half of the six respondents in a Reuters survey said they



expect the October official selling price (OSP) for flagship Arab Light crude to rise by 5 cents to 30 cents from the previous month while the other half expect prices to fall by up to 30 cents.

All except one respondent expect Saudi Arabia to cut Arab Heavy crude's OSP in October to track a 72 percent drop in fuel oil margins last month but their view on Arab Medium's OSP was mixed.

"Demand for Middle East crude is improving," a second source at a North Asian refiner said, adding that he expects Saudi to raise prices by 5 cents to 10 cents a barrel for all grades.

Asia's demand for medium-sour grades was strong last month partly as South Korea and Japan have cut Iranian crude imports ahead of U.S. sanctions in November, the trade sources said.

The October OSPs will also mark the first change in Saudi's crude price benchmarks since the mid-1980s.

Saudi Aramco's OSPs for October will be based on the average settlement prices for the DME December Oman contract and the December Dubai cash price assessed by Platts, both of which are set in October. Saudi crude OSPs are usually released around the fifth of each month, and set the trend for Iranian, Kuwaiti and Iraqi prices, affecting more than 12 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude bound for Asia.

State oil giant Saudi Aramco sets its crude prices based on recommendations from customers and after calculating the change in the value of its oil over the past month, based on yields and product prices. Saudi Aramco officials as a matter of policy do not comment on the kingdom's monthly OSPs.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF

**India to go ahead with Russia defense deal**

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Ahead of the U.S. government delegation's visit to India, speculation is rife that India will convey to the U.S. that it is going ahead with the ambitious Rs. 40,000 crore deal with Russia to procure a consignment of S-400 Triumf air defence missile systems.

According to a report by India's state-run news agency, quoting unnamed government officials, Indian government has reached this decision, notwithstanding the American sanctions on military transactions with Moscow, and it will be communicated to the visiting U.S. delegation during the upcoming 'two-plus-two' talks.

The report quoted officials as saying that India is likely to seek a waiver from the Trump administration for the mega deal, citing its requirement for the missile system in the wake of the evolving regional security architecture as well as considering its close defense ties with Russia.

The US has imposed military sanctions against Russia under the stringent CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) law.

Randall Schriver, the Pentagon's senior official handling issues relating to Asia, on Thursday said that the U.S. cannot guarantee that India will be exempted from sanctions if it purchases weapons and defense systems from Russia.

**Saudi military denies killing schoolchildren despite admitting**

Saudi Arabia says a school bus targeted in an airstrike in Yemen last month was a "legitimate target" after finally admitting "mistakes" which took the lives of scores of children.

Colonel Turki al-Maliki, the spokesman for Saudi-led troops in Yemen, also denied that the vehicle hit in the airstrike was a school bus full of children, despite much evidence to the contrary.

His allegations came on the same day Human Rights Watch called the macabre August 9 attack in a busy market in Yemen's northern Sa'ada an "apparent war crime."

On Sunday, Human Right Watch urged an end to all weapons sales to Saudi Arabia after it was revealed that a U.S.-made bomb was used in the attack.

Since the war began, there have been numerous Saudi strikes conducted "in violation of the laws of war" and without adequate follow-up investigations, HRW said.

It also said that it had identified U.S.-made munitions at the sites of at least 24 other "unlawful coalition attacks" in Yemen, warning Washington to "immediately stop weapons sales to Saudi Arabia" or "risk being complicit in future atrocities."

(Source: Press TV)

**New commander for U.S. forces in Afghanistan**

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — In a significant move at a time when the U.S. is facing defeat in its longest war in Afghanistan, U.S. Army General Scott Miller has assumed command of U.S. and NATO forces in the war-ravaged country.

Miller, the former commander of the U.S. military's Joint Special Operations Command, takes over when the security situation has deteriorated and the Taliban insurgency has got a new lease of life. Many experts have questioned the U.S. policy in Afghanistan and called for an end to this war.

"To be successful, we must continually learn and adapt to the enemy and the environment," Miller said on Sunday at a change of command ceremony at the headquarters of the NATO-led Resolute Support mission in Kabul.

Civilian casualties are at record high and there have been repeated attacks on major cities across the country, putting a big question mark over the role of U.S. and its allies in Afghanistan.

In June, a report by the Pentagon's lead inspector general, said there was little publicly available evidence that "actions to increase pressure on the Taliban were having a significant impact".

**India prepared for fallout of U.S. sanctions on Iran**

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Even as speculation is rife that India might not stop buying oil from Iran, according to a new report, New Delhi is fully prepared to deal with any fallout of the U.S. sanctions on Iran and has made necessary provisions for every scenario, a top government adviser was quoted saying by Indian news agency IANS.

However, he said, it was better to wait till the actual events happen and react quickly to them, rather than pre-commit to a certain sequence of actions.

Sanjeev Sanyal, the finance ministry's adviser, said that while the economy was gathering pace, there were several external factors which were a concern — including the U.S.-China trade war, tightening of U.S. monetary policy and rising oil prices, apart from the trade sanctions on Iran, the report said.

"We have already weighed our options ... various scenarios have been thought about and in each one, certain series of sequences have been planned. Provisions have somewhat been made where necessary. In many cases, you just have to do it when it happens. The key is to react fast," he said.

"So rather than predispose ourselves to a particular line of response, what we can do is have a whole bunch of options and then as things evolve, we know which option to take."

Bangladesh PM blasts Myanmar military for anti-Rohingya propaganda

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has blasted the Myanmar regime for spreading disinformation about Rohingya Muslims presently stationed in Bangladesh's refugee camps.

Addressing media-persons in Dhaka, Hasina said the Myanmar military was using "fake pictures" as part of their hideous anti-Rohingya propaganda.

"This is a magical trick...What they are doing is disgusting," she said as foreign media investigations revealed that the Myanmar military used fake photos to show flimsy 'Rohingya atrocities' on Burmese Buddhists decades ago.

The Bangladesh prime minister said Myanmar committed heinous crimes by attacking and driving tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims out of their homeland but "the biggest matter is that they tarnished their own image".

She said the Myanmar regime had pledged to take back the Rohingya refugees as part of the repatriation deal, but they failed to honor the pledge. "Myanmar is Bangladesh's next-door neighbour, so we never wanted any conflicting position (with them)...the international community gave support to Bangladesh on the issue and I extend my thanks to them for it," she said.

Hasina said Bangladesh has provided shelter to approximately 1.1 million Rohingya refugees and made all possible arrangements for them and at the same time Dhaka was in talks with Myanmar for the safe and voluntary repatriation of these refugees.

"When talks are held with Myanmar, they don't make any objection on the repatriation of the Rohingyas. But the reality is different," she said, indicating that Myanmar regime was reluctant to take back the Rohingya refugees.

It has been one year since Rohingya Muslims were forced to leave Myanmar following brutal crackdown by Myanmar military with tacit support of the government. As per conservative estimates, there are around 905,000



Rohingya refugees presently in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, although some human rights bodies have put the figure higher, living in deplorable conditions.

The exodus of Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar's Rakhine state started in October 2016. Almost 200,000 of them fled to neighboring Bangladesh that time and settled in Cox's Bazar. However, in August last year, more than 720,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh en masse to escape persecution, murder, arson and rape.

The savagery in Rakhine was described by the United Nations as "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing". The atrocities were widely

documented by human rights bodies, including gang rapes, cold-blooded killings, torture and destruction of properties belonging to Rohingya Muslims. Hundreds of Rohingya villages were burnt down between August 25 and November 25 in a systematic ethnic cleansing.

In a statement ahead of the anniversary, 132 sitting parliamentarians from five other countries in Southeast Asia issued a statement calling for Myanmar officials to face trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC). In an interview with Tehran Times, Matthew Smith, CEO of Fortify Rights, also said that the UN Security Council should

"urgently refer the situation in Myanmar to ICC", which he said will "at least start the wheels of justice". The ICC is currently considering whether it has jurisdiction in the crisis. Bangladesh is a member of the court, but Myanmar is not.

Last week, a delegation of Bangladesh officials led by Foreign Minister had visited Myanmar to resolve the crisis and facilitate repatriation of Rohingya refugees but reports suggest that the two sides failed to break the deadlock. It was the first high-profile visit by top Bangladesh officials to Myanmar since the persecuted Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh a year ago.

Pakistan continues to rebuff U.S., supports Iran's stand on JCPOA

1 → Khan thanked the Iranian supreme leader's support for Kashmiris in their struggle for self-determination and the manner in which Pakistan's Independence Day was celebrated in Iran this year, the statement said, adding that Pakistan and Iran were "connected by inseparable bonds of historic, religious and cultural affinities".

Zarif also held formal talks with his counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi during which they discussed wide-ranging issues. Both the sides underlined the importance of deepening cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The statement issued by Pakistan's foreign office said the two officials held detailed discussions on regional and global issues — including the situation in Afghanistan and America's unilateral decision to withdraw from the JCPOA.

It was agreed that the next round of Bilateral Political Consultations and the Joint Economic Commission will be held at early date.

While supporting Iran's principled stance on the Iran nuclear deal, Qureshi expressed hope that remaining parties to the agreement would uphold their commitments in letter and spirit. "This is important given IAEA's repeated verification that Iran has strictly adhered to the terms of agreement," the foreign minister said.

A few weeks ago, Pakistan's foreign office spokesperson Dr Muhammad Faisal had stressed that Pakistan reserves the right to 'pursue legitimate economic and commercial



interests' with Iran in the wake of re-imposition of sanctions on Tehran by U.S. "We are examining the implications of the U.S.' re-imposed sanctions on Iran," he said, "however, Pakistan, being a sovereign state, reserves the right to pursue legitimate economic and commercial interests while respecting the international legal regime."

Meanwhile, on Sunday, in a fresh blow to Pakistan-U.S. relations, the U.S. military said it has made a final decision to annul \$300 million aid to Pakistan that had been suspended over Islamabad's perceived failure to take decisive

action against militants. President Donald Trump had in his New Year tweet lambasted Pakistan and threatened to withhold military aid.

These developments are significant and must be seen in the context of changing regional dynamics — Pakistan getting closer to China, Iran and Pakistan embarking on a new journey, and the new government in Islamabad defying the coercive and manipulative tactics of Trump administration.

Imran Khan, who has on many occasions in the past criticized America's policy for South Asia, had also opposed the idea of Pakistan sending troops to Yemen to fight Houthi rebels. Khan's foreign policy, observer believe, is rooted in pragmatism and national interest. Better relations with Iran, they stress, are in Pakistan's best national interest.

Following his historic victory in general election, Khan had vowed to improve ties with all regional countries, including Iran. Unlike his predecessor, he has shown an inclination to maintain a healthy balance in ties between regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran.

During the meeting between Khan and Iranian envoy to Pakistan recently, Khan also expressed his willingness to revive the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project or 'peace pipeline', which can play a key role in resolving the energy crisis facing Pakistan. It is a historic opportunity for the two countries to transform their relationship into energy partners.

Iran's key role in fight against America's economic terrorism

1 → Recently German foreign minister Heiko Maas proposed an alternative to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication system, aka the SWIFT code, in response to the unilateral withdrawal of U.S. from Iran nuclear deal and to facilitate the operations of EU companies into Iran as some companies such as Total and Maersk have suspended their Iranian operations due to the fear of reprisal from the U.S.

EU is not only challenging the SWIFT but back in 2017 Brussels proposed European Monetary Fund (EMF) in order to provide emergency financial assistance to member countries and to initiate a radical transformation into the financial institution of EU so that they can cope with the petrodollar hegemony.

According to a Wall Street Journal analyst, Gerald F. Seib, the use of petrodollar as a political weapon may cause its demise as obvious from the developments within Iran, Russia, and China, which are constantly exploring options to develop a parallel mechanism to facilitate global trade. Turkey's changing stance and the establishment of New Development Bank (NDB) by BRICS member countries are also nails in the coffin of U.S. dollar standard.

According to a report by Forbes, Russia is also trying to develop an alternative to the SWIFT in an attempt to break the backbone of the western financial system. So Russia in consultation with China is about to introduce BRICS SWIFT. In addition to this



BRICS countries have established their own bank by the name of New Development Bank (NDB), with similar functions as that of the World Bank.

China's front to bring down the petrodollar has started with the launch of RMB priced crude oil Benchmark backed by gold which is a direct threat to current Brent and WTI benchmarks. Russia has also introduced its own payment gateway Mir to counter the

U.S. based VISA and MasterCard companies. According to Russian National System of Payment Cards (NSPK), Mir has issued more than 13.9 million cards covering 10% of Russia in 2017.

Now as we have observed, Iran and a large number of other countries are facing the same problem of petrodollar hegemony and a lot of progress has been made to eliminate it. Iran has always been known for its consistent

stand against the American hegemony and imperialism. Once again the world is looking at the leadership of Iran to consider the experience from monetary history and the cutting edge development into the field of technology like blockchain and hashgraph to design a much needed transparent and just economic system for the oppressed people across the world.

Technologies like blockchain and hashgraph based money, if fully redeemable in gold, can deliver a new global paradigm of financial freedom and a complete independence from U.S. dollar-based predatory international monetary system. Blockchain and hashgraph are immune to manipulation and Gold is indestructible and resistant to inflation as obvious from the monetary history of last 5000 years. Additionally, blockchain based crypto currencies constitute the most efficient medium of exchange and gold is an unmatched commodity as for as the store of value is concerned and thus a combination of these two entities is a way forward for attaining the financial freedom.

Additionally BRICS, Iran, and other countries can develop a common financial institution that will look after the business transactions within these countries and with the rest of the world. A common crypto-currency redeemable in gold and a transparent financial institution can prevent concentration of power in a single entity so that the petrodollar like catastrophe can be avoided in the future.

European army is much closer to aspiration than reality: Jenkins

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Peter Jenkins, former UK Ambassador to the IAEA and UN says that “In theory, Europe is perfectly capable of forming a treaty-based collective security organisation from which the United States and Canada (and maybe the United Kingdom) are excluded.”

Former associate fellow of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy also adds that “It is doubtful whether that is what France and Germany are aiming to achieve in the near to medium future, and doubtful whether at this stage pan-European political will for that could be mobilised.”

He adds that “European army is much closer to being an aspiration than a reality.”

Following is the full text of the interview:
■ How do you evaluate “speeches of Macron, President of French about that Europe should no longer rely on America in terms of security”?

A: I think this is an important statement because it came only a few days after a call for a more independent Europe from Germany’s Foreign Minister, and some 15 months after a similar call from Chancellor Angela Merkel at a public meeting in Munich. Historically (by which I mean since the Second World War) France has championed a more independent European defense policy and Germany has reacted cautiously, reluctant to take any step that might affect the U.S. commitment, under Article 5 of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, to come to Europe’s defense in case of need. Now, it seems, France and Germany are becoming like-minded on this crucial question.

■ With the arrival of the Trump to the White House and his criticism of the European countries regarding NATO’s share, Europe had begun its efforts to form a joint European army. According to Macron’s speeches, it



seam formation of a joint European army take more seriousness. What is your opinion?

A: Back in the 1980s, if memory serves, Germany acquiesced in a French proposal to form a Franco-German brigade, based near Strasbourg. That initiative was rich in symbolism but of little practical significance. Now the talk is of a joint European army. I think this has more to do with Franco-German perceptions that the United States is becoming a more erratic ally, less trustworthy than for most of the last 70 years, more prone to making huge foreign policy misjudgements, than with Trump kicking up a fuss about the inadequacy of European contributions to NATO defense. I suspect, however, that at this stage a European army is much closer to being an aspiration than a reality.

■ Is Europe essentially capable of being independent of America in terms of security? If so, what will be the future of NATO?

A: In theory, yes, Europe is perfectly capable of forming a treaty-based collective security organisation from which the

United States and Canada (and maybe the United Kingdom) are excluded. But it is doubtful whether that is what France and Germany are aiming to achieve in the near to medium future, and doubtful whether at this stage pan-European political will for that could be mobilised. It is more likely that for the foreseeable future NATO will co-exist alongside the development of a more pronounced and more practically effective EU defense identity.

