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PERSPECTIVE

M.A.Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

With or without sanctions, Iran needs to say goodbye to oil money

Except Norway, almost all oil producing countries have made themselves more or less reliant on oil money. Only oil producing countries with a small population, such as Kuwait and Qatar which is also a great gas exporter, have so been safe from fluctuations in the oil market. But, countries with large population, such as Iran, are prone to volatility in the oil market, let alone the mad sanctions introduced against the country.

There is no doubt that oil money has affected politics, economy, management system, culture, spending and consumption habits and many other issues in oil rich countries.

For example, Iran now has one of the cheapest energy prices in the world. This has led to an extravagant use of energy, especially an excessive use of private car, in the country.

Let's make an example to clarify that oil money is not the road to progress and a vibrant economy. In the 1970s, Iran was more developed than South Korea, but now South Korea is much more successful than Iran in terms of economy and technology. South Korea does not have oil, but it has provided an opportunity for a competitive economy and capitalized on its talents.

It is true that the war imposed on Iran in the 1980s hindered Iran's progress and inflicted about 1 trillion dollar in damages on the country, yet officials failed to take serious steps toward creating a competitive economic atmosphere with a focus on research and technology. The oil money has been the main blame for such an economic approach.

According to the successive five-year development plans which end on 2021, Iran had to reduce dependence on oil to a great extent, however, successive administrations, with varying degrees, did not fully act based on the development plan.

Iran is now subject to the toughest ever illegal sanctions by the Trump administration. Just on April 22, the United States ended sanctions waivers on Iran's exports and announced it wants to zero out Iran's oil exports by May 1. **→3**

CNN poll shows Biden in commanding lead among Democrats

TEHRAN — Former Vice President Joe Biden's announcement of a bid for the Democratic presidential nomination earned him an 11-point polling bounce, leaving him head and shoulders above the rest of the Democratic candidates.

The first national poll taken after Biden announced his bid has him well ahead of the Democratic field with 39% to his closest rival at 14% for Sanders. This represents a double-digit Biden bounce from our last poll. Other polls also indicate Biden's up since his announcement.

Meanwhile, with Robert Mueller's investigation finished, Donald Trump's approval rating stands at its highest level since April 2017 in a new CNN Poll conducted by SSRS, as the share who say Democrats in Congress are doing too much to investigate the President rises 6 points.

Trump's approval rating remains largely negative in the new poll -- 52% disapprove and 43% approve -- but that approval figure is the highest -- by one point -- since a CNN poll completed around the

100-day mark of his time in office. At the same time, the share who say they strongly approve of the way the President is handling his job (35%) is at its highest level ever in CNN's polling.

The American public increasingly feels that Democrats in Congress are going too far in investigating the President -- 44% say Democrats are doing too much on that score, up from 38% saying so in March. That shift stems largely from independents, 46% of whom now say congressional Democrats are going too far.

Congressional Democrats have called for Attorney General William Barr to testify this week, including in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, and have issued subpoenas to try to gain access to the full, unredacted version of Mueller's report and for former White House counsel Don McGahn to testify. The Treasury Department recently missed a deadline set by House Democrats for turning over the President's tax returns, and the Trump administration is fighting subpoenas issued for financial records from

accounting firms and banks connected to Trump.

Even with growing concern about overreach, majorities want Congress to investigate whether Trump committed obstruction of justice in the course of the Mueller investigation (58%) and to pursue legal action to obtain the full, unredacted version of the Mueller report (61%). The public is divided on Barr's handling of the release of Mueller's report -- 44% approve and 43% disapprove, with a wide partisan gap.

About two-thirds still say Trump ought to release his tax returns (66%, including 52% who consider it important for the President to do). And most, 54%, say the President is not doing enough to cooperate with Democratic investigations.

The poll finds no change in the share of Americans who say they believe the President ought to be impeached compared with a March survey conducted before the completion of Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.

Hundreds demand election boycott in Kazakhstan

TEHRAN — Hundreds of Kazakhs rallied in their two main cities on Wednesday, calling for a boycott of June presidential elections that they dismissed as a cover for an orchestrated handover of power.

Crowds gathered in the main amusement park in the commercial hub Almaty and a square in the capital Nur-Sultan in protests called by one of the main rivals of veteran leader Nursultan Nazarbayev.

In Almaty, protesters chanted "I have a choice" and "Old man, go away" and waved banners reading "No to despotism and dictatorship", as families on a day out looked on and techno music blared.

Police, who have broken up smaller anti-government protests in the past, only detained a handful of people who tried to take the demonstration outside Almaty's Central Park, and a few stragglers left after the rally ended in the capital.

According to Reuters, Nazarbayev abruptly resigned in March after almost three decades in power and endorsed ally and former Senate speaker Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, all but guaranteeing his success.

The political transition in the central Asian state neighboring Russia and China is closely watched by foreign investors who have pumped tens of billions of dollars into its energy and mining sectors since independence.

Rouhani opens tropical water project in Kermanshah

President Hassan Rouhani opened a tropical water project at Ozgoleh Martyrs Dam in Salas Babajani County, western province of Kermanshah as soon as he arrived in the province on Wednesday morning.

The project has been completed with a budget of 40 trillion Rials and supplies water to 18.5 thousand hectares of agricultural lands in Kermanshah Province.

Ozgoleh Martyrs Dam has the capacity of regulating 30 million cubic metres of water.



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Iranian, Syrian private sectors seek to bolster trade ties

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — Iranian and Syrian officials, entrepreneurs and businessmen once again came together on Wednesday in a business forum in Tehran to explore ways for enhancing trade ties.

The business forum which marked the two sides' sixth gathering in the past six months was hosted by Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

The event was attended by a Syrian trade delegation headed by the Chairman of Chamber of Industry of Damascus and its Countryside, Samer al-Debes, the Chairman of Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee Keyvan Kashefi, Hassan Danaiefar the senior advisor to Iran's first vice president in Syria and Iraq affairs, as well as the Syrian Ambassador to Tehran Adnan Mahmoud and representatives of Iranian private companies. **→4**

Platforms for national satellites set up in low-Earth orbit

TEHRAN — The Iranian Aviation Technology Development Headquarters of vice presidency for science and technology has set up three platforms for the national operational satellites in low-Earth orbit, IRNA reported.

The headquarters established a consortium of universities and knowledge-based companies active in the field of space technology.

The Iranbus 15 project, which is 15 kg imaging satellite platform, is made by the consortium of the Sharif University of Technology and the Malek-Ashtar University of Technology.

Another is the Iranbus 70 project, a 70 kg imaging satellite platform with 5 meter resolution, built by the Amirkabir industrial university and the Khaje Nasiroddin-e Toosi University. **→11**

Iraqi premier warns ISIL weakened, not defeated

TEHRAN — Iraqi Premier Adel Abdul Mahdi said the ISIL terrorist group group had been militarily weakened but not defeated as the recent deadly Sri Lanka bombings had shown.

An ISIL propaganda video released with a purported appearance by the extremist group's elusive supremo Abu Bakr

al-Baghdadi showed him in what appeared to be a "very simple and isolated" location, Mahdi said on a visit to Berlin.

"One and a half years ago Daesh (ISIL) controlled large areas in Iraq and Syria, and now Baghdadi appears in an isolated, unknown location," he said about the world's most wanted man, AFP reported. **→13**



ARTICLE

Mahnaz Abdi
Head of the TehranTimes
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NIOC selling oil at IRENEX while U.S. tightening sanctions

National Iranian Oil Company sold 70,000 barrels of heavy crude oil at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) for the first time on Tuesday.

Offering heavy crude at IRENEX came after NIOC offered light crude at this stock market in eight rounds.

Like offering light oil, one billion barrels of heavy oil was offered at IRENEX with 35,000 barrels as the least amount of sales.

The base price for heavy crude was planned to be \$63.51 but the product was finally offered at \$60.68.

Successful sales of heavy crude at Iran's stock market happened while the U.S. is tightening pressure on the country's oil industry as the Trump administration announced last month that it would end waivers on crude purchase granted to Iran's primary oil buyers in a bid to push Tehran oil sales to zero.

Since the U.S.'s withdrew from Iran's nuclear pact in May 2018, vowing to drive Iran's oil exports down to zero, the Islamic Republic has been taking various measures to counter the U.S. actions and to keep its oil exports levels as high as possible.

One of the main strategies that Iran chose to execute to help its oil exports afloat has been trying new ways to diversify the mechanism of oil sales, one of which is offering oil at the country's stock market.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has said that NIOC will offer crude oil at IRENEX every week.

The minister said that it may take some time for selling crude oil at IRENEX to be common and regular, but the oil ministry will offer the product at this market every week.

NIOC offered crude oil at IRENEX first on October 28, 2018, just few days before new U.S. sanctions on Iran's petroleum sector took effect (November 4). In the first round, NIOC could sell some 280,000 barrels of crude oil at \$74.85 per barrel. With the daily supply amount of one million barrels, the market wrapped up by selling eight 35,000-barrel-cargos of oil on the day. **→4**

Rouhani: U.S. power not matching its tongue

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – President Hassan Rouhani has downplayed U.S. officials' threats against the Islamic Republic, saying, "Their power not as powerful as their tongue is."

Rouhani made the remarks during a trip to the western province of Kermanshah. He was referring to Washington's maximum pressure on Iran through boycotting Iran's oil exports.

"If through their pressure we get less oil money, we will make up for it from other resources," the president said, adding the U.S. administration's claim to preventing Iran's oil export "is baseless talk".

"We know the region and the power of the great Iranian nation better than them. Our nation's [capacity for] sacrifice and power is greater than what the Americans can conceive."



Under President Donald Trump, the U.S. has initiated what it calls a campaign of "maximum pressure" against Iran, pulling out of a multilateral deal with the country and imposing sanctions against it.

With the sanctions, Washington has been seeking, among other goals, to bring Iran's oil sales down to "zero." The White House has also imposed so-called secondary sanctions that target other countries doing business with Iran.

The president said Iran would continue to sell its oil nevertheless. "We will be weathering the difficulties, selling our oil, and meeting our needs."

"We bear no hostility toward anyone but would not stand idly by in the face of conspiracies [either]," the president said.

Araqchi says Iran's patience running thin, warns nuclear deal may fall apart any moment

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – Warning that Iran's "patience is running thin", Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi warned on Tuesday that the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, may fall apart "at any moment" as the U.S. has endangered the agreement by withdrawing from it and reimposing sanctions on Iran.

Araqchi said the deal is in fact a "security agreement" which involves the whole world.

The countries, especially the European Union, have been largely inactive to compensate for the losses that Iran has suffered since the U.S. exited the agreement last year and reimposed sanctions on Iran.

The agreement was endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

"The nuclear deal is more a security agreement than an economic one which is related to the entire world, but the JCPOA has been endangered because of the United States' position and may fall apart at any moment," Araqchi told the Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE) in Ankara, Turkey.

Araqchi said though the agreement was signed between Iran and the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) it is "actually an agreement belonging to the international community".

Araqchi, who served as a senior negotiator in crafting the nuclear deal with the 5+1 group and the EU, said the JCPOA is the only successful example of diplomacy in the region but the United States wants to "destroy" it.

■ **Araqchi warns U.S. will be held accountable for any clash between IRGC, CENTCOM in Persian Gulf**

Araqchi also said the U.S. will be responsible for any clash in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere between the IRGC forces and those of the U.S. Navy Central Command (CENTCOM) as Washington has designated the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps as a terrorist organization.

"The two forces, which have been reciprocally designated as terrorist groups, may engage in clashes in the Persian Gulf or any other region," Araqchi warned.

"There is no doubt that the U.S. will be held accountable for such a situation," he added, according to Press TV.

President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday signed off on the law recently approved by the Iranian Parliament, which designated the American forces based in West Asia – known as the United States Central Command – as a terrorist organization.

The chief executive put his signature to the legislation, obligating its enactment by ministries of intelligence, foreign affairs, and defense as well as the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), and the Plan and Budget Organization.

On April 8, the White House labeled Iran "a state sponsor of terrorism" and the IRGC a "foreign terrorist organization," claiming that the defense force "actively participates in, finances, and promotes terrorism as a tool of statecraft."

Back on Sunday, Mohammad Baqeri, chairman of the Iranian Armed Force chief of staff, said all American ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz have so far remained answerable to the IRGC as the force in charge of security in the strategic waterway despite Washington's latest wave of hostile measures against the Iranian nation.

No change has so far been reported in the conduct of U.S. warships, commercial vessels and oil tankers, and they have up until now been responding to the IRGC's questions as usual while sailing through the Strait of Hormuz, General Baqeri stated.

He said Iran wants the strait – through which nearly one-third of all oil traded by sea passes – to remain open and secure, warning that the country will not allow anyone to destabilize the waters.

"As oil and commodities of other countries are passing through the Strait of Hormuz, ours are also moving through it," Baqeri said, adding Iran "will definitely confront anyone who attempts to destabilize the Strait of Hormuz, and if our crude is not to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, others' [crude] will not pass either."

The commander explained, "This does not mean [that we are going to] close the Strait of Hormuz. We do not intend to shut it unless the enemies' hostile acts will leave us with no other option. We will be fully capable of closing it on that day."

In a recent interview with Reuters, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that Iran was "not going to take any action" should the U.S. continue observing the rules of engagement.

By executing 2030 agenda, they seek to train soldiers for U.S. and UK

TEHRAN (khamenei.ir) – As the National Teachers' Day approaches, a group of teachers and education officials from across the country met with Ayatollah Khamenei—the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution—at the Hussayniyeh of Imam Khomeini on Wednesday morning May 1, 2019.

In this meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei praised teachers for the great role they play in building civilizations and asserted: You the teachers are in fact building the cultural identity of the society. Civilization relies on culture. Without a strong and rich culture, civilization would not be created.

His Eminence slammed the UN 2030 Agenda for nations' educational system for imposing a Western system and went on to say: This is where the importance of the 2030 Agenda is revealed. The essence of this agenda is that our educational system would teach children a lifestyle and philosophy of life-based on Western principles. This means that you, the teachers would train soldiers and footmen for the West in your classrooms.

The Supreme Leader described the 2030 agenda for the education system as a means of foisting Western intellectual strategies on nations that implement it and held: They are working on this 2030 Agenda so much because the instructions and advice for the educational system it implies are meant to adjust students' system of thoughts in a way that the principles of their life would be built upon Western thoughts.

Ayatollah Khamenei further described the 2030 agenda's goal to train soldiers for the West and maintained: It implies that you would train soldiers for Britain, the U.S. and the rest of the well-dressed, perfumed savages: the ones who murder and assist the murderers without giving a care. They say, "we help the Saudis because we need their money!" Now they want us to raise soldiers and footmen for them in Islamic countries. This is what the 2030 agenda is about.

The Supreme Leader regarded human resources as the most important asset for a nation and said: The most important subject of civilization for us is education. For a country and a civilization, the most important capital is human capital. That is to say, having money but lacking human capital, you would not get to anywhere. Just like some wealthy countries who devote their big pockets to traitors to humanity, because they lack human assets.

His Eminence described the plunder of Iran's oil reserves during the tyrannical regimes ruling over Iran as another example and added: [Another example is] our country lies on an ocean of oil. We were unaware of it and did not even have the know-how [to extract it]. Those who knew took away our oil built themselves factories used it in their wars and gave us a little something in return during the monarchy. This is the result of neglecting to invest on human capital.

Ayatollah Khamenei dubbed teachers as the builders of the new civilization by asserting: I am not one to flatter and whatever



I have stated during all these years regarding teachers has come from the belief that teachers are the builders of the new civilization. Because without worthy men and women there would be no civilization.

Imam Khamenei added: You are the fighters in the battlefield against ignorance and illiteracy. With a healthy education system, we will get to the future that we wish for.

The Leader of the Revolution stated: The healthy education system we seek would nurture wise, capable, thoughtful, virtuous, pious, chaste, efficient, ingenious, brave and practical men and women. Those who would not fear the enemy and do not evade or neglect [responsibilities].

Ayatollah Khamenei described such an educational system as the prerequisite to the ideal status Iran would win in science and knowledge where anyone would feel the need for learning Persian in order to acquire knowledge, asserting that: If we have such an educational system, the country would get to what I wished for and promised: the status where anyone who seeks to comprehend the frontiers of science would need to learn Persian. The education of such youth is the foundation for the Iran of tomorrow.