I referred just now to the United Kingdom. Historically the UK has been opposed to greater European integration in the defence sector, for fear of jeopardising NATO. This is likely to remain the UK position for the foreseeable future, not least because of very close ties between UK and US military and intelligence services, although a Labour government led by Jeremy Corbyn would sympathise with what Macron, Maas and Merkel have been saying about Europe and implying about the United States. But, if the UK withdraws from the EU, France and Ger-

many will find it easy to ignore British views, and probably will.

■ Some analysts have interpreted Macron’s speeches as a new Western order. Will the West enter a new era of order and independence from the United States?

A: That is the direction in which France and Germany seem to want to travel. They are starting to imagine a world in which Europe can no longer rely on or cooperate with the United States to the extent that has been the norm since 1945, and must therefore acquire the capacity to be an independent pole in a multipolar international order. But this will not come about overnight. It will take many years.

■ Macron also said that Russia should also be involved in European security issues. How do you assess this position?

A: That, too, is very significant. During the Cold War, especially when General De Gaulle was president of the French Republic, France tended to be less fearful of, and less hostile towards the Soviet Union than the United States and other NATO members. General De Gaulle used to talk of a Europe stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals. Since 2007 this historic tendency seems to have been in conflict with an un-Gaullist Atlanticism, and even with a certain neoconservatism imported from the United States. Now Macron seems to be reviving the Gaullist perspective and contemplating a European security framework that would indeed stretch to the Urals. Defense cooperation with Russia and mutual respect for European and Russian interests would replace unperceptive threat assessments, demonization of Russia’s leaders, and insensitivity to Russian interests. But winning European support for this vision will not be easy. Poland and the Baltic states in particular prefer to see Russia as an ever-present threat to their territorial integrity or even survival. It will take a lot to convince them to look on Russia as a potential partner.

Is Europe’s opposition to America real?

➔ The analysis presented by the Atlantic can be reviewed from different dimensions. First and foremost, there should be a realistic understanding of the economic conflict between the United States and Europe. At this critical period and in examining the Europe’s package of proposals, we need to make strategic, rational and determined distinctions between the two terms of “commitment” and “guarantee”.

Undoubtedly, the EU’s words on remaining “committed” to the JCPOA is of no use to Islamic Republic of Iran. In this period we’re exactly looking for the EU guaranteeing its commitments to the nuclear deal. It should not be forgotten that not only during Trump’s presidency, but also during Obama’s time, the European troika didn’t take any effective steps to lift the ban on the European bank relations with Iran.

They even hesitated to accuse the U.S. Treasury of violating paragraphs 26-29 of the JCPOA, and chose to sacrifice their legal obligations to make a compromise with the current and previous U.S. governments. Therefore, the European Union is facing a tough test, and if it doesn’t or can’t succeed in this test, there will be practically no nuclear deal. This issue should be made clear to the European authorities by our country’s diplomatic and foreign policy.

Not long ago French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said it was unlikely European powers would be able to put together an economic package for Iran before November. As we can see, the European officials are following a “tactical” delay in this regard. On the one hand, they’re waiting to see the results of imposing secondary sanctions on the Iranian economy (to gain more benefits from our country), and on



the other hand, they intend to set their own policy based on the results of the U.S. mid-term elections.

Accordingly, if the Republicans win the mid-term elections in November, the European Union will define its policies in a way which is closer to those by Trump. However, if Democrats win mid-term elections, the United Europe will be slightly more open to this issue. As it can be seen, the EU hasn’t even defined its own independent approach to the nuclear deal yet, let alone its willingness to offer its final package on the basis of this independent approach. Moreover, European officials believe that this delay would make Iran accept a minimal package of proposals, which is not true of course!

On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the economic and political interactions of the United States and Europe over the nuclear deal remain strong. In recent weeks,

signals have been delivered from the White House to the European troika in this regard. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he is negotiating with his European counterparts. Without a doubt, the more European troika is affected by the United States, the farther it would get from reaching an agreement with Iran. Thus the European official should be aware that they can’t ignore the existing realities through magnifying the current gaps between EU and the United States over the JCPOA.

However, as the Iranian officials noted, it seems that “Europe is not yet ready to pay the price (of truly defying the U.S.)” and “Iran can respond to Europe’s political will when it is accompanied by practical measures”.

We have witnessed the special resistance of Merkel and other European authorities to this “practical plan”. It should be noted that along with the negotiations of the European Union (especially the European troika) with Iran on how to maintain the nuclear deal, parallel negotiations were on-going between the United States and the foreign ministers of the three countries of Germany, England and France. The reflection of these negotiations, which are mostly held in secret, is visible in the statements made by the senior European officials, including Merkel and Macron.

If the European leaders do not have a real intention to maintain the nuclear deal and will not pay for it, there is no reason for the Islamic Republic of Iran to remain committed to its obligations defined under the JCPOA. The issue has been repeatedly reminded by our country’s authorities to the European Union, especially the three countries of the Germany, Britain and France.

Terrorists in vice: Syria ‘going all the way’ to liberate Idlib

TEHRAN (FNA) — According to Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem, the Syrian military is ready to “go all the way” to liberate the terror-held region of Idlib. The goal is to wipe out terrorist groups.

Idlib and the surrounding area is the last major terrorist-held territory in Syria, and Muallem has indicated that the presence of a large Al-Qaeda affiliate in the region is a particular problem. Tens of thousands of foreign-backed terrorists from different factions are still operating in Idlib and neighboring Aleppo. Russia is expected to provide air support. Exactly when the offensive will begin is unclear, however, and there are calls by the United States to delay out of what Washington claims to be “humanitarian concerns”!!!

This has of course nothing to do with so-called “humanitarian concerns” and everything to do with the US official policy: continuing the protracted war on Syria. The US also wants a big seat at the table for a political settlement, which means ensuring that the war keeps going so that there is never a clear victor. After all, Trump administration officials keep telling us that “right now, our job is to help create quagmires [for Russia and Syria] until we get what we want.” They want to have a dominant position in post-war negotiations, so they can dictate the form that post-war Syria takes. This means ensuring that the Syrian government doesn’t win the war outright.

But the Syrian government has already won the war with a helping hand from the



allied forces of Iran, Russia and Hezbollah. All it wants to do now is dislodge the last remnants of foreign-backed terrorist groups from the country so that reconstruction could begin. Mind you, the three leaders of Iran, Russia and Turkey are scheduled to meet in the Iranian city of Tabriz next week to discuss the same issue, among others.

In other words, Syria has won the real war on terror. The government has retaken virtually all of the terror-held territory except for a far North bastion in Idlib, dominated by Al-Qaeda. And if the US wants to stop that from happening, that’s because it wants to save Al-Qaeda to keep the war going, which has been a recurring undercurrent in US policy

in Syria from day one.

That also says why the US keeps its threats to intervene militarily if the Idlib offensive involves chemical weapons. Most importantly, it is this desire that has Russia complaining to the UN with damning evidence that the terrorists could stage a fake chemical attack just to suck the US into the war. At the same time, the US is desperately talking about an imminent chemical attack despite there being no reason or evidence to think Syria is poised to launch one.

Washington’s “chemical weapons attack” concerns are unfounded. Syria has no chemical weapons and the whole world is in the know that only the US-backed, UN-designated

terrorists have the means to “stage” chlorine gas releases to simulate an attack. The international civil society is also in the know that Syrian troops and volunteer forces are fulfilling their pledge to liberate Idlib.

At any rate, the war is nearing its end-game, Idlib will be liberated, and the United States will be the first to know – seeing that it supports various terrorist groups there. After Idlib’s liberation, the US won’t be able to drag its regime-change war under any pretext either, because that’s not what the long-suffering people of Syria and the international civil society want.

So despite the grim assessments by Washington – humanitarian crisis - the Syrian forces will launch the offensive undeterred by the US threats and they will dislodge the Salafi-Takfiri militants the same way they cleaned up Lattakia, Aleppo, Deir Ezzur, Ghouta, Homs, Hama, Dara’a and Quneitra. However, liberation is just the beginning. No effective strategy to counter terrorism will emerge unless the intricate issue of good governance and reconstruction in the region is also fully addressed.

The powerful reality is that all terrorist groups are now vulnerable to the re-empowered central government in Damascus. The Syrian government is doing everything it can to also give substance to the ongoing intra-Syrian peace negotiations. This is a policy favored by Iran, Russia and Turkey, as a united front against all manners of terrorism and extremism is what the negotiations envisage in their upcoming meeting in Tabriz.

IAG providing smokescreen for people behind Trump’s anti-Iran policy: U.S. analyst



TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A senior political expert and activist based in the U.S. city of Atlanta described President Donald Trump’s recent move to form an Iran Action Group (IAG) “a show” and said it is aimed at covering up people behind Trump’s anti-Tehran policy, including Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu.

“The new group is just for show, providing a smokescreen for the people behind Trump who are really running the Iran policy, such as

Netanyahu and the U.S. Israel Lobby,” Jim W. Dean told Tasnim in an interview.

“They are not only delighting in killing the JCPOA but now trying to eliminate Iran’s counter-terrorism activity in the region,” he added.

Jim Dean is the managing editor of VeteransToday.com and a regular geopolitical commentator on various media outlets around the world. He and Sr. Editor Gordon Duff have begun their own bridge building campaign with Iranian university youth via Skype conferences. Jim comes from an old military family going back to the American Revolution.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ As you know, the U.S. government’s hostility toward Iran has recently entered a new stage. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has formed a dedicated group to coordinate and run the country’s policy towards Iran following President Donald Trump’s unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran. Pompeo announced the creation of an Iran Action Group (IAG) at a news conference, naming Brian Hook, the Department of State’s director of policy planning, as its head. What do you think about the group and its objectives and do you think that it would be able to reach its goals?

A: The new group is just for show, providing a smokescreen for the people behind Trump who are really running the Iran policy, such as Netanyahu and the U.S. Israel Lobby. They are not only delighting in killing the JCPOA but now trying to eliminate Iran’s counter-terrorism activity in the region.

The Iran Action Group will act as a front for a policy that has already been decided upon. Lost in all of the manufactured chaos is a big elephant in the living room.

The U.S. is treating Iran like “it” had broken the JCPOA, along the lines of N. Korea popping up with nuclear testing and firing off intercontinental missiles, to justify its current hostile actions, throwing everything it has at Iran via the escalating sanctions. But the problem there is that Iran has not broken the agreement. The U.S. has. So we literally are watching the geopolitical landscape turned upside down, the real aggressor playing the victim, like a bad dream.

And lastly, some of this U.S. behavior is pure punishment for Iran’s helping Syria, like it did with Iraq, in fighting off the U.S. coalition proxy terrorist attacks on both countries. This sets a dangerous precedent if the U.S. is allowed to get away with this charade, as the tactic will be used on others in the future.

■ The Trump administration recently threatened to cut Iranian oil exports to zero, saying that other countries must stop buying its oil from Nov. 4 or face financial consequences. Washington later softened its threat, saying that it would allow reduced oil flows of Iranian oil, in certain cases. Since oil is a strategic product and countries around the world always demand it, do you think that the U.S. is able to carry out this threat at all?

A: This is an overt act of war, unprecedented in peacetime when Iran presents no threat to the U.S. at all, but only refused to be subjugated by the U.S. But the oil embargo is a crazy move. Part of its goal is to create oil supply shortages which will drive up consumer energy prices worldwide so Trump’s oil friends can get richer. But the American nemesis, Russia, will get a major boost in its oil and gas revenues.

Struggling third world countries with so many people living on the edge would all be collateral damage when they don’t deserve having that done to them. Even the American consumer will effectively be paying a bonus to Trump’s energy buddies through higher energy prices.

Iran’s announced poison pill for the total oil sanctions is to close the Straits of Hormuz to all the other oil exporters in the Persian Gulf, sending oil up over \$200 a barrel like a rocket. That would destabilize the whole world economy with the high energy prices creating a ripple effect to drive up other products.

There is a method to this madness. Trump’s rich buddies will get even richer. We suspect the Saudis have already made him a partner.

■ Trump’s threat is part of his walking away from the Iran nuclear deal. He also plans to fully reinstate anti-Tehran sanctions from November 4. In the meantime, the EU has vowed to counter Trump’s renewed sanctions on Iran, including by means of a new law to shield European companies from punitive measures. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas recently said Europe should set up payment systems independent of the U.S. if it wants to save the JCPOA. What do you think about the EU’s role in reducing Washington’s pressures against Tehran and saving the deal?

A: We are really in a no man’s land here with an unpredictable future. Just this week the EU stated that it would sanction all of its corporations that followed the U.S. sanctions. Specifically how this would be done was not explained.

So we have to ask how could the EU financially punish its own business infrastructure and that be a good thing? It seems like a lose-lose play to me. Maybe the EU leadership thinks it would be a loyalty test for its business community. But we know historically that corporations are loyal only to their own interests. Benjamin Franklin once addressed this, “Merchants have no country”.

The U.S. economy is booming, the stock market has created fortunes in paper wealth, the kind that can be erased quickly in a major stock market decline which will happen when the balloon bursts and we see a worldwide recession triggered by these reckless sanctions.

The U.S. says these harsh sanctions are not intended for regime change in Iran, a lie of course, but to change its behavior, meaning that the U.S. should be able to topple the governments it wants around Iran to replace with U.S. puppets that would allow more advanced U.S. military bases to control the region via a “soft occupation”. We are living in very dangerous times.

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Deadly venoms may drive medical advances

Venomous plants and animals are incredibly common — 15 percent of Earth's biodiversity, according to the authors — occupying every ecological niche and habitat.

From worms to lizards and from arachnids to mammals, venom has proven to be a winning tool in the game of survival.

Venom is so effective that it actually evolves independently in a variety of species; but can we harness these toxins and use them to our advantage?

Until recently, harvesting venom and dissecting it on a molecular level was hard; many venomous animals are small, making it challenging to harvest. Also, venom is often a complicated cocktail of chemicals.

However, this is slowly changing as technology steadily improves, and its full potential is coming into focus.

Lead study author Mandë Holford, of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and Hunter College — both in New York City, NY — believes that toxic animals may hold clues to the treatment of a range of conditions, including diabetes, autoimmune diseases, and chronic pain.

Certain technological breakthroughs have helped develop better insight into venom. For instance, advances in omics — the identification and quantification of biological molecules that make up an organism — are providing deeper insight.

Scientists can now peer into a species' genome and draw a picture of the evolutionary changes that have unfolded over generations.

Holford continues, "New environments, the development of venom resistance in its prey, and other factors can cause a species to evolve in order to survive. These changes can produce novel compounds — some of which may prove extremely useful in drug development."

Currently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have approved just six drugs derived from venom. This, Holford and colleagues believe, is just the tip of the iceberg.

Because of the rich diversity of natural venoms and their high specificity, they could be useful templates for drug designers.

Discussed in the new paper are a few examples of where venom might prove useful. For instance, peptides derived from a venomous sea anemone could help treat autoimmune diseases by targeting specific ion channels on T cells.

Also, neurotoxins derived from the Conus magus — a species of sea snail — may provide effective treatments for chronic pain that do not cause addiction.

Another example is the deathstalker scorpion, which produces chlorotoxin; this bonds selectively to malignant cells, making it useful for signposting tumor cells before



"Knowing more about the evolutionary history of venomous species can help us make more targeted decisions about the potential use of venom compounds in treating illnesses."

surgery to ensure that all cancerous tissue is removed.

Chlorotoxin has also been studied as a potential vehicle for transporting anticancer drugs to their target.

Spider toxins, according to the report, might one day yield an ecofriendly way for farmers to rid crops of pests. Rather than the traditional, broad-spectrum insecticides that can be toxic to other animals and build up in watercourses, natural, protein-based pesticides are highly specific to their target species and biodegradable.

Venom is enjoying a resurgence in popularity, but using these toxins as medicine is nothing new. The first recorded example was relayed by historian Applan of Alexander more than 2,000 years ago.

According to him, after Mithridates received a sword wound to the leg, Scythian doctors saved his life by applying "a small amount of steppe viper venom," which stopped the bleeding.

As one author points out, "The ancient Scythian healers would not be surprised to learn that crystallized venom [...] is now a major export to emergency rooms around the world."

Venom still has many secrets left to be revealed, and technological advances will help us steadily unravel them. The burgeoning field of venomics is certainly one to watch.

(Source: medicalnewstoday.com)

ADHD may be caused by stress in infancy, says parenting expert Steve Biddulph

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may be brought on by experiencing stress in infancy, claims a leading parenting expert.

According to psychologist, parent educator and author of the best-selling Raising Boys, Steve Biddulph, new research suggests factors such as "stress at home and parents not meeting children's needs early in life" could play a role in causing ADHD.



Previously it was thought that the behavioral disorder - typically characterized by inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness - was caused by genetics and chemical imbalances in the brain.

But in the new, updated version of Raising Boys, Biddulph highlights new studies which suggest stress in infancy plays a role in the development of ADHD.

Around one in 20 boys in the UK are diagnosed with ADHD, most often when aged between six and 12 years old.

Girls do suffer from ADHD too, but the symptoms are often harder to spot - it's more common for girls with ADHD to be "daydreamers" rather than "trouble-makers," according to Patricia Quinn, MD, co-author of Understanding Girls with ADHD.

Symptoms tend to improve as children age, but some people continue to experience problems into adult life.

Biddulph says that some cases of ADHD could actually be called DDD - "Dad Deficit Disorder." The author has in the past been vocal about the importance he places on fathers being involved in their sons' lives and teaching them self-control.

(Source: independent.co.uk)

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Britain seeking to boost museum cooperation with Iran



Alistair Burt (L) shakes hands with Jebrael Nokandeh at the National Museum of Iran on September 1, 2018.

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A high-ranking British delegation visited the National Museum of Iran in Tehran on Saturday, seeking to step up bilateral contacts in museum spheres.

UK Minister of State for the Middle East at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Alistair Burt, and London ambassador to Tehran Rob Macaire and the National Museum of Iran's director Jebrael Nokandeh exchanged views on expanding cultural ties and holding joint exhibitions in the two countries, Mehr reported.

Burt touched upon the role of museums on developing close relations between the two nations, saying he was among those who had issued the license of releasing Cyrus Cylinder for its exhibition in Tehran.

Nokandeh, for his part, hailed an upsurge in the museum-related cooperation. He expressed hope that the UK government would provide special support for showcasing antique items in Iran.

Brazil museum fire: 'Incalculable' loss as 200-year-old Rio institution gutted

Brazil's oldest and most important historical and scientific museum has been consumed by fire, and much of its archive of 20m items is believed to have been destroyed.

The fire at Rio de Janeiro's 200-year-old National Museum began after it closed to the public on Sunday and raged into the night. There were no reports of injuries, but the loss to Brazilian science, history and culture was incalculable, two of its vice-directors said.

"It was the biggest natural history museum in Latin America. We have invaluable collections. Collections that are over 100 years old," Cristiana Serejo, one of the museum's vice directors, told the G1 news site.

Marina Silva, a former environment minister and candidate in October's presidential elections said the fire was like "a lobotomy of the Brazilian memory".

Luiz Duarte, another vice-director, told TV Globo: "It is an unbearable catastrophe. It is 200 years of this country's heritage. It is 200 years of memory. It is 200 years of science. It is 200 years of culture, of education." TV Globo also reported that some firefighters did not have enough water to battle the blaze.

It wasn't immediately clear how the fire began. The museum was part of Rio's Federal University but had fallen into disrepair in recent years. Its impressive collections included items brought to Brazil by Dom Pedro I — the Portuguese prince regent who declared the then-colony's independence from Portugal — Egyptian and Greco-Roman artefacts, "Luzia", a 12,000 year-old skeleton and the oldest in the Americas, fossils, dinosaurs, and a meteorite found in 1784. Some of the archive was stored in another building but much of the collection is believed to have been destroyed.

(Source: The Guardian)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Lakes of Ounianga

Located in northeast of Chad, in a hot and hyper-arid desert setting with less than 2mm rainfall per year, the Lakes of Ounianga comprises a total of 18 lakes, in two groups, displaying a variety of sizes, depths, colorations and chemical compositions.

The property, inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list, covers 62,808 ha and has a 4,869 ha buffer zone.

The Lakes of Ounianga ensemble is located in a basin which, less than 10,000 years ago, was occupied by a much larger lake and has a globally unique hydrological system, sustaining the largest permanent freshwater lakes system in the heart of a hyperarid environment.

The property also displays a range of striking aesthetic features, with varied coloration associated with the different



lakes and their vegetation, and the presence of dramatic natural desert landforms that all contribute to the exceptional natural beauty of the landscape of the property.

The shape and distribution of the lakes, combined with the effect of the wind moving the floating vegetation in the lakes, gives the impression of 'waves of water flowing in the desert'.

(Source: UNESCO)

Imam Mosque: Elegant, iconic and visually stunning

TOURISM d e s k With its perfect proportions and iconic blue-tiled mosaics, the Imam Mosque forms an elegant, visually stunning historical monument, which stands tall at the southern side of a massive square of the same name; the UNESCO-registered Imam Square of Isfahan in central Iran.

Visitors to the mosque are mainly overwhelmed with good views of the main dome with its glorious profusion of turquoise-shaded tiles.

Originally named Masjed Shah ("the Shah Mosque"), its construction began in 1611 during the rule of the Safavid King Shah Abbas the Great who reigned from 1588 to 1629. The mosque's topmost dome was completed in the last year of his sovereignty.

A very picturesque huge entrance portal welcomes people to the mosque. It is built to face the square though the mosque is oriented towards Mecca. A short corridor connects the square to the inner courtyard that is surrounded by four imposing iwans (porticos) with a pool dedicated to ritual ablutions nesting in the middle.

The walls of the courtyard feature sunken porches framed by seven-colored tiles of deep blue and yellow. Each iwan leads into a vaulted sanctuary covered with particularly fine floral motifs on a blue background.

Many believe each of the mosque's parts is a masterpiece that leaves a lasting impression. This palace of devotion owes its splendor mostly due to being covered with seven-color mosaic tiles and symmetrical calligraphic inscriptions.

On other side of the square stands the very delicate Sheikh



Imam Mosque boasts glorious profusion of turquoise-shaded tiles.

Restoring UNESCO-registered garden nears completion



HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Restoration work on the UNESCO-inscribed Dolat Abad Garden in the central city of Yazd will be completed within a month.

The renovation project commenced in early April, as part of efforts to renovate landscaping and to reinforce its octagonal pavilion which is surmounted by an imposing wind tower, said director of the World Heritage site Majid Oloumi, ISNA reported.

The property together with eight others across the country have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list under the title of "The Persian Garden."

The concept of the Persian Garden interweaves natural elements with manmade components to embody an idea of creating a paradise on Earth by the means of artistic, philosophical, figurative, and religious notions.



A painting by the French architect Pascal Coste, who visited Isfahan in c. 1840, depicts the main courtyard and two iwans of the Imam Mosque.

Lotfollah Mosque which was dedicated the ruler's father-in-law, Sheikh Lotfollah, a revered Lebanese scholar of Islam who was invited to oversee construction of the Shah Mosque.

Isfahan is Iran's top tourist destination for good reasons. Its profusion of tree-lined boulevards, Persian gardens and important Islamic buildings gives it a visual appeal unmatched by any other Iranian city. In addition, Isfahan's many artisans underpin its reputation as a living museum of traditional culture.

■ Under tourists' eyes

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the mosque have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

● "Beautiful mosque"

This mosque an architectural masterpiece. The entrance to the mosque is not direct, but through an offset vestibule, with the effect that the grant interior courtyard opens up all at once as you turn the corner. Grand in scale. (Peter K. from Sydney, Australia; Reviewed in July 2018)

● "A lesson in preservation"

At the end of the main square stands this big mosque, which is not only impressive because of its sheer size and incredible decorations, but also helps to get a good impression of the needs and challenges of always on-going restoration works. The craftsmanship continues and is amazing! (rob-ert_bos53 from Geneva, Switzerland; Reviewed June 2018)

● "Stunning mosque on Imam Square"

Initially, this mosque was closed as it was a public holiday. We could only see the outside entrance way, which itself was beautiful with ornate tiles and Quranic script. We came back later in the day and the mosque had been opened. We walked inside to find that the same detail and beauty existed throughout the mosque. The exquisite artwork on the walls

Iranian airline starts Tehran-Kazan direct flight



TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's ATA Airlines on Sunday launched the first direct flight connecting Tehran to Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan.

The flight is carried out two times a week on Sundays and Thursdays with a duration of about 3 hours and 20 minutes, IRNA reported.

"This is a historic event and a major accomplishment for us, which will create the prospect of attracting tourists to Tatarstan," IRNA quoted Sergei Ivanov, the head of the State Committee on Tourism of the Republic of Tatarstan, as saying on Saturday.

"We hope to see Russian and Iranian tourists would travel through this flight," the official said, adding the Islamic Republic of Iran has recently established close ties with Tatarstan with several delegations travel to this area of Russia.

Solid traffic growth, record load factor, for air travel

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced healthy global passenger demand for July with all regions reporting growth.

Total revenue passenger kilometers (RPKs) rose 6.2%, compared to the same month last year. While this was down from 8.1% year-over-year growth in June, it nevertheless marked a solid start to the peak passenger demand season. Monthly capacity (available seat kilometers or ASKs) increased by 5.5% and load factor rose 0.6 percentage point to a record high for July of 85.2%.

"The industry posted another month of solid traffic growth. And the record load factor shows that airlines are becoming even more efficient in terms of deploying capacity to meet demand. However, rising costs -- particularly fuel - will likely limit the stimulus we would expect from lower airfares. Therefore, we do expect to see a continued slowing of growth compared to 2017," said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's Director General and CEO.

■ International passenger markets

July international passenger demand rose 5.3% compared to July 2017, which was a deceleration compared to the 8.2% growth recorded in June. Total capacity climbed 4.7%, and load factor edged up half a percentage point to

85.0%. All regions reported growth, led by Asia-Pacific for the first time in three months.

Asia-Pacific airlines' July traffic rose 7.5% over the year-ago period, a slowdown compared to June growth of 9.6%. Capacity increased 6.0% and load factor rose 1.1 percentage points to 82.1%. Growth is being supported by a combination of robust regional economic growth and an increase in route options for travelers.

European carriers posted a 4.4% rise in traffic for July compared to a year ago, down from 7.1% annual growth in June. On a seasonally-adjusted basis, passenger volumes have been tracking sideways for the past three months, reflecting mixed developments on the economic front and possible traffic impacts related to air traffic control strikes across the region. Capacity rose 3.9%, and load factor climbed 0.5 percentage point to 89.1%, highest among the regions.

Middle East carriers had a 4.8% increase in demand for July, well down on the 11.2% growth recorded for June, although this mainly is attributable to volatility in the data a year ago, rather than any major new developments. The region has been negatively impacted by a number of policy measures over the past 18 months, including the ban on portable electronic devices and travel restrictions. July ca-

capacity climbed 6.5% compared to a year ago and load factor dropped 1.3 percentage points to 80.3%.

North American airlines' traffic climbed 4.1% compared to July a year ago. This was down from 6.0% growth in June, but still ahead of the 5-year average pace for carriers in the region as strong momentum in the U.S. economy is helping underpin a pick-up in international demand for airlines there. July capacity rose 2.8% with the result that load factor climbed 1.1 percentage points to 87.2%, second highest among the regions.

Latin American airlines experienced a 3.8% rise in traffic in July, the slowest growth among the regions and a decline from 5.6% year-over-year growth in June. Capacity rose 4.6% and load factor slid 0.6 percentage point to 84.2%. Signs of softening demand have come alongside disruption from the general strikes in Brazil.

African airlines' July traffic rose 6.8%, second highest among the regions. Although this represented a decline from 11.0% growth recorded in June, the seasonally-adjusted trend remains strong. Capacity rose 3.9%, and load factor jumped 2.1 percentage points to 76.0%. Higher oil and commodity prices are supporting economies in a number of countries.

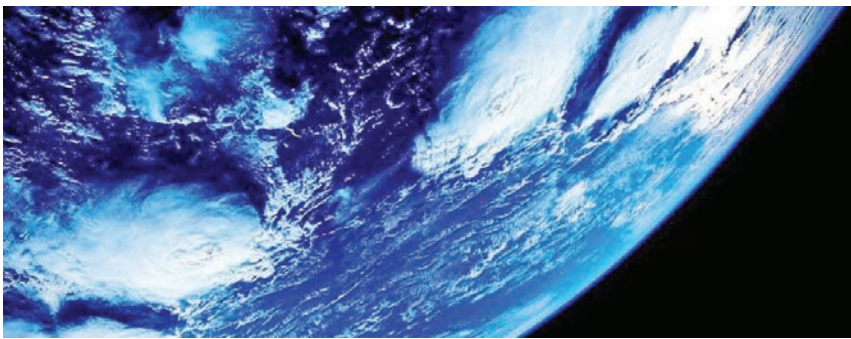
(Source: Travel Daily News)

Earth's oxygen increased in gradual steps rather than big bursts, new study suggests

A carbon cycle anomaly discovered in carbonate rocks of the Neoproterozoic Hüttenberg Formation of north-eastern Namibia follows a pattern similar to that found right after the Great Oxygenation Event, hinting at new evidence for how Earth's atmosphere became fully oxygenated.

By using the Hüttenberg Formation, which formed between a billion and half a billion years ago, to study the time between Earth's change from an anoxic environment (i.e. one lacking oxygen) to a more hospitable environment that heralded the animal kingdom, a team of researchers led by Dr. Huan Cui of the NASA Astrobiology Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison discovered a sustained, high level of carbon. This influx of carbon, coupled with changes in other elements, indicates how changing levels of oceanic oxygen may have lent a helping hand to early animal evolution.

The study, published in the journal *Precambrian Research*, paired new oxygen, sulfur, and strontium isotope data, with carbon isotope data published in 2009, obtained from drill core samples from the Hüttenberg Formation. Together, the data provides further evidence that Earth's oxygen increased in a stepwise fashion, as opposed to being constrained to two major events capping the Proterozoic (a geological epoch that lasted between 2.5



billion and 541 million years ago).

Rise of oxygen

The University of Maryland's Dr. Alan J. Kaufman, who is the second author of the study and the lead author of the 2009 carbon isotope study, says that the paired data "suggest that the rise of oxygen was oscillatory through this 50- to 75-million year interval

associated with the Hüttenberg Anomaly and the Neoproterozoic Oxidation Event or NOE at the end of the Proterozoic."

The anomaly shows how the carbon isotope ratios (13C/12C) experienced a sustained 12 to 14 parts per thousand increase in abundance for roughly 15 million years before returning to prior low levels.

As oxygen levels in the ocean increased, sulfides were converted to sulfates, which some microbes use in their metabolism to digest and recycle organic carbon on the seafloor.

As oxygen levels in the ocean increased, sulfides were converted to sulfates, which some microbes use in their metabolism to digest and recycle organic carbon on the seafloor. The isotopes of oxygen, carbon, and sulfur moved in tandem during the Hüttenberg Anomaly, convincing the scientists that what they were seeing wasn't just a coincidence.

Global carbon

Although it has long been accepted that high levels of atmospheric oxygen paved the way for animals to populate the Earth, global carbon and oxygen cycles fluctuated wildly during the Proterozoic, between the time when oxygen first accumulated in the atmosphere during the Great Oxygenation Event (GOE) around 2.4 billion years ago, and the time in which they stabilized near to modern levels once animals took the world stage following the NOE, around 500 million years ago.

During the time between those two events, pulses of unicellular life and variable levels of oxygen in the oceans are thought to have stimulated the evolution of more complex life. These ancient oxygen swings were crucial to the evolution of multicellular life at the Precambrian-Cambrian boundary (541 million years ago; the Cambrian is a geological period that marked the origin and diversification complex animal life on Earth).

(Source: space.com)

Scientists find out how lava happens -- melting the Earth



After spending the last few months watching bright red-orange lava fountain out of Kilauea's Lower East Rift zone and promptly turn into dark black basalt rock, you may be somewhat astonished to learn how recently it was that scientists were bitterly divided over the origin of basalt. But there was quite a bit of debate over hundreds of years.