The Supreme Leader criticized those who slam the educational system over minor shortcomings and held: There are problems and shortcomings that we will address by God's help. The community of educators has performed remarkable feats during the past 40 years. Some seek to degrade the education system for different political reasons. This is unfair. Of course, I know about the shortcomings. But I am also aware of the long way the education system has come from the deplorable situation before the Revolution.

Ayatollah Khamenei praised the teachers and officials of the educational system for raising scientists and revolutionary generations decades after the Islamic Revolution and maintained: These different

scientists, for example, who have placed the country among the top 5 countries of the world in nanoscience were nurtured by you. The third and fourth generations of the Revolution who have not met Imam Khomeini and the martyrs of the 8-year Saddam's U.S.-backed war on Iran, and who stand against the enemy today to defend their faith, sacrificing their lives are nurtured by this education system, despite the world of internet, satellite TV, and different vices that exist.

His Eminence further added: Who educated the youth who go on trips to help people as a way of Jihad? So many great scientific works have been accomplished in the country. So many manifestations of faith are present in the country. So many students and teachers. This is all the outcome of the education system. Do not underestimate the education after the Revolution.

Ayatollah Khamenei warned those who seek to inculcate despair and pessimism among the revolutionary youth by saying: God will not let go of those who weaken the revolutionary spirit with their writings.

The Leader described the revolutionary spirit among the nation as the driving force behind the Islamic Revolution of 1970 and stressed: It was the nation's revolutionary spirit that overthrew the Pahlavi regime. People gave their lives for this Revolution to happen, and free the country from the domination of foreigners.

Referring to the Pahlavi era as an era of humiliation for the Iranian nation at the hands of the Pahlavi family, Ayatollah Khamenei declared: There were 2 kings during the Pahlavi regime: Reza and Mohammad Reza. Reza Shah was brought to power by the United Kingdom. Mohammad Reza was brought to power by the UK and the U.S.

Mentioning Reza Khan's interest in Hitler as a dictator, the Supreme Leader added: Reza Shah was brought to power by the British. Later during the World War, he was attracted by Hitler. This made the British angry and they ordered him to step down, which he

did. If he had a bit of decency, he would not step down and even die for it.

Ayatollah Khamenei told his audience: The Islamic Revolution overthrew this regime. The revolutionary spirit is the life and soul of this nation. Will God forgive those who weaken and doubt the revolutionary spirit?

Stressing the need for the meticulous implementation of the proposed national agenda for reforming the educational system, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution stated: The agenda for reforms in the education system opens the way for the educational system to reach to its destination. However, it is not enough to just communicate the agenda; rather, we need to make sure to implement it, so that the people involved in the education system will read it, understand it, and act upon it. This is a well-drawn document that needs following up.

Ayatollah Khamenei urged education officials to help the schools affected by massive floods in many provinces of the country so that they will not fall behind their educational plans and held: Do not let the students in flood-stricken regions fall behind their studies. Rebuilding schools has started. The charitable people who help in building schools—and are truly beneficial—will help too. The situation has to be managed in a way that while the schools are being rebuilt, these students do not fall behind in their studies.

The Supreme Leader reminded his audience of the enemies' plots against the independent Iranian nation, asserting that: Today, the enemy is attacking us in every front. In the economic, politics, and intelligence fronts as well as in the cyberspace. This is not particular to the current U.S. government. This person in power in the U.S. now [Trump] actually helps to expose the real face of the United States. Those before him followed the same policy, however, they wore velvet gloves over their iron hands. The current President of the U.S. has taken off these gloves and everyone can see the iron fist hidden beneath.

Imam Khamenei advised the nation as well as government officials to be prepared and equipped in the face of these aggressions and held: Every one of the people and the officials must prepare themselves for this aggression and wherever they are, they must take responsibility and enter the battlefield.

Ayatollah Khamenei described the enemy as arranged for a confrontation and stated: The enemy has made a confrontation arrangement in the realms of politics, economics, and cyberspace. Apparently, have not made a military confrontation arrangement yet. However, our armed forces are of course vigilant.

His Eminence further added: In the face of this confrontation arrangement, the nation has to go into make a confrontation arrangement too, and the most important thing to do is to stay united. Everyone make sure not to confront one another for differences of opinion. Because the power of this nation and what gives this country sovereignty is unity.

Diplomat: U.S. unilateralism harming rule of law

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations said on Wednesday that multilateralism and rule of law is suffering from the U.S. unilateralism.

Kazem Gharibabadi was speaking in a ceremony to commemorate diplomacy for peace, organized by the Non-Aligned Movement, according to the Islamic Republic News Agency.

He said that multilateralism is the cornerstone of international relations and the formation of international organizations is based on this principle.

Noting that rule of law and multilateralism guarantee the national and international interests, he said, "Unfortunately, these principles are being hurt by unilateralism of one country, i.e. the United States."

The ambassador said the United States repeatedly resorts to unilateral moves such as sanctions, threaten to use force, military intervention, and even withdrawing from international treaties and agreements.



These moves, especially on the part of a country that considers itself the police of the world, are contrary to international law and the UN Charter, he said, adding

Zarif: World realizing Bolton's 'chronic warmongering'

POLITICAL d e s k TEHRAN – In a post on his Twitter account late on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif highlighted again how Donald Trump's national security advisor John Bolton is enthusiastically trying to drag the U.S. into a war with Iran.

"Today, the world's catching on to Amb. John Bolton's chronic warmongering," Zarif tweeted.

The remarks came after Zarif and Bolton had squared off on Fox News in separate interviews.

Zarif told Fox News on Sunday that the "B-team", that includes Bolton and number of regional leaders including of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Zayed, are trying to inflame U.S.-Iranian tensions and push Trump "into a confrontation he doesn't want."

According to Press TV, Iran's chief diplomat cited examples from U.S. media outlets and elsewhere to exemplify his remarks.

The tweet incorporated a snapshot of a 2018 article in The New York Times that showed how Bolton had been promoting Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO or MEK), a notorious cult group which was on the U.S. terrorist list until September 2012, as a "viable opposition" and an alternative to the current ruling system in Iran.

"We've seen him (Bolton) shill for a cult terror group," Zarif remarked.

The Iranian foreign minister was referring to evidence showing how Bolton had received a \$40,000 "speaking fee" to

address the MEK's annual gathering in Paris.

Zarif also attached another image captured from a profile published by The New Yorker on Monday that detailed Bolton's idiosyncrasies, including by citing remarks by a former senior advisor to the U.S. administration that "John wants to bomb everyone."

The foreign minister said it was not necessary that Iranians read a long story in the New Yorker to be "convinced" that Bolton is working hard to get the U.S. entangled in a war with Iran.

"...Iranians didn't need to read a 10,000-word New Yorker profile to be convinced," Zarif chided.

Also in a tweet on Sunday, Zarif asked whether Trump will let Bolton and other persons on the B-team "realize their dreams"

the international community should disagree with the moves and stay committed to multilateralism and rule of law, he explained.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who recently visited New York released a list of U.S. unilateral acts, stressing that Iran has always supported multilateralism and diplomacy for peace.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly conference on "Remarking and Promoting International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace", Zarif stressed that Iran has always supported multilateralism and diplomacy for peace.

He said, "To defend multilateralism, it is imperative to deny the U.S. any perceived benefit from its unlawful actions, and to forcefully reject any pressure it brings to bear on others to violate international law and Security Council resolutions."

"We all have a responsibility to collectively hold any government accountable for the consequences of any lawlessness."

to push the U.S. toward an unending war with Iran.

"While John Bolton and the B-team say the Iranian people 'deserve better', they've admitted to targeting them with Economic Terrorism—and even war—in a delusional pursuit of 'regime-change'. But will Donald Trump let them realize their dreams of another Forever War?" Zarif asked.

The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, which had welcomed Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and reimposition of sanctions on Iran, have said they are ready to pump more oil to compensate for Iran's oil cut from the market as the U.S. announced on April 22 that it does not extend sanctions waivers on Iran's oil exports.

Any war against Iran will hurt all regional states, general warns

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Commander **d e s k** of the Khatam-al Anbiya Central Headquarters has warned regional countries against supporting Washington and Tel Aviv's warmongering, saying any war against Iran would hurt the entire region, Fars reported.