Plenty of reputable men of science even believed, passionately, that basalt is deposited by water. And we're not talking hot water, either!

Unfortunately, the book heavily focuses on European male naturalists and scientists. I'm sure there were plenty of women who had opinions on the subject, and indigenous people on volcanic islands and such who could have advised the Europeans on the precise origin of this common black rock. It would have been nice to hear from scientists in other civilizations on the matter. And I could have done with a lot more focus on Iceland. But these drawbacks don't detract too much from the book. So don't let them stop you from picking it up and thoroughly enjoying it.

Tectonic setting

After a brief survey of volcano myths from around the world, Sigurdsson settles into ancient Greece and environs. He describes the tectonic setting for a fascinating chapter before getting down to what ancients believed caused all this burning and exploding: wind. Well, that and underground fires. Many ancient thinkers, it turns out, figured that a combo of winds and combustible materials in passages underground led to volcanic

eruptions. They definitely noticed the correlation between increasing earthquakes followed by mountains going boom. And their ideas on how and why these happened persisted for well over a thousand years in some scholarly circles.

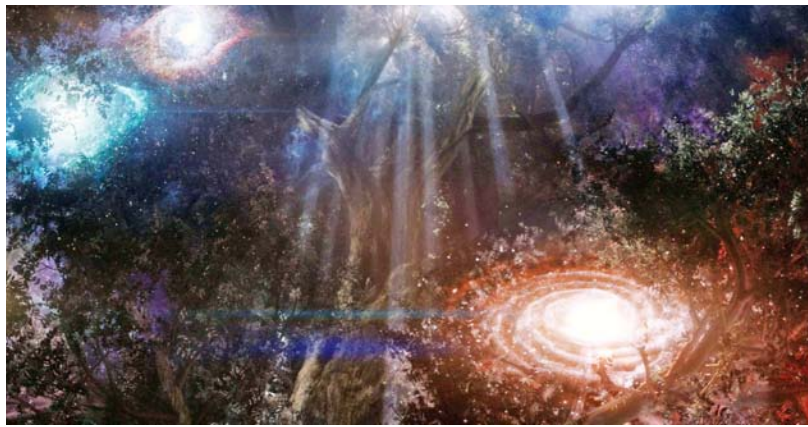
Then we come to the Christian era, when volcanoes could be easily explained away as "chimneys of Hell," with a brief stop by alchemy, in which the ancient Greek ideas of underground winds and fires are reprised. These ideas persist into the Renaissance, when folks in Italy get to watch a volcano being born (Monte Nuovo). Now we see people beginning to perform practical experiments, like melting volcanic rocks to see what would happen, and poking active lava flows with sticks to test viscosity. In addition to learned folks trying to figure out what makes volcanoes tick, we get to see some of the impacts of Etna and Vesuvius on Renaissance citizens, with plenty of very excellent contemporary illustrations of eruptions.

By the Enlightenment, people were starting to figure that ordinary combustibles like bitumen, coal, and sulfur weren't powerful enough to fuel volcanoes, so we get a very neat chapter on pre-radioactive theories such as Earth maybe being a cooling star.

Afterwards, we get to the real silliness: Neptunists. Yes, my friends, despite thousands of years of people witnessing molten rock emerge from volcanoes and cool into basalt, there was still a respectable group of scientists in the Age of Reason who decided basalt is sedimentary.

(Source: The NYT)

Team hunts mysterious 'dark force' to explain hidden realm of the cosmos



Scientists are about to launch an ambitious search for a "dark force" of nature which, if found, would open the door to a realm of the universe that lies hidden from view.

The hunt will seek evidence for a new fundamental force that forms a bridge between the ordinary matter of the world around us and the invisible "dark sector" that is said to make up the vast majority of the cosmos.

The chances of success may be slim, but should such a force be found it would rank among the most dramatic discoveries in the history of physics. The best theory of reality that physicists have explains only 4% of the observable universe. The rest is a mystery made up of dark matter, the strange material that lurks around galaxies, and the even more baffling dark energy, a substance called upon to explain the ever-accelerating expansion of the universe.

The Particles and forces

"At the moment, we don't know what more than 90% of the universe is made of," said Mauro Raggi, a researcher at the Sapienza University of Rome. "If we find this force it will completely change the paradigm we have now. It would open up a new world and help us to understand the particles and forces that compose the dark sector."

Physicists, to date, know of only four basic forces of nature. The electromagnetic force allows for vision and mobile phone calls, but also stops us falling through our chairs. Without the so-called strong force, the innards of atoms would fall apart. The weak force operates in radiation, and gravity – the most pervasive of nature's forces – keeps our feet rooted to the ground.

But there may be other forces that have gone unnoticed. These would shape the be-

havior of the so far unknown particles that constitute dark matter, and could potentially exert the most subtle effects on the forces we are more familiar with.

This month, Raggi and his colleagues will turn on an instrument at the National Institute of Nuclear Physics near Rome which is designed to hunt down a possible fifth force of nature. Known as Padme, for Positron Annihilation into Dark Matter Experiment, the machine will record what happens when a diamond wafer a tenth of a millimeter thick is blasted with a stream of antimatter particles called positrons.

Merging with electrons

When positrons slam into the diamond wafer, they immediately merge with electrons and vanish in a faint burst of energy. Normally, the energy released is in the form of two particles of light called photons. But if a fifth force exists in nature, something different will happen.

Instead of producing two visible photons, the collisions will occasionally release only one, alongside a so-called "dark photon". This curious, hypothetical particle is the dark sector's equivalent of a particle of light. It carries the equivalent of a dark electromagnetic force.

Unlike normal particles of light, any dark photons produced in Padme will be invisible to the instrument's detector. But by comparing the energy and direction of the positrons fired in, with whatever comes out, scientists can tell if an invisible particle has been created and work out its mass. Though normal photons are massless, dark photons are not, and Padme will search for those up to 50 times heavier than an electron.

(Source: The Guardian)

Rutgers researchers identify protein that may have existed when life began

How did life arise on Earth? Rutgers researchers have found among the first and perhaps only hard evidence that simple protein catalysts - essential for cells, the building blocks of life, to function - may have existed when life began.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the chemist Günter Wächtershäuser postulated that life began on iron- and sulfur-containing rocks in the ocean. Wächtershäuser and others predicted that short peptides would have bound metals and served as catalysts of life-producing chemistry, according to study co-author Vikas Nanda, an associate professor at Rutgers' Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

Human DNA consists of genes that code for proteins that are a few hundred to a few thousand amino acids long. These complex proteins - needed to make all living-things function properly - are the result of billions of years of evolution. When life began, proteins were likely much simpler, perhaps just 10 to 20 amino acids long. With computer modeling, Rutgers scientists have been exploring what early peptides may have looked like and their possible chemical functions, according to Nanda.

Scientists use computers

The scientists used computers to model a short, 12-amino acid protein and tested it in the laboratory. This peptide has several impressive and important features. It contains only two types of amino acids (rather than the estimated 20 amino acids

that synthesize millions of different proteins needed for specific body functions), it is very short and it could have emerged spontaneously on the early Earth in the right conditions. The metal cluster at the core of this peptide resembles the structure and chemistry of iron-sulfur minerals that were abundant in early Earth oceans. The peptide can also charge and discharge electrons repeatedly without falling apart, according to Nanda, a resident faculty member at the Center for Advanced Technology and Medicine.

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The metal cluster

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"Modern proteins called ferredoxins do this, shuttling electrons around the cell to promote metabolism," said senior author Professor Paul G. Falkowski, who leads Rutgers' Environmental Biophysics and Molecular Ecology Laboratory. "A primordial peptide like the one we studied may have served a similar function in the origins of life."

Falkowski is the principal investigator for a NASA-funded ENIGMA project led by Rutgers scientists that aims to understand how protein catalysts evolved at the start of life. Nanda leads one team that will characterize the full potential of the primordial peptide and continue to develop other molecules that may have played key roles in the origins of life.

With computers, Rutgers scientists have smashed and dissected nearly 10,000 proteins and pinpointed four "Legos of life" - core chemical structures that can be stacked to form the innumerable proteins inside all organisms.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Researchers suggest that a Dyson sphere could potentially be made from a material

Scientists in the field of SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) have carried out a number of searches for a Dyson sphere -- a hypothetical megastructure that completely encompasses a star and, which could be constructed using material harvested from dismantled planets -- without uncovering any compelling evidence.

Now, in a paper published in *The Astrophysical Journal*, researchers from Uppsala University, Sweden, and Heidelberg University, Germany, have proposed a new way to look for Dyson spheres that may have some advantages over previous attempts.

So far, these efforts have focused on finding signs of excess infrared light, *Astrobit*es reports. This is because the spherical structure would likely block out most of the visible light from the star.

It is estimated that a Dyson sphere would be heated to temperatures between 50 to 1,000 Kelvin (-370 to 1300 degrees Fahrenheit), generating infrared light, which scientists think they might be able to detect the signature of, (although this has not yet been achieved).

The new paper, however, suggests that a Dyson sphere could potentially be made from a material that hasn't been considered in previous searches, which would be capable of dimming the star's light equally across all wavelengths.

This could hamper the search because previous efforts have tended to look for Dyson spheres using an analysis method known as spectrophotometry which looks at the light properties of stars. If the structure was made of a material like the one proposed in the new study, the observations would show that the star is further away than it is.

(Source: Newsweek)

Are vulnerable lions eating endangered zebras?

Are Laikipia's recovering lions turning to endangered Grevy's zebras (*Equus grevyi*) for their next meal?

That's what a team of researchers led by WCS and WWF set out to discover -- whether the comeback of a top predator -- in this case lions in Laikipia County, Kenya -- were recovering at the expense of Grevy's zebras, which number only around 2,680 individuals with half of those living in Likipia.

In recent years, lion numbers have slowly recovered in this region as livestock ranching -- which commonly practiced shooting or poisoning lions -- has given way to wildlife tourism. Lions (*Panthera leo*) are classified as Threatened by IUCN.

Publishing their results in the journal *PLOS ONE*, the team used satellite telemetry to track the movements of both lions and zebras.

The team found that lions preyed on both Grevy's and plains zebras (*Equus quagga*) far less than expected. Their data showed that the population of Grevy's zebra populations may in fact be stabilizing with recruitment into the population tripling since 2004.

The researchers did conclude that competitive displacement by livestock and interference competition for grass from plains zebras, which are 22 times more abundant than Grevy's, are most likely the predominant threat to Grevy's zebras' recovery. (Source: Science Daily)

Machine learning technology could lead to more accurate earthquake predictions

Researchers have found a way to predict where aftershocks will strike after an intense earthquake through an artificial intelligence machine.

The study analyzed more than 131,000 mainshock and aftershock earthquakes including the 9.1-magnitude earthquake in Japan and other major earthquakes in history. By using data on past earthquakes, researchers harnessed a better predicting method which made use of a learning machine.

The team trained a neural network to understand earthquakes more and identify a pattern. The machine could also immensely aid in finding out new methods to assess seismic risk. Through the study, the researchers surpassed the standard method of predicting the next aftershock's location.

According to Phoebe DeVries, a seismologist at Harvard University and a part of the team of researchers who presented their findings in the journal *Nature* on Aug. 29, they have just scratched the surface of what the device can contribute for aftershock forecasting.

The "application of machine learning to high-quality earthquake datasets is a big step beyond what has been done in the past," said Professor Mark Stirling, who serves as the chair of earthquake science at the University of Otago.



"With evolving methods like this, we stand to gain a better understanding of how this method can contribute to the ensemble of existing earthquake forecasting methods," Stirling added.

Aftershocks can be similarly damaging as the main earthquake. For example, New Zealand was hit by a magnitude 7.1 earthquake in 2010. The earthquake did not kill anyone; however, the 6.3-magnitude earthquake, which hit 5 months after the initial earthquake, killed 185 people.

Currently, seismologists can predict how intense the aftershock can be; however, they cannot figure out where it will happen. This is calculated by using a method that finds out how earthquakes change the stress in rocks.

Following this, seismologists assess if it would result in an aftershock. Although this method can explain the patterns of aftershocks for intense earthquakes, it is not foolproof.

The scientists tested their findings on 30,000 mainshock and aftershock events where the neural-network forecast managed to predict the locations of the aftershock more accurately than the past method.

Additionally, the network also found out the physical changes that happened in the ground after the first earthquake. Though the study is a fresh way to look at aftershocks, it would not be the final study about the mainshock and aftershock relationship.

(Source: Tech Times)

Ebtekar calls for improving food, water consumption patterns

W O M E N d e s k **TEHRAN** — The pattern of food and water consumption is wrong among Iranian families and it needs to be improved, Masoumeh Ebtekar, the vice president for women's and family affairs, said here on Monday.

The improve of food and water consumption in line with resistance economy will certainly lead to a decrease in social vulnerabilities, Donyaye Eqtasad Persian language daily quoted Ebtekar as saying.

The presidential department for women's and family affairs enjoys a good relationship with the Ministry of Energy in order to improve the consumption pattern, especially regarding water, she stated, adding more than one third of food supplies and 28 billion cubic meters of water is wasted in Iran due to using bad consumption patterns.

The VP further emphasized women's vital role in implementing the Resistant Economy adding the workgroup for modifying the consumption patterns has started its work about one year ago.

All workgroups related to the women and family affairs department are bound to observer gender equality Ebtekar noted adding women enjoy a great share in implementing the resistant economy.

The department pays special attention to families because a healthy family has a vital role in decreasing social and economic vulnerabilities, she concluded.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Lemon zucchini bars

“This snack cake is a good use for that bumper zucchini crop!”
■ **Ingredients:**



1 1/4 cups white sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
3 eggs
2 teaspoons lemon zest
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1 3/4 cups grated zucchini
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped walnuts
1/3 cup confectioners' sugar for decoration
■ **Directions:**
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Grease a 9x13-inch baking pan.

In a large bowl, combine sugar, oil, eggs, lemon rind, and lemon juice; mix well. Stir in shredded zucchini.

In another bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Gradually add this mixture to the zucchini mixture. Stir until thoroughly combined; mix in the walnuts.

Pour batter into prepared pan and bake until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean, 35 to 45 minutes. Cool. Sprinkle cake with sifted confectioners' sugar and cut into bars.

Sprinkle top with sifted confectioners' sugar and cut into bars.

LEARN ENGLISH

Volleyball

A: It's a beautiful day here in New Zealand at the Men's Volleyball world championship. My name is Rick Fields and I'm joined by the man with the plan, Bob Copeland.
B: Thank you, Rick. We've got a very exciting **encounter** ahead of us today as two **powerhouse** teams, Brazil and China, face off against each other and try to **qualify** for the next round. Without a doubt, both teams are **in top shape** and this will prove to be a competitive match.

A: The ref signals the start of the game and here we go. Ribeiro **serves** and China quickly receives the ball. Chen **bumps** it to the setter, and... a very nice **set** by Chen!

B: Xu **spikes** it! Wow, what a great hit! The Brazilian blockers **anticipated** the play and tried to block him but he managed to get the ball in! Great play.

A: It's China's service now. What a superb **jump serve** by Li, oh, and we have a **let serve**. The ball was coming in fast and almost made it over the net.

B: Brazil calls for a **time out** and we'll be right back, after a short commercial break.

■ **Key vocabulary**
encounter: meet for a game or battle
ahead of (someone): in the future
powerhouse: a highly energetic, strong team
qualify: to reach the later stages of a selection process or contest by competing successfully in earlier rounds
in top shape: in their best condition
serve: hits the ball to start a set of the game
bump: to pass (a volleyball) by redirecting it with the forearms
set: the action of putting ball in the air so as to be driven to opponents' court
spike: strongly hit the ball to opponents' court using the palm of the hand
anticipate: to foresee and act in advance of
jump serve: a serve with the ball firstly thrown overhead and then the player jumping to hit it
let serve: the ball touches the net in a serve but still crosses into the opponents' court
time out: a pause during a game
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
side out: when the team that served the ball loses the rally, causing the other team to serve the next point
whiff: a mishit when a player attempts to hit (or spike) the ball with the open hand and nearly misses the ball
dig: the ability to prevent the ball from touching one's court after a spike or attack, particularly
coin toss: the practice of throwing a coin in the air to resolve a dispute between two parties

Cooperative company for women vendors to be formed

W O M E N d e s k **TEHRAN** — A cooperative company is to be formed in order to organize activities of female vendors, Seyed Hamid Kalantari, deputy minister of cooperatives, labor and social welfare, said here on Sunday.