"We do not welcome war in the region because it will definitely benefit the U.S. and the Zionist regime, but we are men of war and will stand against any aggression and will defeat the enemy with God's grace," Major General Gholam Ali Rashid said, addressing the Army Ground Force commanders in Tehran on Wednesday.

General Rashid emphasized Iran's common interests with the neighboring countries in securing stability, security and development in the region, saying they should avoid behaviors that would serve the interests of the U.S. and Israel which do not have any goal but sowing discord and war in the region.

Pointing out that the Islamic Republic always believes in peaceful co-existence with its neighbors, Rashid said, "We always



strive for this goal, otherwise the U.S. and the occupying regime [of Israel] will push the region toward crises and unpredictable

incidents."

He added that the Iraq-Iraq war (1980-88) has shown that "if we do not strive to maintain

enough power, we will be invaded; we will defend the interests of our people so that the life of our nation can be well protected."

The remarks come weeks after the United States officially designated Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a foreign terrorist organization, according to a notice published in the U.S. Federal Register.

In response, President Hassan Rouhani signed a bill into law on Tuesday declaring all U.S. forces in the Middle East terrorist and calling the U.S. government a sponsor of terrorism.

The law specifically labels as a terrorist organization the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), which is responsible for U.S. military operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

"These two forces (Guards and CENTCOM) that are designated as terrorist groups reciprocally might confront (each other) in the Persian Gulf or any other region. The United States will surely be responsible for such a situation," Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi was quoted as saying on Tuesday.

Army chief calls for 'utmost preparedness'



POLITICAL **TEHRAN (Tasnim)** **d e s k** — Army Chief Major General **d e s k** has called on his forces to maintain a constant level of preparedness to address any imminent threat.

In comments in a gathering of Army Ground Force commanders in Tehran on Wednesday, Major General Mousavi said Iran is faced with "serious threats" today.

"While such threats will not emerge on the ground in the first stage, the Ground Force must preserve and boost its preparedness," he stressed.

"Today, we must practice the game of war constantly and reach the level of 'night of attack' strategy in terms of mental and intra-unit preparedness," the general

underlined.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has on various occasions reiterated the need for boosting Iran's military capabilities and defense preparedness.

In November 2018, Ayatollah Khamenei said enhanced military preparedness would frighten the foes and is deterrent against the enemies. "The Islamic Republic is not intending to begin a war against anyone, but you (the Iranian military forces) should boost your capabilities in such a way that not only the enemy would be fearful and afraid of attacking Iran, but also thanks to the solidarity, might, and effective presence of the Armed Forces, the specter of threats against the Iranian nation would be swept away."

Majlis committee mulling exit from JCPOA, NPT: MP



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chairman **d e s k** of the Majlis Nuclear Committee says while Iran's government has not yet decided to exit the JCPOA, the committee is mulling over abandoning the agreement and the NPT if sanctions remain in place.

"With sanctions in place, we have no reason to continue our cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," Mehr quoted Mojtaba Zonnour as saying on Wednesday.

"We are mulling over leaving the JCPOA and NPT as our options," he stated.

Zonnour pointed to U.S. decision to end sanctions waivers for Iran's oil exports, saying, "It is not possible for the U.S. to drive Iran's oil exports to zero. We have our own clients, and we know the ways to

sell oil and we can handle our financial transactions."

Last year, President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of the JCPOA, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, and unleashed the "toughest ever" sanctions against Iran despite international objections.

Since then, the U.S. has been trying to coerce the Europeans and other signatories to the JCPOA into following its lead and scrapping the nuclear agreement.

However, the three European state parties to the deal — namely Germany, Britain and France — have created a non-dollar direct payment channel, known as INSTEX, with the aim of protecting their companies against U.S. bans and enabling them to continue trade with Iran.

Former diplomat warns against negotiation with U.S.

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The United States is trying **d e s k** to force Tehran back to the negotiating table, and if that happens, Washington would be the winner of this game one way or the other, former Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi has said.

They would claim that Tehran was forced by Washington to accept its conditions for dialogue, Asefi said in an interview with the Arman newspaper published on Wednesday.

"In other words, bringing Iran to the negotiating table means humiliating Iran," he added.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington have intensified since the Trump administration withdrew last year from an international nuclear deal with Iran and began reimposing sanctions. Last month, the United States blacklisted Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and demanded buyers of Iranian oil stop purchases by May or face sanctions.

Pointing to the recent remarks by IRGC Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani who has warned against any negotiations with the U.S., Asefi said the Americans are

not after reaching a solution through negotiations but want to show to the world that Iran has surrendered.

General Soleimani had said on Monday that "through economic pressure the enemy wants to bring us to the negotiating table but such a negotiation would be an example of surrender; however, our people are vigilant and clever and believe that negotiation in the current conditions is pure surrender and we will not give in to such an indignity,"

Asefi further said Washington is making every effort to demoralize the Iranian nation and foment unrest inside Iran.

The only way to counter the United States' unilateralism is to resist against its anti-Iran pressure campaign, the former diplomat suggested.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Asefi, who served as Tehran's ambassador to France and the UAE, said it is not in Iran's national interest to let Saudi Arabia and other regional countries move toward the U.S.

"We should try to point out the mistakes and wrong strategies of these countries to them," he said, adding, "Putting regional countries beside the Zionist regime and the U.S. is



not a very good strategy for [Iran's] foreign policy."

The Saudis should know that the Americans see them as financial resources and they will get rid of them as soon as they become disposable, the former diplomat asserted.

Raisi: Delay in judicial proceedings 'unacceptable'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi **d e s k** says delay in judicial proceedings is "not acceptable at all", ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Speaking at a meeting with judges and judicial officials of Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Raisi said the Judiciary is determined to reduce the number of cases entering the judicial system and prevent delays in judicial proceedings.

He also said the Judiciary regards Sistan-Baluchestan a priority and strives to improve the situation in the southeastern province.

Sistan-Baluchestan is on the development track and with coordination and cooperation of different bodies, it will move forward more rapidly, he added.

Next administration, parliament will be more revolutionary, Rezaee predicts

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Mohsen Rezaee, secretary of the **d e s k** Expediency Council, has criticized the current administration, predicting that the next administration and parliament will be more revolutionary compared to the past.

Rezaee also said the U.S. government plans to use all its power in the current and next year to counter the Islamic Revolution, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

"(However) our intelligence and security forces are ready to stand up to them with all their strength," he added.

Three parties receive permit

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hamid Molanouri, director general of the political department at the Interior Ministry, said on Wednesday that the government has granted permits for the establishment of three parties.

The three parties, including the Society of Ambassadors for Development and Hope of the Islamic Iran, the Society of Thankful to the Islamic Revolution of Tehran Province and the Society of Development and Solidarity of Mazandaran Province, are permitted to start their activities, Molanouri said, ISNA reported.

He also said the government has extended the license of three religious minority associations.

Earlier this week, Molanouri announced that 58 religious minority associations have official permission for activity in Iran.

Thee associations include 29 Zoroastrian groups, 16 Armenians, 10 Assyrians and 3 Jews, he added.

Zarif's 'clever' remarks angered Bolton, Pompeo: top MP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A top lawmaker says Foreign **d e s k** Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's "righteous" and "clever" remarks have agitated U.S. national security advisor John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Mohammad Javad Jamali Nobandegani, a member of the presiding board of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, made the remarks on Tuesday, speaking with IRNA.

Zarif's stances in his interviews with American news networks, especially Fox News which is the loud speaker of America's hardliners, made Bolton and Pompeo "angry", Jamali Nobandegani said.

The Iranian foreign minister's remarks were logical, decisive and based on international law, especially with regard to the Strait of Hormuz, he added.

In his interview with Fox News on Sunday, Zarif said all measures adopted by the administration of President Trump in dealing with Iran conveyed a message that "the United States is not reliable".

"Maybe he [Trump] believes in America first, but America cannot be first in a globally insecure environment," Zarif stated.

"We all need to work together in a global environment that is safe and you can only live in a safe global environment if you respect yourself by respecting your signature," the chief diplomat noted.

He emphasized that the B-team — U.S. national security advisor John Bolton, Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince of Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ), and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, also known as Bibi — seeks to "lure" the U.S. into a confrontation with Iran that Trump himself does not want.

"They have all shown an interest in dragging the United States into a conflict," Zarif said of Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates plus Bolton.

With or without sanctions, Iran needs to say goodbye to oil money

1 → Whether the Trump administration succeeds or not to implement its oil threats is an issue that we should wait and see, but it is necessary that Iran take a departure from oil export how much painful it will be.

Sorena Sattari, a graduate of Sharif University of Technology who serves as vice president for scientific affairs, told a meeting in Hamedan on Tuesday that sanctions have provided an opportunity that knowledge-based companies to intensify their efforts. Sattari also said plans have been drawn up to manufacture equipment and machinery that are subject to sanctions.

Also, whether we like it or not, fossil fuels, especially crude oil, are losing their importance as renewable energy resources are gradually taking the center stage.

Saying goodbye to easily-gained oil revenues is a bitter pill that Iran should swallow. To do so, though very difficult under tough sanctions, officials need to find other sources of income.

They can invest on tourism as Iran is among the top countries in hosting touristic sites, establish an environment for a transparent competitive economy, close loopholes of corruption, involve competent persons in managerial posts, introduce a sound and workable tax system, end unnecessary subsidies, and more importantly prioritize research and development (R&D).

Zarif: If we fail to secure multilateralism the 'rule of jungle' will prevail

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad **d e s k** Javad Zarif warned on Wednesday that if the international community fails to "secure multilateralism" the entire world will degenerate into "the rule of jungle".

"Unless we align our capabilities to secure multilateralism, a rising and aggressive unilateralist wave can cover the entire world, quickly replacing the rule of law with the rule of the jungle," Zarif told the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) summit hosted by Qatar.

Following is the text of his speech to the ACD forum:

Since 2002, we have worked together as the community of Asian Cooperation Dialogue and have exhibited the spirit of amity

in pursuit of a prosperous, functional and inclusive multilateral framework. The Islamic Republic of Iran views the Dialogue as a significant achievement of our continent, and is determined to promote its lofty values and develop its practical agendas envisioned in the ACD Vision for Asian Cooperation 2030, the ACD Blueprint for 2017-2021, and the ACD Summit Declarations.

Embracing the aspirations of our peoples for a peaceful and prosperous region, my country has utilized all its capacities and advantages in national, regional and international arenas to move towards Pan-Asian Cooperation 2030 and building the Asian Community. In this regard and as the "Prime Mover of Culture and Tourism", we

have initiated and implemented various programs, events and projects to foster mutual understanding among our nations and to make Asia a prime, sustainable tourist destination: They include organizing a grand festival celebrating Hamadan as Asian Capital of Tourism (ACT), and conducting various cultural activities through the ACD Cultural Center in Tehran.

The position of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the North-South and East-West transit corridors—along with a well-developed transportation infrastructure—plays a crucial role in connecting members of our community to other regions and contributing to the "Pillar of Connectivity" of our forum. Conclusion of various transit agreements, including the

Agreement on International North-South Transit Corridor, Ashkhabad International Transit Agreement and Chabahar Trilateral Agreement, along with bilateral arrangements, are all among the instruments that are promoting our shared target of connectivity.

Moreover, building upon our experience of hosting the Asian Clearing Union, a similar financial mechanism will become operational within the D-8 Organization to facilitate financial transactions between member states utilizing national currencies. We believe that the same arrangement can be adopted by the ACD in order to create institutional connectivity for an enabling business environment, and to reduce administrative and regulatory business roadblocks.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	220108.8
IFX	2643.16

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,117 rials
GBP	54,779 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$72.17/b
WTI	\$63.62/b
OPEC Basket	\$71.07/b
Gold	\$1,282.90/oz
Silver	\$14.92/oz
Platinum	\$884.50/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

‘Absence of gas supplies from Iran could shut down half of Iraq’s power plants’

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Without Iranian gas supplies half of Iraq’s natural gas power plants will close down in the summer, IRNA quoted a member of the trade committee of Iraqi parliament as saying on Tuesday.

“Baghdad’s waiver from U.S. sanctions on Iran not being renewed, Iraq will face a really critical situation, including in power production.” Heibat al-Habousi said in a press conference.

According to the official, of Iraq’s total 15,000 megawatts of power capacity, 7,000 megawatts is produced by gas supplied from Iran.



Al-Habousi added that almost all Iraqi power plants use natural gas as feedstock and cannot use any other substitute fuels and don’t have any other pipelines from other countries.

Considering Iraq’s geopolitical improvements in the past few years, the Iraqi government has been seeking to improve the country’s infrastructure and one of the main areas of focus has been Iraq’s electricity network and power infrastructures.

Being neighbor to a country which is the home to the world’s second largest gas resources is a good-enough reason for Iraq to look to Iran as one of its main suppliers of natural gas to meet its energy needs. Therefore, Iran for long has been one of Iraq’s main gas suppliers.

The neighbors signed a deal in 2013 for Iran to supply gas to Iraqi power stations, but poor security in Iraq hampered the implementation of the deal.

Later on in 2017, once again Iran signed two contracts with Iraq to export gas, one for the capital Baghdad and the other for southern city of Basra.

Based on these deals Iran was to supply 35 million cubic meters of gas on a daily basis to the capital Bagdad [gradually in three phases] while up to 25 million cubic meters of gas per day was supposed to be exported to Basra.

After Trump withdrew from Iran’s nuclear deal in November, the U.S. government and its allies have been putting all their efforts together to isolate Iran and make the Islamic country bend under economic pressure.

Taking Iran’s energy market in the region has been Trump’s top agenda in order to succeed in his plans.

■ Steel market in Iraq offers \$4b potential for Iran’

Iraqi steel market has at least \$4 billion potential for Iran, according to the secretary general of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce, IRNA reported.

Seyyed Hamid Hosseini said that to take the advantage of this market, Iranian companies need to be more active in branding, product quality and holding exhibitions in this country.

He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran should be thinking of diversifying its export markets and the best of these markets is Iraq.

The secretary general of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce referred to the great advantages of the Iraqi market and said that the destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure, its high financial ability and the need for goods and services, the lack of efficient manpower are among the advantages that have attracted the Iranians to Iraqi market.

He said the Iraqi population survey shows that 65 percent of the country is under 45, while Iraq’s population under the age of 20 has a share of over 45 percent, which is a demographic characteristic of their desire for consumption.

Hosseini noted that the development of construction and infrastructure is the fourth priority of the central plans of the Iraqi government, which should be addressed by Iranian exporters of goods and services.

Iranian economic figure highlighted that the Islamic Republic of Iran by the year 2017 was the third largest exporter to Iraq with \$6.4 billion worth of exports, but last year, due to foreign exchange rate and events in the Iraqi government, Iran’s exports to Iraq reached \$8,700 million and Iran was ranked first in exports to this country.

Iran Oil Show 2019 hosting 106 foreign exhibitors

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — The 24th **d e s k** Iran International, Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2019), which kicked off at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Wednesday, is hosting 106 foreign exhibitors from 21 countries, Shana reported.

As reported, 1,047 Iranian exhibitors are also showcasing their latest products and

services in the oil, gas, petrochemical and refining industries during the four-day event.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, some Iranian senior directors in oil, gas, petrochemical and refining sectors, some members of the Iranian parliament, and representatives of some renowned Iranian and foreign companies were present in the inaugural ceremony of



the international event.

Companies from various countries including Azerbaijan, Spain, Germany, Britain, Italy, Turkey, China, Russia, the Netherlands, Ukraine, and etc. are showcasing their latest products and achievements in oil and gas industry in the four-day event.

According to the head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) public relations office,

which is in charge of organizing the event, although this year the number of foreign participants has decreased due to the U.S. sanctions, still many countries are interested in Iran’s lucrative oil industry and market.

“This year the main focus of the exhibition is on developing domestic production and empowering domestic companies.” Mohammad Naseri said.

Iranian, Syrian private sectors seek to bolster trade ties

1 → During the gathering, several senior officials delivered speeches and afterwards the two sides’ companies held B2B meetings to get to know each other and acquire information on their potentials and capacities.

■ Bilateral trade low despite high political ties

Addressing the forum, the Chairman of Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee Keyvan Kashefi mentioned the good political relations between the two countries and criticized the mismatch between the level of economic ties and political ones.