Unfortunately, many women do not gain the opportunity to take advantage of their field of education for finding a job, Mehr quoted Kalantari as saying.

Moreover, Kalantari added, women have to spend hours on raising children and dealing with home affairs, therefore, working in a cooperative company provides them the opportunity to show more successful presence both at home and in society.

Women cooperative companies can play role in international affairs, stressed Kalantari adding there exist many women who are active in handicraft section and organizing their activities in a cooperative company leads them to present their products in international trade fairs.

The official further called for women's activities in information technology, trade in virtual world, floriculture at home, making and selling home-made foods to be organized in the form of cooperative companies.

Currently, 2,480 women's cooperative companies are active in different provinces and a number of 29,870 women are active in these cooperative companies.



This American woman swapped Tulsa for Tehran

Katayoun “Kat” Khosrowyar, 30, was born and raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She has also lived in Houston and has a master's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. She describes herself as a “Midwest girl.”

Since 2005, she has been living in Iran, the birthplace of her grandparents. In Iran, she's the head coach of the country's U19 women's national soccer team. The following text is an edited version of a recent email exchange between USA TODAY and Khosrowyar:

■ **What do you do you move to Iran?**
Khosrowyar: I'm here to grow women's soccer and to learn about my Iranian culture and traditions. Iran is an extremely vibrant place, and I want to make a difference here. It's very different (than) Oklahoma. Everything is open 24/7, traffic is continuous throughout the day, people are (varied) and open to new information and customs.

The hospitality is unbelievable in Iran, and I think this is what caught my attention in the first place. Iranians are extremely friendly and giving and want to invite you home for lunch/dinner within two minutes of meeting them. Tehran is a huge city (12 million people) and Tulsa was just a couple hundred thousand, and adapting to the Tehran lifestyle was difficult at the beginning. Now I consider myself a Tehran guide for visitors.

■ **What's your favorite thing about living there?**

Khosrowyar: I love how every day is different from the previous day. The fashion is unique, not like in other Middle Eastern countries. Extremely colorful and modern. It's so easy to go to Tajrish Square (in north Tehran) to the fabric market and to (order) as many montos (long overcoat) and dresses I want and the seamstress will make and design them within two hours. I know the guy who owns the fruit shop next to my house and he delivers fresh fruit without me even asking every Thursday. One of my favorite things to do every day is to walk to the barbari bread (an Iranian flatbread) shop and have my breakfast with the locals. Here, I am able to work in different fields (I am busy with a startup and coaching the national under-19 soccer team and now working on an athletic leisurewear brand) and still have time to spend with my family and friends. I can bring



all my interests to live more simply in Iran.

I love that women are extremely strong-willed here, and as I am writing this to you I am at a conference where one of the (female) speakers is a Harvard graduate who is also an adviser to Iran's vice president of science and technology.

■ **What do you do for fun?**

Khosrowyar: One of my main entertainments in Tehran is going out to restaurants and coffee shops, so I am always on the lookout for somewhere new. Over the last 10 years, all types of restaurants have opened in Tehran that cater to a large Iranian diaspora who have come back to Iran from all over the world. On the weekend, my friends and family gather in a city outside of Tehran where there is a pool, we go to the mountain to pick Damavand for fresh fruit, to the city of Shemshak for kebabs and continuous servings of black tea while playing backgammon outside during the summer, and in the winter, skiing. Family gatherings are very important for Iranians, and this is something that I felt like I was missing back in Oklahoma. My favorite Iranian dish is the Azeri version of Ghormeh sabzi (a herb stew popular in Iran). My father's side of the family is from Tabriz (in Iran's northeast), and they are known for having the best version of Iranian dishes.

■ **What do you miss about living in the U.S.?**

Khosrowyar: The ease of how work is done and of course Chick-fil-A. Everything has a certain procedure in the U.S., whereas in Iran

the procedures change daily. I miss the big roads and pickup trucks (Ford!) and definitely Whole Foods! I also miss the American work ethic and standards.

■ **Do you know any other Americans who live in Iran?**

Khosrowyar: I don't know of full Americans (those without dual Iran-U.S. nationality) living here, but I know they exist and go to college here. I mainly know Iranian-Americans, Canadians and Europeans who regularly come and go to and from Iran.

■ **What are some of the challenges of living and working in Iran?**

Khosrowyar: Besides food, the lifestyle in Tehran is quite expensive. Apartments and cars are more expensive than in some European cities, and since everything is imported, the tax on the products can be three times more. Laws and regulations change often, and you need to always be aware of the changes. And most importantly in this day and age, the Internet is slow, which in some cases it is good because you can log out and just be at ease for a few days before you want to reconnect to the world again.

■ **Have sports acted as a diplomatic bridge between Iran and the U.S. at all?**

Khosrowyar: Not yet for soccer, but for wrestling it surely has because Americans have come to Iran to compete, and a lot of Iranian fans came to support the Americans! (They visited Iran in February last year for the Freestyle World Cup.) It was all over the

news, and everyone wanted the wrestlers' signatures and wanted to show them what Iranian hospitality is like.

■ **What is the women's soccer culture in Iran like?**

Khosrowyar: Women's indoor soccer (futsal) has created a strong atmosphere for women to get involved in sports more especially as they (Iran) are back-to-back Asian champions in this. Soccer, on the other hand, has taken some time to get to the same level because building the base and infrastructure has been challenging. Although women would prefer to play soccer rather than futsal, futsal has more fields, sponsors and leagues than soccer.

■ **How big is the soccer in Iran compared with other Middle East countries?**

Khosrowyar: Huge! To be honest, the Iranian population gets very emotional when their teams win/lose. Either we block the streets and highways and celebrate standing on our cars blasting Iranian music, or we complain for an entire week about how bad the team played/how unlucky they were/how bad the refs were.

■ **How does the hijab affect the women's game, and what are the specific rules around it? Has it been a disadvantage when playing competitors around the world?**

Khosrowyar: If the material would change to a proper sports material, it would be much better, rather than the 100% polyester we currently use. In 2011, we were disqualified from the second round of Olympic qualifications because of the hijab. However, in 2013 that ruling was overturned, and we were allowed to play again. I hope one day Nike will have Iranian women who have won Olympic medals and Asian game medals take part in an ad campaign for the hijab, but politics has played a huge role in not having strong Iranian women athletes take part. In any case, we are still thriving and determined to win, no matter what we are wearing.

■ **Women in Iran were recently allowed to watch a men's soccer game at a stadium in Tehran during the World Cup. That has never happened before. Are the restrictions on women in Iran loosening over time?**

Khosrowyar: Yes! However, this is not a simple subject. In one day, one person can't change the rules. It has been a long process. We are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. (Source: WLTX.com)

ENGLISH IN USE

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ع

Iran dispatches aircrafts to contain wildfire in Hour al-Azim

National Disaster Management Organization of Iran have sent aircrafts to extinguish the wildfire hitting Iraqi part of Hour al-Azim wetland, director general of disaster management department of Khuzestan province has said. The smoke rising from the raging fire in Hour al-Azim wetland is threatening people's health in southern cities of southwestern province of Khuzestan, ISNA quoted Kiamars Hajizadeh as saying.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-cele, -coel, -coele”

■ **Meaning:** tumor or swelling
■ **For example:** A **cystocele** is mild when the bladder droops only a short way into the vagina.

PHRASAL VERB

Kill something off

■ **Meaning:** to cause the death of a lot of living things
■ **For example:** Pollution is rapidly killing off plant life.

IDIOM

Caught unawares

■ **Explanation:** to be surprised and unprepared for what happens
■ **For example:** The security guard moved so silently that the thief was caught unawares.

We seek no covert operation in Iran, plan to build ties

Alistair Burt urges respect for JCPOA

➡ “We will make our own decision,” he said. However, he added, finding a technical mechanism to allow the continuation of banking transactions with Iran would not be an easy task and it would take time.

The British diplomat further maintained that the EU and the U.S. will remain “good friends”, but the UK is committed to maintaining a relationship with Iran. About a belief among Iranians that Britain is seeking to stir up unrest in Iran, especially through media outlets such as the BBC Persian, Burt said the UK is not seeking to do “covert operation” in Iran. Instead, Burt said he is being given the mission by the prime minister and foreign secretary to “build relationship” with Iran. The following is the text of Tehran Times’ interview with Burt:

■ Would you please tell us that what issues were raised during your talks with Iranian officials in Tehran?

This is my third visit to Tehran in round about a year. The fact that I’ve been here three times means that the relationships I’m building gets stronger each time. I have lost count of the number of meetings I had with Deputy Foreign Minister Araghchi because we meet here, we meet in Europe, and we speak on the phone. Dr. Kharrazi, whom I met again this morning, I met him before. And I met, for the first time, the chairman of foreign relations committee. So the familiarity that we gain with each other is important to the United Kingdom and my approaches on behalf of the prime minister and foreign secretary are much about building relationship and being able to have through that relationship and the ability to look at those things that we share in common which are more than what people would think sometimes. And also provide the right platform for what we do disagree to be able to talk it through. And this is a region that matters a great deal to the United Kingdom, and Iran matters to United Kingdom. In terms of the questions that they covered, as you would imagine, they covered JCPOA and United Kingdom’s position and relations to that, bilateral relationships which covers issues like consular matters, visas and issues such as that a look around in the region and what’s happening in terms of events in Syria, Yemen, the Middle East peace process. I was able to see a little bit of culture when I met the director of the national museum because the cultural relationship between the United Kingdom and Iran is very good. At a very sensitive time in our relationship indeed, when we did not have diplomatic relations, I was responsible for signing the order to release the Cyrus Cylinder for the exhibition here. Because for me, personally, it was very important to our cultural relations continued even at a difficult time between nations. So the questions on the discussions and international issues came up; these were the main topics of conversations as we went round the discussions.

■ Any special achievements? How successful do you assess your visit?



© Tehran Times / Mohammad Khodabakhshi

I don’t think you build a relationship on a series of outputs. The fact that I count my contacts as friends, those who I would meet in street anywhere and exchange word with. I think it is extremely important the fact that we understand each other. I think trust is important. And we will say things about which we disagree. That’s inevitable. But that we say those things with sincerity, and the position is accepted as not being hostile but in explanation of position, I think is important. Now if you measure success in terms of building relationships, then those are positive outcomes and achievements from the conversations we have here, I go away with a clear sense of what is very much on the mind of the government and I hope my interlocutors have a clear sense of the responses of the United Kingdom. And we have all channels open as we look at a region and look forward to what we can do to deescalate tensions in the region and build on things that we can work on together.

■ What is the approach of London toward the JCPOA and President Trump’s withdrawal from the agreement?

We made very clear both before the American announcement and after, that we regarded the JCPOA as a commitment to honor. We recognized that Iran has met the compliance conditions in relation to its nuclear program. We strongly support the work of the IAEA. We regarded as significant that Iran has met its obligations; that’s fundamental to relationships built around it. We are doing all we can in the European Union to make sure we can provide the mechanisms by which our trade can continue. This is not easy. We know that there is frustration. It is not an easy time for the economy in Iran, we understand this. There are other issues going on, there are reforms that are needed in banking. The decision of the United States doesn’t make it easier. We are very determined in the European Union to find mechanisms and at the same time we are still encouraging our

businesses to be involved. They have difficult commercial decisions to make; I understand that but our determination remains as it was when we signed JCPOA. This matters and when you give support to something, then you should stick to it.

■ What are the economic, political and security importance of the JCPOA for the UK and EU?

It is very important. We are all aware that this was not an agreement signed in haste as a whim; it took years of negotiation. There were difficult calculations on both sides but nuclear proliferation is fundamental to the security of the world. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has been a success at a time when the world is looking for international norms to cling on to, like the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons which of course must mean a great deal to Iran having suffered from that during the Iran-Iraq war. So the Non-Proliferation Treaty is important. Making sure that nations abide by it, to have access to peaceful use of nuclear energy but do not do anything else, is really important. So for us the signing of this treaty was very important and I know that for my EU colleagues as well. The meetings we had since the American decision and recently in Vienna with Foreign Minister Zarif and Deputy Foreign Minister Araghchi where we recommitted our political determination to keep things going. So it is of great importance to us both in economic and security terms.

■ To what extent is the UK ready to pay for the costs of keeping the JCPOA alive despite the U.S. pressure?

On this issue the UK as the U.S. ally pays the costs of the disagreement. It is very clear that the U.S. would like all to follow their lead and abandon the JCPOA and we are pressed to do so. It is not our view so we are very clear that we will make our own decision and we are very determined to do so. We are working on the economic side of it. We are working to find a technical mechanism that will allow the banking system to continue. This is not an easy process. It does take time. It cannot be achieved very quickly. We are working very honestly on that. We have realized that there is cost in our relationship but we are prepared to pay the cost because it is the independence of foreign policy matter.

■ Why do you think that this process is not easy?

I am not a technical expert to talk about this. They are trying to put together a banking mechanism in Europe. And remember that the world banking system is interconnected, and the reach of American financial institutions is very long, and people have mutual obligations trying to find a path through those that secures those banking arrangements to make sure that they can be fulfilled in relation to European, and Iranian connections outside the reach of any U.S. sanctions is not technically easy.

■ Does the UK exit from the EU affect the UK relations with the U.S.?

Not really. There is a difference of opinion and difference of policies between the United Kingdom and the EU and the United States. It is not the end of relationship between the EU, the UK and the United States. It must not be considered as a possibility of that. We disagree with our partners on important issues. The United States is still a great partner of the United Kingdom in a whole variety of ways. But when we think something is wrong, say the example of United States’ moving of its embassy to Jerusalem. At a

time when there is not a conclusion to the Middle East peace process, we thought that it was wrong. We are prepared to say so. But the EU and the United States will remain good friends. But this is not a zero sum game. Remaining in a close relationship with the United States is not at the expense of the relationship we wished to have with Iran. And we will work on that. That relationship is dependent on the whole series of other things. So, do not confuse the two. We can maintain relationships with the United States and relationship with Iran. And that is what we will continue to do.

■ How do you see the future of the JCPOA and relations between Iran and the EU, especially with the UK?

Firstly, my sense is that there is a determination all around to work to keep the JCPOA in place. I think it is understood here as in London how important it is. It is under pressures and restraints; we know that.

■ Iranians are doubtful of the will of the EU to keep the JCPOA alive. Given all these obstacles that are on the way, how feasible is it to keep it alive? And, how do you see the future of the agreement?

I would suggest your readers, if they doubt the sincerity of the EU. We had



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weeks to walk away. We could simply have accepted the Americans’ leaving the agreement and it would have no longer mattered. We could have said there and then, well we are very sorry there we are. We did not, we have had time over the last few weeks. We could have said, well we worked very hard, we are not going to continue. But we have not. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity and the determination of the EU to fulfill as China and Russia. But it remains fundamental. We must all do our best to fulfill the provisions. That includes compliance with the nuclear arrangements as certified by the IAEA. But there is no reason to doubt the sincerity and the determination of the EU to continue with this. I see no evidence; I see a lot of hard work by my colleagues trying to find the mechanism that will assist in terms of the economies. I do not see any lack of will. I do not think that will be detected by any of your readers.

■ Germany and France have announced that they are going to establish a new financial mechanism to deal with Iran. Does the UK support it too?

We are working collectively to find mechanisms to support our businesses. Yes.

■ How do you see the future of the relations between Iran and the UK? In which way do you think it can be much better than now?

Good, remember it is not that long ago I could not have been sitting here to have this interview as you know. It has been within my time as a foreign minister that we have been up and down and back up again. So it is good that I am here. I like my conversations here. I like an opportunity to discuss with a state with a country that has such an extraordinary history, three thousand years of history and influence in the region. How it sees the region and how that history is used in contemporary sense, bearing in mind the nature of the government here and the nature of the government in state roundabout. I have colleagues in the parliament who have been here regularly. The Anglo-Iranian business and corporation, we have the cultural relationship. And, you know, we have a first rate ambassadorial team and colleagues who work right across the board in the things that we can do together.

These are all fundamental of relationship.

So the short answer to your question is that “how do I see the relationship”: good. If we could not talk about things we do not see the same way, well that would be illustration of poor relationship. It is not illustration of poor relationship to have disagreement. It is the illustration of poor relationship if you cannot talk about them. And we can. But we should not magnify those, we should look at those areas of conflict in the region and say what we can all do to try to deescalate the conflict and the risks that we share together.

■ As you know the relations between Iran and the UK has had ups and downs and this relationship has been suffering from historical distrust. In recent years, many believe that the UK tries secretly to affect Iranian internal affairs in different ways like supporting unrest in Iran by media outlets like the BBC Persian to weaken Iranian establishment and pave the way for regime change. What do you think of this? Is there a program in London to boost trust between London and Tehran?

Well, firstly, let me give a short answer to the allegations that are made and be very clear. We do not do what was alleged in your question. We have no plans to do so and we have no covert operation to

to friends to support that in Yemen. It’s essential that conflict comes to an end as quickly as possible. We strongly support the efforts of the UN special envoy, Martin Griffiths, and again, everyone knows the conflict has been deeply distressing for the people of Yemen, and we must do all we can to end the conflict. All of us with influence on different parties there should seek to do so. Middle East peace process is fundamental to the United Kingdom. Of course, we have a long engagement with Israel and the Palestinians, as is well known. So it matters to us fundamentally that there is a just settlement to the issues between them. We support the two-state solution. The issue of Jerusalem is for negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel. We do not accept the United States position that is somehow off the table. We will continue our support to the Palestinian people through bilateral programs. But we don’t regard the Middle East peace process as something that has been going on a long time and can go on forever; it’s essential to us that it comes to an early conclusion, and we will work really hard for that.

Now in each of these areas, we join with the United States in a broad determination that these areas should be secure and

conflict should end. We may have some differences in position, but essentially we see that the same. But we don’t see that our partners in Iran are fundamentally in a different place. We all want to see a resolution of the conflict, and an opportunity where extremism and terrorism does not flourish, as it threatens us all. And we want to work together. And we are very keen to see when that can be done.

■ You talked about Yemen, but I know that the UK government continues to sell weapons to the Saudi regime. There is a difference between the statements of the UK regarding Yemen and the human rights issues and the European country’s behavior. And what is the general approach of London toward the developments in Bahrain and the democratic demands of its people?

Bahrain has been in the process of reform for many years and prior to the events of 2011; since 2011, we have worked with the government of Bahrain on this reform program with providing technical assistance; we believe it is important how that reform program goes on; it is important that the process goes without violence being directed against the Bahraini government and against the Bahraini people; and we will continue to work with Bahrain as a good partner and strong partner of the United Kingdom; and we want the reform program will continue to make sure that Bahrain’s government works with all its people who count on their identity strongly as Bahraini rather than anything else; we will continue to support that.

■ Is there anything else that you like to add at the end of this interview?

No. I think you asked a good question at the beginning that gave me the opportunity to express my thanks to our interlocutors here in the government; they have been very generous as I see a lot you minister in different places and I appreciate that and that’s good and I was also able to make references to the other meetings that I had here; so I am going to see the programs in Iran to talk about the works done here for the Afghans which again is not easy for your government. So you gave me good opportunity to answer your questions, thanks you very much.

Second Announcement



Permit No. 1397.2556

N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 31-32-95304-44-001

National Iranian South Oilfields Company(NISOC)intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity.
01	COMPLETELY NEW “RUSTON” GAS TURBINE TYPE: TB 5000 INCLUDING SPARE PARTS, PACKING, LOADING, TRANSPORTATION AND INSTALLATION ON THE PROJECT SITE PRESONNEL TRAINING AND SITE VISIT ARE REQUIRED	2

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their Intention to participate letter via fax to the following number not later than 14 days after the second announcement. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of Euro 83,471 or Rls 4,300,000,000 in favor of NISOC Kindly note that NISOC will not make any advance payment to the winner of the tender.

Iranian vendors shall submit their resume according to Quality

Assessment Forms available at www.nisoc.ir

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg NO 104, Material procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site) Ahvaz, Iran

Tel. No.: +98-61 -34123455 fax NO.: +98-61 -34457437

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روزنامه: تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۷/۶/۱۰ نوبت دوم: ۹۷/۶/۱۳

➡ I believe Europe is using the Iran issue to discredit Trump and increase its own bargaining power in matters more important for Europe. Iran is becoming a tool in Europe’s hands in confrontation with Trump.

■ Previously, in 1996, without the Europe support, America put sanction on Cuba, and Europe did not accept these sanctions. Nowadays Is Europe still able to resist U.S. sanctions against Iran?

A: Iran issue is more complicated than Cuba because it is linked to other Middle East -related issues. Europe has very little economic relations with Cuba. Moreover,

America was not so keen in getting European cooperation regarding Cuba than it has been via a vis Iran. The main issue is that Europe does not want to endanger its economic interests in America for Iran’s sake.

■ In Europe, economic companies have the right to choose and freedom, and the EU also does not want to restrict this freedom. Does the EU can push the companies to work with Iran? How the EU can force the companies to cooperate with Iran?

A: European countries can encourage their companies to invest in some countries, but they cannot force them. More-

over, given the current conditions, European governments are not themselves interested in seriously helping Iran. It was recently reported that the EU will offer 18million euros for some projects in Iran. This is not serious. Europe wants to keep Iran committed to JCPOA, and thus makes some vague promises, but it is not willing to give Iran serious help. This is because Europe, too, is unhappy with many aspects of Iran’s foreign policy behavior. The fact is that Iran’s options are very limited. If it exits JCPOA, it could face military attack or more severe sanctions and other economic pressures.

EU help to Iran is not serious: Hunter

Ronaldo buys controlling stake in Real Valladolid

Brazil World Cup winner Ronaldo has become the majority shareholder of Real Valladolid, after purchasing a 51% controlling stake in the Spanish club.

The 42-year-old played for Real Madrid, Inter Milan, AC Milan and Barcelona in an 18-year playing career.

Valladolid is 16th in La Liga and yet to win a game this season. “The arrival of Ronaldo puts Real Valladolid on the map and will allow the club to take a leap in quality,” said president Carlos Suarez.

Ronaldo scored 62 times for Brazil, including both goals when they beat Germany in the 2002 World Cup final.

Speaking at a news conference on Monday, he said: “I have gone through many stages in my training in football to prepare. Football is a passion.

“This new management will be defined by four words: competitiveness, transparency, revolution and social.”

Ronaldo won two La Liga titles with Real Madrid and the Uefa Cup with Inter. He was part of the Brazil squad who won the 1994 World Cup - although he did not play - and helped them reach the 1998 final.

He picked up the Ballon d’Or award for the best player in the world in 1997 and 2002.

Last month, he was admitted to hospital in Ibiza with pneumonia. *(Source: BBC)*

Denmark’s Euro 2020 campaign at risk due to player contract dispute

The Danish Football Association (DBU) is looking for replacements for regular national team players for this month’s matches against Slovakia and Wales after contract negotiations broke down.

If the DBU fails to recruit players for the games, Denmark, who are ninth in the FIFA world rankings and reached the last 16 at this year’s World Cup, could face expulsion from the 2020 European Championship.

“UEFA has been pretty clear about this,” a DBU spokeswoman said. “That would be the worst-case scenario”.

She could not say if the association had been successful in attracting lower-tier players to play in the team’s matches this month.

The dispute is chiefly over the rights of players, including Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Christian Eriksen, to make individual sponsorship agreements with companies competing with national team sponsors. The players’ travelling conditions are also an issue.

The DBU on Sunday rejected the players’ offer to extend their existing contracts for the next two games which would have postponed further negotiations until after those matches.

The team are scheduled to play Slovakia in a friendly on Wednesday and Wales in a Nations League group stage match on Sunday.

Coach Aage Hareide will not be in charge of the team for the games as the FA does not want him to manage a side he did not pick himself, the DBU said.

The DBU last year had to cancel a World Cup qualifying match for the women’s national team against Sweden, also due to a contract dispute.

(Source: Eurosport)

Ventura avoids IKEA, will never get over Italy’s World Cup failure

Former Italy coach Gian Piero Ventura, in charge last year when they lost to Sweden and missed out on the World Cup, said he would never get over their “momentous” failure and joked that he had avoided shopping at IKEA.

The 70-year-old has kept a low profile since he was sacked in November, shortly after Italy were beaten 1-0 in a two-leg playoff by Sweden and failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1958.

“It was a long summer for me,” Ventura told state broadcaster RAI in a radio interview. “It had been many years since I had a full summer, but it gave me the opportunity to reflect and regenerate.”

“Have I got over the disappointment with the Blues (Italy)? It is difficult because what happened was something momentous.”

“After the Sweden-Italy match, I don’t go to IKEA any more,” he added, referring to the iconic Swedish flat-pack furniture company. Ventura, who has spent much of his career in the lower divisions and coached nearly 20 clubs, still wanted to manage again and received an offer from one Serie A club during the summer but the deal fell through.

“I have found the adrenaline again. I feel an inner necessity, a ferocious desire to show what I can do,” he said.

(Source: Goal)

Ex-head of South American soccer governing body sentenced to nine years

A former head of the governing body for soccer in South America was sentenced to nine years in prison by a U.S. judge on Wednesday for crimes stemming from the bribery scandal that engulfed the sport three years ago, prosecutors announced.

Juan Angel Napout, 60, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Pamela Chen in Brooklyn, New York, who also ordered him to pay more than \$4.3 million in financial penalties, according to a statement from the office of U.S. Attorney Richard Donoghue.

“Napout’s conviction, as well as the successful prosecution of other high-level soccer officials, has struck at the core of corruption in soccer and underscores the need for continued vigilance against fraud and bribery in the sport,” Donoghue said in a statement.

“Of course we are disappointed with the nine-year sentence and plan to appeal both the verdict and sentence,” Silvia Pinera-Vazquez, Napout’s lawyer, said in an email.

(Source: Euronews)

South Korea may seek change in controversial military exemption for athletes

South Korea may seek to revise its military exemption programme for athletes amid calls for stricter rules after the country’s football and baseball teams earned the reward with gold medals at the Asian Games over the weekend.

Military service is a highly contentious issue in South Korea, where all able-bodied men must complete about 21 months of service as part of efforts to maintain a deterrent against the North. Exemptions are offered to athletes who win titles at the Asian Games or medals of any colour at the Olympics, however, and Tottenham Hotspur striker Son Heung-min along with his team mates earned that right when they struck gold on Saturday. Nine baseball players who had not yet completed their service also received the exemption after winning the Asian Games title in Jakarta on Saturday, but they could be among the last athletes to be so rewarded.

Ki Chan-soo, commissioner of the Military Manpower Administration, an arm of the Defence Ministry in charge of conscription, said on Monday that the rule could be amended.

“We’re planning a comprehensive re-examination of the system in the areas of sport and art,” Ki told Yonhap.

“We’re already running short of military personnel resources so we’ll start by looking into whether the exemption programme is fair.”

An official at the conscription agency told Reuters that Ki was speaking “in principle” in light of recent media and parliamentary inquiries, and no specific plan for a review had been set up. The Defence Ministry also said in a statement that it was not considering any change in the system for now but would have intra-agency consultation on the issue.

The incentive was introduced in the 1970s as part of Seoul’s drive to become a world sporting power and raise its profile on the global stage but it has come in for criticism in recent years as the country rebalances its priorities.

Some have called for the exemption system to be abolished altogether, questioning its fairness in an era where the South Korean public have been yearning for an end to privilege and lopsided advantages in all walks of life.

The baseball team was at the centre of the latest controversy as it consisted of top professionals and the national league was put on hold during the Games, while other countries such as Japan and Chinese Taipei sent more amateurs than pros.

Others, though, believe the system fosters athletic excellence and boosts the country’s image.



“I don’t really think it’s unfair ... he is one of the most famous South Korean stars in the world,” Jang Ji-hoon, who is currently serving in the military, said of Son.

“I just hope that he does not go into the service and develops himself during that time instead.”

According to a survey in July by pollster Realmeter, nearly 48 percent supported scaling up the incentive for athletes, while 44 percent were opposed.

■ K-POP BOYBANDS

Ha Tae-keung, an opposition lawmaker, said the programme should also be expanded to include other professions such as K-Pop boybands.

An artist who takes first or second place in a government-designated international contest can be granted an exemption but the fields eligible for the benefit are largely

confined to classical music and dance.

Ha pointed out that the BTS band topped the Billboard 200 albums chart for the second time this year on Sunday with its latest album “Love Yourself: Answer” — an unprecedented feat in K-pop history.

“The programme should be open to other areas but with a higher threshold, say, number one worldwide, not Asia,” Ha told Reuters.

Ha and some other experts have proposed a scheme under which athletes acquire a certain amount of points from international competitions to qualify for exemption.

Lee Kee-heung, president of the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee, expressed support for the idea on Sunday, saying he would raise the issue for discussion.

(Source: Reuters)

Amateurs vow no easy ride for Bolt ahead of Mariners debut



Usain Bolt’s Central Coast Mariners debut will pit him against a grab bag of office workers, students and factory hands in an amateur side that have no intention of giving the Olympic sprint champion an easy ride, their captain Matt Page has said.

The Jamaican’s hopes of winning a professional contract in the Australian top flight will be tested on Friday when the Mariners play an amateur select side at their sleepy base in Gosford, north of Sydney. [LnL3N1VJ1PB]

The pre-season match will be televised live by a local broadcaster and could draw over 12,000 paying fans to the Mariners’ home stadium, where they can expect fireworks, a DJ and at least a cameo appearance from the athletics superstar.

Once the entertainment makes way for the sport, Bolt can expect to face a set of willing opponents bent on making their own impression in front of a prime-time audience. “Everyone’s buzzing. Most of the guys wouldn’t have played in front of a big crowd like this before, myself included,” 34-year-old skipper Page, a former groundsman at the local soccer association, told Reuters by telephone.

“If he wants to make it at this level, no one’s going to take it easy on him. I don’t envisage any of the boys pulling out (of a

tackle). But I don’t think anyone will be dirty, either. It’ll be a really good natured game.”

Eight-times Olympic gold medalist Bolt had his first training with the A-league team only a week ago and said he expected to feel “nerves” at the trial match.

He has admitted he lacks fitness and is still struggling with the “stop and go” nature of football.

With speed his obvious asset, the 32-year-old has trained as a left winger and will hope to get on the pitch for the last 15-20 minutes.

Marking the speedster could be a challenge but the amateurs’ coach Chris Ackerley said he had the perfect man for the job at right back — a “thick-set lad” by the name of Bryce Fielder from local champions Killarney District FC.

“I think Usain Bolt will know he’s been in a game, especially if he gets a few tackles in on him because Bryce has got tree-trunk thighs,” said Ackerley, whose father Stan captained Australia’s national Socceroos side in the 1960s.

Bolt may also meet a fellow Caribbean in 45-year-old forward Keith Gumbs, who played over 100 times for the tiny island nation of St. Kitts & Nevis.

(Source: Mirror)

‘My desire has not gone down at all’ - Williams after reaching last eight



Serena Williams says her motivation to win major trophies remains as high as ever in motherhood after reaching the US Open quarter-finals.

Williams, whose daughter Olympia turned one on Saturday, is aiming to win a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title in New York. The 36-year-old American former world number one is playing her seventh tournament since giving birth.

“That desire has not gone down at all,” she said.

“And I don’t think it was capable of going up, because if it was at a 10, I was at a 15 or a 20 - and I’m still there.”

Williams, seeded 17th, has been in fine form at Flushing Meadows, dropping her first set of the tournament before recovering to win 6-0 4-6 6-3 against Estonia’s Kaia Kanepi on Sunday.

Winning the US Open for a seventh time would see her level Australian Margaret Court’s all-time record of 24 majors.

Williams returned to Slam competition at the French Open in May, only to withdraw before her last-16 match against Maria Sharapova of Russia because of injury.

She then reached the Wimbledon final in July but lost to Germany’s Angelique Kerber.