The official mentioned some of the hurdles in the way of developing trade between the two countries including lack of strong banking relations, high tariffs on some of the Iranian goods, weak insurance policies and coverage and lack of desirable ways of transportation.

He called for both sides taking necessary measures in order to fill this gap and escalate

the two countries trade ties to the levels of political partnership.

He further voiced Iranian companies and private sector’s readiness for cooperation with their Syrian counterparts in reconstruction of Syria noting that Iran is going to have a significant role in Syria’s future markets.

Kashefi also underlined the strategic and geographical situation of Syria stressing the fact that Syria could be used as a hub for exporting Iranian goods to other countries.

The official mentioned technical and engineering services, water and wastewater, medicine and pharmaceuticals, petrochemicals, mining, construction materials and transportation and tourism as some of the potent areas for mutual cooperation.

■ Iran, Syria’s top priority in trade

Samer Al-Debes for his part, expressed gratitude for Iran’s efforts in helping his country regaining peace and stability and noted that the Islamic Republic is Syria’s top trade

partner and first priority in reconstruction of the war-torn country.

The official pointed to some positive meetings which he had with senior Iranian officials on enhancement of economic ties between the two countries private sectors and noted that the Syrian government will take all necessary measures to remove the existing barriers and facilitate trade for the two sides’ businessmen.

“We need to raise awareness and pave the way for the two sides’ private sectors to get to know each other’s potentials and capabilities.”

Exchanging trade delegations and holding specialized exhibitions in the two countries was offered by Debes as a way to achieve the above goal.

■ Implementing previous agreements

In another part of the event, Hassan Danaiefar, the senior advisor to Iran’s first vice president in Syria and Iraq affairs, also

addressed the forum emphasizing the importance of the event.

“This event marks the sixth gathering of the two sides’ private sectors in the past six month and that is an indication of the two countries determination for boosting economic ties just like the positive political relations.”

Danaiefar stressed the need for implementing and acting upon the previously reached agreements between the two sides, noting “The free trade agreement and the strategic economic cooperation agreement have provided the necessary bases for fruitful economic relations and the private sectors of the two countries should act on them to reach the desirable trade.”

Adding to the number of direct flights between the two countries, establishing joint ventures and opening representative offices for the private companies in the two countries were other suggestions presented by the official in order to further develop mutual trade ties.

700 rooftop PV stations to be installed in southeast Iran

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Imam **d e s k** Khomeini Relief Foundation has funded the construction of 700 rooftop photovoltaic power stations (known as PV systems) in the southeastern Kerman province, of which 520 are ready for use, Mehr reported on Wednesday, quoting Mohammadreza Pur-Ebrahimi, the chairman of the Parliament’s Economic Committee.

The five-kilowatt PV systems are aimed at boosting the power capacity in the region and also helping the families under the patronage of Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation.

According to the deputy manager of the Kerman Electric Power Distribution Company, an estimated 1,690 small-scale power stations will become operational next month in the province.

“The small-scale solar systems will add 8,455 megawatts of electricity to the national grid by the end of May,” Abdolhamid Shirnejad added.

In September 2018, Mohammad Sadeqzadeh, head of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA),



said Iranian households are going to install 2000 new rooftop solar power stations across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2020), pushing the number of such small-scale power plants to reach 4000.

The country’s current capacity of generating electricity from renewable resources stands at 700 MW and near 500 MW of new power plants are under construction.

Overall, in the next five years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

U.S. sanctions on Iran would hurt India’s economy: Indian envoy

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — The **d e s k** Indian ambassador to the United States said on Tuesday U.S. sanctions on Iran could boost oil prices and inflation to a point that hurts the common people in India.

“We are apprehensive that that impact can translate into inflation, (and) higher oil prices,” Economic Times quoted Harsh Vardhan Shringla as saying at a Carnegie Endowment.

Shringla mentioned the heavily reliance of Indian oil refineries on oil supplies from Iran, noting that “it is not possible to suddenly convert those refineries (to run) some other form of crude.”

Cutting off sales of oil from Iran, with which India has long had business and cultural relations, raises questions about long-term agreements on pricing and quality in the oil business, he said.

Earlier this week, India’s External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj discussed Iranian oil sanctions with Mike Pompeo

over phone, insisting that India should be allowed to continue importing oil from Iran at least for a longer time span.

In May last year, the U.S. brought back sanctions on Iran after withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal which was struck in 2015.

They told India and other countries to cut oil imports from the Persian Gulf nation to “zero” by November 4 or face sanctions. However, Washington granted a six-month waiver to India and seven other countries to buy oil from Iran. The waivers are due to expire in May.

India, which is the second biggest purchaser of Iranian oil after China, has since then restricted its monthly purchase to 1.25 million tons or 15 million tons in a year (300,000 barrels per day), down from 22.6 million tons (452,000 barrels per day) bought in 2017-18 financial year, sources said.

The world’s third biggest oil consumer, meets more than 80 percent of its oil needs through imports.

NIOC selling oil at IRENEX while U.S. tightening sanctions

1 → Now, offering heavy crude oil at IRENEX can open a new chapter for the exports of Iranian oil as this type of crude is of high significance both technically and commercially, because it accounts for a huge amount of production in the refineries and many refineries throughout the world specially in the South Asian region are willing to use this type which has of course lower price compared to the light oil.

■ Another achievement for stock market

While sales of heavy crude at the IRENEX is some good news for the exports of Iranian oil, it also highlights existence of infrastructure at the country’s stock market for trade of different types of commodities.

Offering this product at the stock market in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) is considered another achievement added to some noticeable successful measures of this market in the past year as besides offering light crude oil at IRENEX for the first time it launched some new financial instruments in different markets.

For example, Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) officially launched “futures” in mid-December 2018 for more risk management and Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) launched “option” in early March 2019 in an ap-



proach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products, while the number and worth of trades at Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market, known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), increased 89 percent and 71 percent, respectively, in the past year compared to its preceding year and IFX, the main index of (IFB), touched a new record high, gaining more than 100% to stand at 2,258 points on March 19, 2019.

Meanwhile, the value of trades at IME rose 52 percent in the past calendar year from its previous year.

■ Strong support by government

Sales of crude oil, both light and heavy types, at the IRENEX is being strongly supported by the Iranian government and NIOC is facilitating the condition for the buyers more in each round of the offering.

In this due, Export Guarantee Fund of Iran (EGFI) is going to issue bank guarantees for the customers who purchase the oil offered at IRENEX, managing director of the fund announced on Sunday.

“We are in talks with the oil ministry in this regard.” Afrouz Bahrami said.

She noted that EGFI has received some requests for issuing bank guarantees from oil customers interested in purchasing the oil offered at IRENEX.

According to the official, EGFI covers the commercial and political risks of exports, including both non-oil and oil exports and since the oil which is offered at the IRENEX is also considered as part of the country’s oil exports, therefore it is possible for EGFI to issue banking guarantees for such cargoes.

Such supports and also offered incentives encourage the applicants of crude oil at the energy exchange and also pave the way for the country’s oil exports under the sanctions.

Asia’s economies can fight off trade war and global headwinds, says report

The economies of Southeast Asia, China, Japan and South Korea are expected to remain “resilient” in the face of heightened trade tensions and stronger global headwinds, a regional body said.

While growth in the region should ease to 5.1 percent this year from 5.3 percent in 2018, robust consumption and trade between the

economies will be supportive, the Asean+3 Macroeconomic Research Office, known as AMRO, said in a report released Wednesday. The biggest risks remain an escalation of trade tensions, a sharper global slowdown and financial market volatility.

AMRO was created as a monitoring unit and adviser to the Chiang Mai Initiative, an agree-

ment forged in the wake of the Asian financial crisis to pool resources to help countries facing liquidity problems.

The economies were in a good position to weather headwinds to external demand, given that most “have adequate reserves and fiscal buffers,” AMRO said. It saw decent growth, inflation largely within range, and credit cy-

cles “mostly in either the recovery or slowing phase” and close to trend.

The region’s current policy stances were deemed “appropriate,” though AMRO warned that central bankers should be ready to adjust policy toward promoting growth while maintaining financial stability, according to the report.

(Source: Bloomberg)

NISOC, Pioneer in Rendering Relief & Rescue Services to Flood-Hit Areas



شرکت ملی مناطق نفت خیز جنوب

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) is pioneer in rendering quality relief and rescue services to the flood-hit areas.

In the early hours of crisis hit almost all provinces of the country, the company took effective and constructive measures in cooperation with all provincial organizations and departments in offering quality relief services to the flood-stricken people.

With the drastic measures taken by the National Iranian South Oilfields Company before the start of rainfall, all relevant installations, equipment and pipelines were put under complete protection in order to avoid probable damages in the face of flash floods.

Therefore, this company rendered quality services in this respects: offering quality relief services to flood-hit areas and also protection of relevant installations and equipment. In general, the company used all its potentials and capacities for the materialization of these two important objectives.

To learn more about the details, our correspondent conducted an interview with the Managing Director of the National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) Eng. Ahmad Mohammadi.

In the beginning, the managing director said, "with the special

at the time of flood crisis."

Eng. Ahmadi expounded on the measures taken by the company in Khuzestan province and said, "this company along with the National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) were tasked with offering quality relief services to the three cities of Ahvaz, Bavi and Karun."

In this regard, the company rolled its sleeves up eagerly in order to render maximal services to the flood-stricken people. Even, in some cases, the company risked and allocated relevant equipment and machinery for helping flood-stricken people.

He reiterated, "rendering quality relief services to the people is the main mission of the company and we believe that the company should make practical measures in time of need."

■ Allocation of Over 370 Transport Equipment and Machinery to Relief Services

Production Logistics and Transport Operation Affairs Management of the company said that more than 370 various types of machinery including compressor, loader, mechanical shovel, bulldozer, roller, grader, roofed truck, pickup, trailer, passenger car, water pump dredger were dispatched to the required areas until normalization of conditions in flood-hit areas.

Also, 900 personnel and



coastal areas of rivers at the distance of about 150 km.

The National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) also carried out dredging operations, fortifying and strengthening and refurbishing Salman Canal as long as 7 km (from 21 km).

■ Distribution of Contributions Donated



by NISOC's Personnel to Flood-Hit Areas

The contributions collected by the staff and personnel of the company were distributed by the Basij Resistance Base of Shahid Tongdouguyan among flood-hit cities of Elhaei, Hamidiyeh and Karun.

These donations were distributed within the 30-member Jihadi groups to the cities of Elhaei, Hamidiyeh and Karun. At the first stage, the number of 3,000 packs of sanitary products and detergents, 6,000 bottles of minerals (each 1.5 liter), 900 packs of foodstuff (sugar, lump sugar, date, etc.), 250 ice boxes

and also five tents for settlement purposes.

The second stage of contributions include the number of 100 sanitary products and detergents, 100 packets of toys, shoes, slippers, etc.

The third stage of donations also included: foodstuff, sanitary products, various

the company in line with fulfilling its social commitments, it should be referred to the launch of social and mental health base of family with the aim of reducing mental and psychic pressures caused by the flash flood.

For this purpose, relief packages of the company were sent to the aforementioned areas. In these camps, experts, social workers in women's affairs offered quality relief and rescue packages.

■ Distribution of Cultural Packages and Participating in Offering Quality Mental Health Services to Flood-Hit Families by Karun Oil & Gas Co.

Karun Oil and Gas Operation Company also offered quality mental health services and distributed cultural packages among flood-hit families through Health Base of Red Crescent Society based in Elhaei region.

The company took effective relief services to the flood-hit people especially in the field of sending psychological experts for offering quality consultation services.

■ Aqajari Oil & Gas Operation Co. Offers Relief Services to Esmaeilayah District of Ahvaz

A group of Basiji members of the company rushed to help flood-hit people along with heavy transport equipment and

the flood-hit area.

■ Providing 5,000 Dishes of Hot Food to Flood-Hit People by Masjed Soleiman Oil & Gas Co.

In line with fulfilling its social responsibilities and participating in alleviation of problems facing flood-hit people, Masjed Soleiman Oil and Gas Operation Company donated its noncash donations including chicken, rice, vegetable oil, tomato paste in order to provide 5,000 dishes of hot food.

■ Marun Oil and Gas Co. Renders Quality Relief Services to Flood-Hit People

For its part, Marun Oil and Gas Operation Company, in tandem with immunizing operational units of this company, offered special services to the people of flood-hit regions.

Provision of a mechanical shovel unit, one bulldozer for dredging operation and construction of dyke, two trucks for the construction of a dyke as long as one kilometer, constructing and dredging canals, one loader unit and two trucks, etc. are of the other measures conducted by the company in this field.

■ Gachsaran Oil and Gas Company Helps Flood-Hit People

Shortly after the torrential flood hit a number of provinces in the country, staff and personnel of the company rendered quality relief and rescue services to the



emphasis of the Ministry of Oil and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), helping flood-hit people and also sustainability of production were taken into consideration as our main priority

workers of the company rendered quality relief services both directly and indirectly to the flood-hit people from more than nine cities, the most important of which can be referred to: immunizing

types of detergents that were collected by the Basij resistance base of subsidiary companies, National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) and gas company of the province, total of them were sent to Hamidiyah.

It should be noted that Basiji members of Shahid Tongdouguyan Basij Resistance Base rendered relief services to the flood-hit people as of the early hours of the flash flood with the aim of restoration of security.

■ Family Social - Mental Health Base in Flood-Stricken Areas

Other measures conducted by



machinery in controlling flood in Esmaeilayah region (Malihan Village). In this Jihadi move, a trailer, two trucks, two light machinery and mechanical shovel, etc. were dispatched to

flood-stricken people, the most important of which includes as follows: sending carpet, blanket, foodstuff, water, sanitary appliances, etc. valued at one billion rials.

By: A.Saeidi



NPC Holds Ceremony to Honor Functionaries of P-Xylene Unit Project



Nouri Petrochemical Company (NPC) held a ceremony to honor the unflinching efforts of functionaries for launching P-Xylene Unit project of the complex.

This prestigious ceremony was held in the Amphitheater of Nouri Petrochemical Complex on Monday April 29, 2019 for honoring unsparing efforts of laborers and functionaries in promoting the performance and function of absorbent towers in the P-Xylene Unit.

In the beginning, Eng. Jafar Rabiei the managing director of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company expressed his special thanks to the industrious workers, laborers and engineers of the company for launching this great task and added, "the company

owes its success to the hardworking personnel and engineers of the company in all units."

Given the numerous problems, many ups and down and dismissal of European side to carry out the project after the US reimposition of sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, "we could launch this unit in the shortest time possible at the unsparing efforts of industrious personnel and workers of this industrial and production unit."

Earlier, Eng. Sanei Chief Executive of Nouri Petrochemical Company (NPC) expounded on the various dimensions and aspects of this important project and termed the current situation of P-Xylene Unit 'satisfactory'.

He seized this opportunity to express his special thanks to the respected management of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company, all-out cooperation and collaboration of respected members of the Board of Directors of the company and all officials who contributed to the materialization of most objectives of this industrial and production unit.

With the implementation of various other projects of the company, it is hoped that this industrial and production unit will witness evermore progress and development in national and international arenas, he reiterated.

He then pointed to the results of promotion of performance and function of absorbent towers and added,

"winning technical knowhow and knowledge, redesigning inspection unit, commissioning molecular screening, providing p-xylene used in the country, exporting surplus p-xylene in the country and increasing production capacity in the unit from 460,000 tons to 750,000 tons per year are of salient results behind implementation of this giant project in the company.

In the end of this ceremony, some industrious and hardworking personnel and engineers of the company, represented by all units of the complex, were honored.

Eng. Rabiei awarded statue and Plaque of Honor to some of industrious laborers and engineers of the company who contributed in launching p-xylene unit of the complex.

By: A.Saeidi



Managing Director Expounds on Key Role of Dams in Reducing Damages Caused by Devastating Floods



This point should be taken into serious consideration that conducting research and research activities, performing accurate and expert planning in the field of dam construction and also constructing dams in proper locations can alleviate and eradicate the damages caused by the flash floods to a great extent.

Managing Director of Mahab Ghodss Consulting Engineering Company Nasser Tarkeshdooz announced the above statements and reiterated, "if expert-level studies are considered in the field of construction of dam, upcoming damages caused by flash flood will be alleviated to a great extent."

He pointed to Karun River in Ahvaz and said, "as located 40 km away from northern city of Ahvaz, Karun River joins Dez River. Since the Greater Karun's water pours into Ahvaz and then Abadan and Khorramshahr, Dez River itself is composed of two important head branch i.e. Sezar and Bakhtiari rivers."