“My desire still remained at that incred-

ibly high level to compete and to want to win,” Williams said.

“It would be wonderful to win a Grand Slam while having a daughter, but it’s a lot of work.

“It takes a lot of work to win those tournaments. I’m only in my third one back. I’m going to continue to grind and see what happens.”

Meanwhile, Williams says she hopes to have more children in the future - but maybe not until after she finishes playing.

“Right now is not the time,” she said. “I’m thinking about playing tennis and enjoying this time with Olympia.

“I’ll have plenty of time in the future.”

Williams cruised to the first set in 18 minutes against Kanepi, only to see the world number 44 fight back to level in the second. The Estonian missed two break points in the first game of the third set, allowing Williams to fight back and hold serve with a backhand winner, which brought out a loud yell of “come on” from her.

“It was a Serena scream,” Williams said with a smile. “I don’t try to do it. It just comes out.

“Winning a big game and a very important game and a really tight game, I think it was just a relief.”

(Source: BBC)

Modric, Ronaldo, Salah named FIFA The Best finalists

Lionel Messi has failed to make the world player of the year shortlist for the first time since 2006, with Luka Modric and Mohamed Salah making their first appearance in the final three alongside Cristiano Ronaldo.

Messi and Ronaldo have been the only winners of world soccer’s main individual award from FIFA since 2008.

The award, created in 2016 following FIFA’s split with the Ballon d’Or, will this year honour the standout player from July 3, 2017 to July 15, 2018 -- and in that period, Modric won the Champions League with Real Madrid, while also helping Croatia reach the World Cup final where his performances earned him the Golden Ball.

Ronaldo, who has won this honour in both years of its existence, is once again among the final three, but faces arguably his toughest challenge yet, following so many impressive performances in Russia.

However, the Juventus forward will still be confident of making it three in a row, as he once again finished top



scorer in the Champions League. His 15 goals -- five more than anyone else -- helped Madrid win the trophy for a

third successive season.

And, while he would have expected to make a bigger impact in Russia, he still hit a hat trick again Spain, which included one of the goals of the tournament with a stunning late free kick.

Mohamed Salah’s impact on the world stage may have been minor, but his exploits in the Premier League and Champions League for Liverpool made him a certainty for this list. He became the first player to score 32 in a 38-game season, while also contributing a further 10 in Europe -- while he won all the individual awards in England.

Meanwhile, FIFA also announced the three finalists for The Best Men’s Coach award with Zinedine Zidane, Didier Deschamps and Zlatko Dalic making the cut.

Zidane led Madrid to a third successive Champions League title, while Dalic led Croatia to the World Cup final where they were beaten by Deschamps’ France.

(Source: ESPN)

Esteghlal, Persepolis learn fate at Iran’s Hazfi Cup

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian football giants Esteghlal and Persepolis learned their fates in Iran’s Hazfi Cup Round of 32 on Monday.

Reigning champions Esteghlal will face Naft Masjed Soleyman in Masjed Soleyman while Persepolis host first tier Navad Urmia in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium.

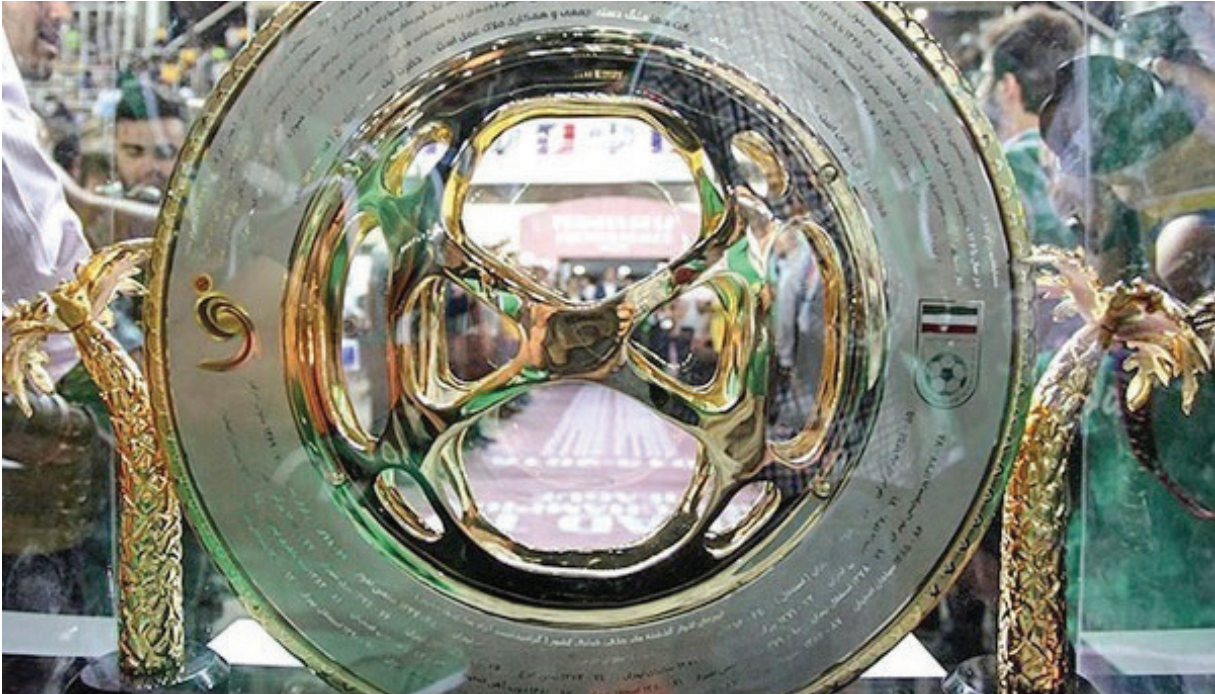
Hazfi Cup is a knockout cup competition, run by the Iranian Football Federation.

The Iranian football league was not being held during the 1980s, hence the winners of Hazfi Cup represented Iran in the Asian Club Championship.

After the revive of the league system, the champions of Iranian league qualified for Asian Club Championship and the winners of Hazfi Cup participated at the Asian Cup Winners’ Cup. However, the Asian Cup Winners’ Cup merged with the Asian Champions Cup in 2002-03 to form the AFC Champions League and Iran had been initially given two (and later four) slots in this competitions.

The Iranian football federation decided to award one of Iran’s AFC Champions League spots to the winner of the Hazfi Cup, and since then, the winners of Hazfi Cup have always been allocated a spot in the AFC Champions League.

The competition was founded in 1975. Esteghlal are the most successful club with seven titles.



Esports: Move to less violent games for 2022 Asiad - Alisport CEO

JAKARTA (Reuters) — Esports will shift away from violent content and toward sports- focused titles for the 2022 Asian Games, the CEO of Chinese tech giant Alibaba’s sports arm told Reuters on Sunday.

Alisports CEO Zhang Dazhong, who partnered with the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) to feature electronic sports as a demonstration event in the 2018 Asian Games, said the discipline would need to evolve to earn Olympic inclusion.

“The Asian Games is the first step. We are working towards meeting the standards set by the International Olympic Committee (IOC),” he said.

Players from 18 nations competed across six different games at the 18th Asian Games, which ended on Sunday, in competitive video gaming’s debut at a major multi-sport event.

Recognised by the IOC as a sport, the Jakarta event was also a trial run for esports to be included as an exhibition event in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Professional electronic gaming boasts an estimated 250 million players worldwide in a growing market worth about a billion dollars a year.

But the inclusion of battle games like the popular League of Legends is unlikely to convince IOC President Thomas Bach, who said in April that the violence in some games went against Olympic values.

Zhang said the titles for the 2022 Asian Games would be more similar to football-themed Pro Evolution Soccer (PES), which was part of the 2018 demonstration event and which Alisports helps promote. “Esports should be about sports, not



entertainment and about the honor of representing your country,” he said, noting that both the OCA and IOC were hopeful that esports titles would become sports focused.

The CEO said “a move in the direction of sports-focused esports” was happening globally, referencing a crackdown in China on mobile gaming.

Beijing announced on Thursday it would limit the number of new online video games, take steps to restrict the time young people spend playing games and explore an age-appropriate system for players.

The announcement led Tencent Holdings’ (0700.HK) market value to slump by around \$20 billion.

“The (Chinese) government is concerned that the content is too violent and unhealthy for young people, but the government is still

supportive of e-sports,” Zhang said. “Right now, there haven’t been very serious regulations towards electronic games and on content. We anticipate that in the future this will change and that there will be a clear line on what is esports content and what is video games content.”

Zhang cited Tencent’s Honor of Kings, which has more than 200 millions players in China as an example of “violent content” that would probably not be part of the 2022 Asian Games.

Honor of King’s international version, known as Arena of Valor, was played in the 2018 demonstration event.

In the long term Zhang sees the lines between electronic and physical sports blurring.

“Esports is the result of the digital age.

With the development of smart technology, there will be more ways to play esports that will require physical efforts,” he said, noting that he had emphasized this to Bach.

“The shape of esports players right now is not so good, but in the future, they will have muscles!”

■ HANGZHOU 2022
Alisports is taking an active role in the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China where Alibaba has its headquarters.

Esports was originally announced as a medal event for the 2022 Games. But the OCA told Reuters it had put those plans on hold until it acquires a recognized world federation and Asian body.

Although the Asian Electronic Sports Federation (AESF) claims to be the “sole competent authority for electronic sports” in the region, South Korea’s International esports Federation organizes separate world championships and there is no single international body.

Alisports will be making Chinese female athletes a priority, Zhang said, starting with assistance for the country’s women’s national soccer team who won the silver medal at the Asian Games.

“We are looking to help (Chinese) female athletes. More than 70 percent of Alibaba’s customers are young women,” he said.

The CEO said Alisports would be providing financial and logistical help to the team, including for the 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup. The company will also support female esports players.

“The equality between men and women is important and they should be able to have the same opportunities in sports,” Zhang said.

Asian Games stir Indonesia’s pride, boost Jokowi’s campaign

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia’s hosting of the Asian Games and a record haul of gold medals have swelled national pride, boosting the re-election campaign of President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo.

The 2-week games ended Saturday with Indonesia fourth on the medal table behind China, Japan and South Korea. A good chunk of its 31 gold medals were in obscure sports held only at the Asian Games, and none was from swimming or athletics.

But for Indonesia, which has won only seven Olympic gold medals — all in badminton — it was a landmark haul that outdid its modest ambition of sneaking into the top 10.

A well-received opening ceremony, an absence of major organizational problems and Jokowi’s surprise announcement Saturday that Indonesia would bid for the 2032 Olympics have fueled feel-good nationalism that analysts say is likely to lift Jokowi in voters’ sentiments heading to an April election.

That would widen his already substantial lead over former general and ultranationalist politician Prabowo Subianto, Jokowi’s challenger for a second time.

The games will “certainly have a positive impact on Jokowi’s electability,” said Syamsuddin Haris, a political analyst from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. “The spectacular opening ceremony became a successful campaign for the incumbent, especially to attract swing voters and millennials whose numbers are very significant.”

Jokowi was compared to Barack Obama when first elected in 2014, and he and his advisers have cultivated a “cool cred” around his presidency.

That was evident two weeks ago in his cameo at the opening ceremony before a crowd of 40,000 and a national television audience.

A slickly choreographed video showed Jokowi stuck in traffic — a humorous nod to one of Jakarta’s major challenges in hosting the games. He donned a black helmet and raced through the city’s backstreets on a motorbike to reach the stadium on time.

Then the motorbike shown in the video sped into the stadium and its helmeted driver disappeared into a tunnel moments before the real Jokowi appeared in the VIP area



to thunderous applause.

It resembled part of the opening of the 2012 London Olympics, where Queen Elizabeth II and James Bond appeared to skydive into the stadium.

In another moment that riveted Indonesians, Jokowi was shown enthusiastically grooving to music blasting across the stadium, a stark contrast to the morbid formality of most Southeast Asian leaders.

Haris said the games also positively highlighted ethnic and religious differences in Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim-majority nation, with more than 260 million people, making it harder to exploit those divisions during the election campaign, he said.

“The Indonesian people saw how the athletes are fighting for victory, for gold medals, and the winners are not only Muslim, but also of Chinese descent, Christian, Hindu and Buddhist,” Haris said. “This will certainly dampen the sectarian and ethnic issues used in the 2014 presidential elections.”

Despite Jokowi’s prominence, Subianto wasn’t totally deprived of oxygen.

As chairman of the Pencak Silat association — a local martial art included in these games — he was shown on national television presenting some of the 14 gold medals that Indonesia won in the discipline, and in a group hug with Jokowi and one of the winners.

But he was also mocked online with a mercilessly effective meme that juxtaposed a recent image of a shirtless and

flabby Subianto against the washboard abs of an Indonesian heartthrob who jubilantly tore off his shirt after winning gold in the men’s badminton singles.

Young Indonesians make up 35-40 percent of voters and will play a “decisive” role in the 2019 presidential race, said Hugo Brennan, Asia analyst at Verisk Maplecroft, a business and political risk consultancy.

“Jokowi’s motorcycle stunt during the opening ceremony was widely shared on social media and will have burnished his ‘cool credentials’ among this important constituency,” he said.

The PR win comes less than a month after Jokowi unexpectedly chose a conservative cleric, Ma’ruf Amin, as his running mate, dismaying moderate and liberal supporters but likely neutralizing damaging criticism that he isn’t sufficiently Islamic.

Most of his five-year term has been spent balancing the demands of his moderate base, powerful Islamic conservatives, a complicated parliamentary coalition and the military, which has never completely accepted its diminished role following the end of the Suharto dictatorship two decades ago.

Improving Indonesia’s creaking infrastructure has been Jokowi’s signature policy — the Asian Games indirectly highlighted some of the progress — and he enters the campaign the clear but not unbeatable front-runner.

If it’s any consolation for Prabowo, who was narrowly defeated by Jokowi in 2014, the games afterglow will fade and is unlikely to be a decisive factor when the world’s third largest democracy votes in April, analysts said.

“I think Jokowi’s and Indonesia’s performance in the Asian Games will give the president a bit of a bump in the polls but I’m not sure it significantly changes his odds of re-election,” said Eurasia Group analyst Peter Mumford.

“Any benefit from the Asian Games may have dissipated by then. But certainly doesn’t do him any harm,” he said.

Jokowi, however, appears intent on extending its shelf life, announcing alongside the president of the International Olympic Committee on Saturday that because of the success of the Asian Games, Indonesia will bid for the 2032 Olympics.

Ali Ghorbani joins Spartak Trnava

IRNA — Ali Ghorbani joined Slovak football team Spartak Trnava from Esteghlal on Monday.

The 28-year-old player has joined Spartak Trnava on a two-year contract for an undisclosed fee.



Ghorbani started his playing career with Nassaji in 2010 and has also played at Iranian football clubs Gahar, Mes Sarcheshmeh and Naft Tehran.

Ghorbani joined Esteghlal in 2016 and scored 18 goals in 68 matches for the Blues. He scored against Persepolis in Tehran derby in his first season in Esteghlal.

FC Spartak Trnava is a Slovak professional football club based in Trnava. Historically, it is one of the most successful clubs in the country, having won both the Czechoslovak First League and the Czechoslovak Cup five times, and reaching the semi-final of the European Cup once and the quarter-final twice.

Women volleyball team to participate at Szeles Péter Memorial

TASNIM — Iran’s women’s volleyball team will take part at the Szeles Péter memorial as part of preparation for the 2018 AVC Cup.

The tournament has brought a total of six teams together. Team Melli will start the competition with a match against Hungary national team on Thursday.

The Iranian team is preparing for the 2018 Asian Women’s Volleyball Cup, so-called 2018 AVC Cup for Women, scheduled for September 17 to 23 in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

Abdollah Veisi quits Iran’s Naft Masjed Soleyman

Persian Football — Abdollah Veisi left Naft Masjed Soleyman football team after five weeks in charge.

Veisi replaced Mahmoud Fekri in late June but parted company with the Masjed Soleyman based football team due to financial issues.

Under guidance of Fekri, Naft Masjed Soleyman won promotion to the Iran Professional League (IPL).

Former Esteghlal coach Parviz Mazloumi is among the candidates to take charge of Naft Masjed Soleyman.

Naft Masjed Soleyman sit one place above bottom in IPL table.

Iran participate in World Nomad Games

IRNA — The opening ceremony of the 2018 of World Nomad Games was held at Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan.

Political figures, including the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Tatarstan also attended the opening ceremony on Sunday.

More than 2,000 athletes from 12 countries participate in the event, including 24 Iranians.

This edition of the Nomad Games kicks off officially on Monday, Sept 3 and will wrap up on Saturday, Sept 8.

Previous editions of World Nomad Games (2014, and 2016) took place in and were won by Kyrgyzstan.

The World Nomad Games was the initiative of the former Kyrgyz president Almazbek Atambayev and is intended to create relationships between ethnic games and cultures and to revive the historical and cultural heritage of different nations around the world.

Japan’s Takakura among finalists for FIFA’s The Best award

Japan’s Asako Takakura remains in the running to add The Best FIFA Women’s Coach Award to her five AFC Female Coach of the Year honours, after being named as one of three finalists on Monday.

Takakura was named alongside Olympique Lyon’s UEFA Women’s Champion League-winning head coach Reynald Pedros and Sarina Wiegman, who led her native Netherlands to the UEFA Women’s Euro 2017 title.

Australia’s Alen Stajcic was one of seven previously shortlisted candidates to miss out on a nomination for the final three.

2018 has been a memorable year for Takakura, who guided the Nadeshiko to April’s AFC Women’s Asian Cup with a 1-0 over Australia in Jordan, before claiming gold at the 2018 Asian Games with a win by the same margin against China PR just last Friday.

If the 50-year-old is successful at the official ceremony, to be held in London on September 24, she will join the man she replaced - 2011 FIFA Women’s World Cup-winning head coach Norio Sasaki - as the second Japanese head coach to have won FIFA’s highest coaching honor.

While Takakura remains in contention, fellow Asian hopefuls Sam Kerr and Saki Kumagai were eliminated from The Best FIFA Women’s Player category, with Brazil star Marta and Lyon duo Ada Hegerberg and Dzsenifer Marozsan reaching the final three.

(Source: the-afc)

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Art for Peace Festival to open in Tehran on Sept. 14

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – The Mellat Cineplex in Tehran will be hosting the 6th edition of the Art for Peace Festival from September 14 to 28, the organizers announced on Sunday.

“The festival has been organized to bring hope, peace and happiness to the everyday life of people but perhaps this would not come true due to the current economic and financial issues in the country,” the director of the festival, Fereidun Farbud, said in a press conference at the cineplex.

“Like the previous editions, the festival concerns world peace and environmental issues such as the water crisis in the country,” he added.

The Art for Peace Festival will be showcasing a variety of artworks by Iranian and international artists in the media of painting, photo, sculpture, installation, video art, cinema and theater to promote the culture of peace and a world without violence.

About 300 artworks created in various media have been selected to be showcased during the festival.

A lineup of 41 films produced in 2017 and 2018, out of which 20 are debut films, will be screened during the event.

In addition, 17 theatrical performances will go on stage at Baran Theater.

Tehran exhibit displays 150 years of Iranian political history

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – An exhibition displaying 150 years of the Iranian political history opened at the Saba Art and Cultural Institute in Tehran on Monday.

A collection of 125 photos and documents about various historical events in the country from the Constitutional Movement between 1905 and 1911 to the Islamic Revolution in 1979 can be viewed at the exhibit, the institute announced.

The exhibit is also showcasing materials on top political events such as the early years of the reign of Qajar king Nasser ad-Din Shah (1821-1900), the nationalization of the oil industry and the demonstrations of June 5, 1963, known as the 15 of Khordad Uprising.

The exhibit has been organized to familiarize the younger generation of Iranians with the political history of their country over the past century.

The institute will host the exhibition until September 10.

“Charlie Says” tells Manson story from view of women he sent to kill

VENICE, Italy (Reuters) — Charles Manson did not wield the knives in the 1969 murder spree that ended the Californian hippy dream, so what drove the people who did so on his orders? That is the question posed in “Charlie Says” which premiered in Venice on Sunday.

“Doctor Who” star Matt Smith plays Manson, a wild-eyed petty criminal who sets up a hippy commune where his followers worship him like a messiah, clinging to every word of his incoherent prophecies of Armageddon.

Directed by Canadian Mary Harron, who made the 2000 Christian Bale movie “American Psycho”, “Charlie Says” is set three years after the murders of, among others, Roman Polanski’s actress wife Sharon Tate and her unborn child.

Serving life in jail are three women, still in thrall to Manson and clinging to his promise that they will all live out the coming race war in a hole in the desert from which they will emerge to populate a glorious new world.

Trying to reverse the brainwashing is a prison teacher who is astonished that the bright-eyed young women seem untroubled by their crimes and the fact they will die in jail.

“That’s a perspective that no one has seen and no one has really focused entirely on: their story or their journey about how they ended up there and why they did the things they did,” Harron told Reuters in an interview.

“To me that’s the great mystery. You know Charles Manson was insane, but they were not, so how did he get them to do these things?”

Ehsan Yarshater, founder of Encyclopedia Iranica, dies at 98

C U L T U R E **TEHRAN** – The U.S.-based Iranian scholar Ehsan Yarshater who spent all his life creating his magnum opus, Encyclopedia Iranica, a complete encyclopedia of Iranian culture and history, passed away on Saturday, a number of his fellow colleagues announced in posts published on social networks.

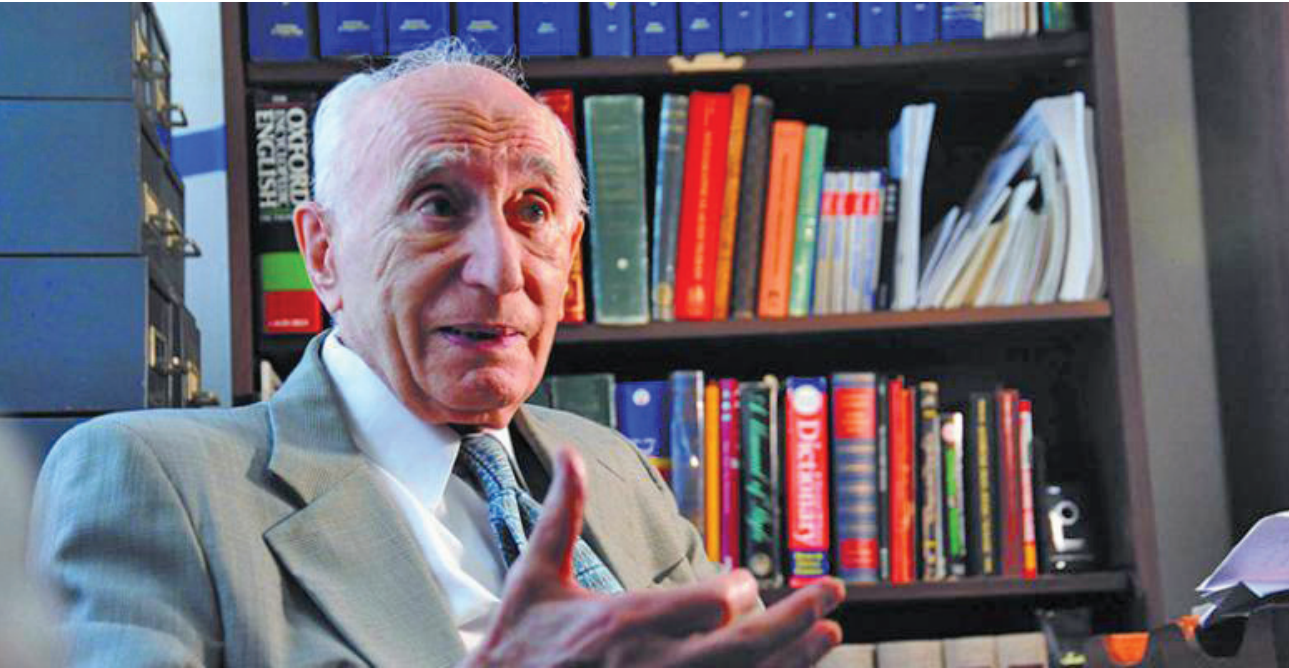
He was also a professor and the founder of the Center for Iranian Studies at Columbia University in New York.

Born in Hamedan in 1920 he got a Ph.D. in Persian language and literature at the University of Tehran in 1947. He then moved to England to pursue his studies at London University, where he received an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Old and Middle Iranian in 1960.

In 1961, he was appointed to the Kevorkian Chair of Iranian Studies at Columbia University. He was the first full-time professor of Persian at an American university since World War II. In 1968, he established the Center for Iranian Studies.

He founded Encyclopedia Iranica in 1973 and was the editor-in-chief of the encyclopedia until his death. Yarshater looked for a successor several times, but failed in his attempts to find one.

“He has worked to create the most comprehensive account of several millenniums of Iranian history, language and culture in the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia” the New York Times



Iranologist Ehsan Yarshater in an undated photo

wrote about Iranica in a report published on August 12, 2011.

“There is nothing like it” in scope or quality, said Ali Banuazizi, a professor at Boston College and a former president of

the Middle East Studies Association of North America.

He was the general editor of a 40-volume translation of al-Tabari’s 10th-century history of the world and editor of some of

the Cambridge History of Iran.

He married Latifeh Alvieh, a cultural advisor at the Cultural Bureau of the U.S. embassy in Tehran. She died in 1999, and the couple had no children.

“The Last Fiction” to compete in Korea Bucheon festival



A scene from “The Last Fiction” by director Ashkan Rahgozar.

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian animator Ashkan Rahgozar’s “The Last Fiction” will be competing in the 20th Bucheon International Animation Film Festival in the South Korean city during October.

The movie is based on a story from the Shahnameh, the epic masterpiece of the Persian poet Ferdowsi.

It is about Zahak’s treacherous rise to the throne in Jamshid in Persia. The young and naive hero Afaridoun will have to save the kingdom and its people from darkness. But he must first conquer his own demons in this portrayal of Persian mythology that reveals human nature.

Vocalist Shahram Nazeri has sung the closing credits song in “The Last Fiction”. In addition, an all-star cast including Parviz Parastui, Leila Hatami, Hamed Behdad, Baran Kowsari, Askhan Khatibi, Akbar Zanjani and Farrokh Nematni have lent their voices to the characters in the project.

The festival, which will be held from October 19 to 23, will also screen eight other movies in the official competition.

Among the animated films are “A Man Is Dead” by Olivier Cossu from France, “This Magnificent Cake” by Emma DE Swaef from Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, and “Funan” by Denis Do from France and Belgium.

Brothers called Sisters show no mercy in star-studded Western

VENICE, Italy (Reuters) — “We’re good at what we do,” Joaquin Phoenix tells his partner-in-crime John C. Reilly after they have killed so many cowboys they have lost count, in the comedy Western “The Sisters Brothers” that premiered at the Venice Film Festival on Sunday.

The reason they are so good, apart from being handy with a pistol, is their complete lack of conscience in taking a man’s life, something Phoenix’s character Charlie Sisters attributes to the genes the brothers inherited from their abusive father.

In the first English-language film by Jacques Audiard, the French director of “Dheepan”, “Rust and Bone” and “A Prophet”, the brothers have a contract to kill a gold prospector being tracked by Jake Gyllenhaal’s John, a more cerebral bounty hunter who does not have what it takes to finish the job himself.

For Reilly, a familiar character actor who rarely gets big lead roles, playing opposite Phoenix was daunting.

“The challenge was working with someone as amazing as Joaquin Phoenix, someone I hold to be the greatest actor working, I think he’s peerless,” Reilly, who is also a producer of the movie, told reporters.

At a key point in the film, his character, Eli, tells Charlie he would like to open a shop when their career as killers is over, something Phoenix’s character mocks, but soon he too is wondering whether there might be more to life and is forced to question his version of masculinity.

“In the 1850s in America we were at



Director Jacques Audiard with John C. Reilly, Thomas Bidegain and Alexandre Desplat attend the photocall for the film “The Sisters Brothers” competing in the Venezia 75 section at the 75th Venice International Film Festival in Venice, Italy, September 2, 2018. (Reuters/Tony Gentile)

this sort of crisis point, similar to the way we are now,” Reilly said.

“We founded the West by murdering all the Indians and destroying all the buffalos, and largely a lawless society was set up,” he told a news conference.

“The strongest prevailed over the weak. But that is not a sustainable plan for the future. That is a self-destructive plan, so I think that’s one of thing the film is looking at ... that makes the film very relevant: Where do we go from here?”

For all the brutality, Audiard said the movie “is about nothing other than love”.

“In “The Sisters Brothers”, it’s a story about going home, going back to mother, that home, without the disruptive influence the father had been. So it’s a film full of optimism.”

“The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi” to go on stage in Tehran



A scene from “The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi” directed by Ehsan Falahatpisheh at Nazerzadeh Kermani Hall in Tehran during September and October 2015 (Twall/ Ziaeddin Safavian)

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian director Ehsan Falahatpisheh plans to restage Swiss writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt’s play “The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi” at the main hall of Tehran’s City Theater Complex on September 27.

The play will be performed based on a translation by the renowned Iranian playwright and drama theater director Hamid Samandarian, a public relations team announced on Monday.

Earlier in September and October 2015, Falahatpisheh staged the comedy play

at the Nazerzadeh Kermani Hall of the Iranian Artist Forum in Tehran.

The comedy play is about Florestan Mississippi, a public prosecutor and a fanatical exponent of Mosaic law who has murdered his wife. He visits Anastasia, who confesses to having murdered her husband. After Mississippi has persuaded Anastasia to marry him as a gesture of grotesque retribution, the two dedicate themselves to presiding over a governmental system of “absolute justice” under which Mississippi sentences victims to death and Anastasia presides over their execution.

“Crazy Rich Asians” heads for huge Labor Day weekend

LOS ANGELES (Variety.com) – The summer 2018 box office is officially ending on a high note.

An August surge is thanks partially to “Crazy Rich Asians”, the Warner Bros. romantic comedy that is still doing crazy good business in North America. Jon M. Chu’s film will top the domestic box office for the third week in a row with estimates showing it could make another \$27 million to \$30 million over Labor Day Weekend. It generated a three-day tally of \$22 million in 3,865 locations, dropping just 10 percent in its third outing and bringing its domestic total to \$110 million.

Following “Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle”, “Black Panther”, and “Avengers: Infinity War”, “Crazy Rich Asians” is the fourth film this year to top the domestic box office three weekends in a row.

Warner Bros. also nabbed second place as “The Meg” picked up another \$10 million on 3,761 screens. That takes its North American come to \$120.5 million.

Newcomer “Operation Finale” launched at No. 4 with \$6 million in 1,818 locations. MGM’s political thriller debuted on Wednesday and is expecting to earn between \$8 million to \$10 million over the six-day period. Chris Weitz, the filmmaker behind “American Pie”, “About a Boy”, and “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story”, directed the movie, which cost \$20 million. It stars Oscar Isaac, Ben Kingsley, and Nick Kroll.

The weekend’s final wide release, “Kin”, opened with a dismal \$3 million in 2,141



“Crazy Rich Asians” premiere at TCL Chinese Theatre IMAX in Hollywood, California. (Getty Images/AFP/Emma McIntyre)

locations. Lionsgate’s sci-fi action film — starring Jack Reynor, Zoe Kravitz, Carrie Coon, Dennis Quaid, and James Franco — is on track to make \$3.6 million over the four-day period.

Meanwhile, Sony’s “Searching” found \$5.6 million when it expanded to 1,207 locations. The thriller featuring John Cho, Debra Messing, and Michelle La, has earned \$6.5 million to date. Cho and fellow “Crazy Rich Asians” stars, including Henry Golding, helped rally support by buying out screenings of the film.

Tom Cruise’s “Mission: Impossible - Fallout” continues to stay in the top five. This weekend, it looks to clock in at No. 3 with \$6.9 million in 2,639 locations and a four-day total of \$9 million. The sixth installment in the Ethan Hunt spy series has generated \$206 million in North America.

Disney’s “Christopher Robin” will be facing off against “Searching” for fifth place.