As a matter of fact, more than half a century has passed since the construction of Dez Dam and presently, about 80 to 85 percent of the dam has been deposited. Once this issue is not taken into consideration, the sediment of the dam will reach to the mouthpiece of the power plant, he emphasized.

Since 80 percent of the deposit enters into the dam from Bakhtiari River, he said, "once Bakhtiari Dam had been constructed before, not only 80 percent

of water entered into the Dez River would have been controlled but also we could have generated about 2,500-megawatt of electricity."

In the course of the recent flash floods, special attention was paid to Dez Dam in a way that the dam was much more sensitive because of its longevity and lifetime, dating back to more than 50 years ago.

Therefore, releasing water was the fastest and sole way that we could carry out in that situation.

He added, "Gotvand Dam helped us greatly in controlling and preventing occurrence of flood in Ahvaz."

In absence of Gotvand Dam, Ahvaz city was under water, he said, "however, construction of dam prevented destruction of most flood-hit areas in this province considerably."

He pointed to the unique and salient specifications of Iran and degree of precipitation in different seasons of the year and reiterated, "in 2015, the average precipitation rate in Iran hit 80mm while the average of precipitation in Iran's neighboring countries such as Oman stands at about 100 to 200mm in year."

Moreover, global warming and climatic change caused disruption of climatic condition in Iran especially in recent years, he said, adding, "under such critical water shortage situation, responsible officials should take logical steps in this respect and save the country from water shortage problem."



■ Managing Director: Please Not to Play with People's Lives and Property / Some Consider Iran Self-Sufficient in Dam Construction 'Mistakenly'

Managing Director of Mahab Ghodss Consulting Engineering Company Nasser Tarkeshdooz pointed to the recent flash floods overshadowed the country in the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year in 1398 (started March 21, 2019) and said, "some people criticize unthinkingly and do not know that their criticism can cost dearly with the lives and property of the people."

Some others believe that the country is self-sufficient in construction of dam but actually, construction of dam is needed in the country, he said, adding, "there are some officials who say without knowledge that construction of dam is not needed in the country."

The issue of flood and its consequences should be taken into serious consideration, otherwise, if logical steps are not taken in this regard, spread of flood will cost dearly for the country, he reiterated.

■ In Only Three Days, Threefold of Karz Dam Reservoirs Entered Dez Dam

He acknowledged, "on April 14, 2019, we witnessed the incidence of a huge flash flood in Dez River in such a way that flow and discharge rate of the dam hit 8,000 cubic meters at large. In only three days, 600 million cubic meters of water i.e. threefold of reservoir of Karz dam

entered into the reservoir of Dez River."

"If Dez Dam was not exist; a great disaster and calamity would happen," he noted.

Rivers in Iran have specific conditions especially rivers that are located in Iran, south, west, southeast and eastern the country, he said, adding, "the condition of these rivers differs from those rivers in northern parts of the country."

The average discharge of country's northern rivers and floodwaters of these rivers do not have much difference, but such condition in southern rivers of the country is very different, Tarkeshdooz stated.

For instance, the average discharge of Dez River stands at 260 cubic meter/second, expandable to 6,700 cubic meters/second in 25 years.

Given the above issue, the average discharge of water in 50 years will hit 7,700 cubic meters/second, expandable to 16,000 cubic meters/second in 10,000 years.

■ Instant Discharge of Karun River Is Variable from 360 Cubic Meter to 9,000 Cubic Meter

He, who is expert official in dam-construction field, added, "Dez River, located in below part of Gotvand Dam, pours into Karun River and form the Greater Karun. Shatit and Gargar rivers join it and pass through Ahvaz city directly. After that, except small cities, the river passes through Khorramshahr and then from Abadan. If Gotvand Dam was not controlling flood in Karun River in the flash flood happened in the current year, flood in rives of Greater

Karun would incur financial and physical damages to many cities of Ahvaz and its surrounding areas."

■ Iranian Rivers Are Both Opportunity and Threat

Elsewhere in his remarks, managing director of Mahab Ghodss Consulting Engineering Company reiterated, "Karun and Dez rivers are the opportunity in terms of production of potable and agricultural waters, generation of electricity, etc. These rivers are considered as a great and serious 'threat' since rivers pas through the middle part of the city."

The only logical and practical way for preventing flood damages is 'dam construction, he said, adding, "however, construction of dam is necessity in the country in order to prevent flood damages. All of a sudden, volume of water as much as threefold of reservoir of Karz Dam enters into a river that passes through a populated city like Ahvaz."

■ Critics Requested to Respond to This Question, "Which large structure except dam can control water with the discharge rate of 8,000 cubic meters?"

He reiterated that only dam can control the discharge rate of 8,000 cubic meters of water. If dams are not constructed in upstream side and/or if water with the discharge rate of 6,000 or 8,000 cubic meter/second enters into the city of Ahvaz, a national disaster and calamity would happen in the country which

will cost dearly.

This is not a joke that some officials say that dam should not be constructed in the city, rather, the country will be in dire need of construction dam especially in such occasions, he criticized.

Those who are against construction of dam should be asked that which structure except dam can control and curb a floodwater as large as 8,000 cubic meter/second discharge.

If no dam is constructed on a flood river, who is responsible for compensating the damages when water enters into the cities and create a great disaster, he added.

He pointed to the implementation and modulation of flood last year using world's latest and most modern technologies of flood in the world and said, "Mahab Ghodss Consulting Engineering Company modeled the flood happened in the first Iranian month of Farvardin and showed it within the framework of an animation."

Once Gotvand Dam was not available, the city of Ahvaz would put under about 10- to 15 meters of water and in some cases, the city would have been turned into an aquarium city, he said, adding, "in this software, the latitudinal and longitudinal extent of the flood has been modeled according to the topography of the region. We can observe that when flood volume reaches to 4,000 cubic meter/second, water enters into the city and engulfs the whole city of Ahvaz in southern part of the country."

By: A.Saeidi



In Year Named after “Boosting Domestic Production”:

Persian Gulf Star Oil Co. Increases Production Using Its Capabilities and Potentials



Introduction:

Chief Executive of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company “Mohammad-Ali Daadvar” is one of the able and competent managers who took effect steps in the field of materializing most objectives of the company in the past year (ended March 20, 2019).

With his Jihadi measures taken, he managed to inaugurate two phases of Persian Gulf Star Refinery, bringing about honor for the Islamic Iran, in line with attaining self-sufficiency of the country in the field of production of gasoline and removal of threats due to the excessive demands of the global arrogance. In the beginning of the year named after “boosting domestic production” by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, we conducted an interview with him which comes as follows:

Recommendations of Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Key for Development and Growth

In the beginning, senior official of the company pointed to the remarks of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in the beginning of the year entitled ‘boosting domestic production’ and said, “the second and third phases of Persian Gulf Star Refinery was put into operation in the past year (ended March 20, 2019) with following up policies of resistance economy, all-out support of all responsible organization of the country, incessant efforts and self-credence of industrial Iranian engineers and laborers. However, the country attained self-sufficiency in the production of gasoline.

While placing special emphasis on the realization of objective of resistance economy in the current year (started March 21, 2019), he said, “in the current year (started March 21, 2019), increasing production capacity of strategic products of energy such as gasoline was put atop agenda with the aim of booming production.”

Opening Horizons of Exports

Elsewhere in his remarks, the managing director reiterated, “this approach, moreover providing domestic fuel, will open new export horizons on the Iranian refining industry.”

He termed productive production as one of the salient indicators of growth and development in the country and added, “relying upon technical knowhow and knowledge of industrial laborers, we will come out of problems and difficulties successfully.”

With this approach, promotion of quality of products, lowering costs, increasing level of productions and planning for boosting economy will be accessible, he added.

We Could

Dadvar pointed to the trend of operation from 3rd phase of Persian Gulf Star Refinery and added, “we were chanting slogan on “We Can” in previous years but now, we announce with pride that “we could”.

He added, “by relying our domestic capabilities and potentials and without announcing the need to the foreign experts, we could construct the third phase of the largest gas condensate refinery in the world, the project that is of paramount importance in economic terms and strategic achievements for the country.”

Entering into Regional Gasoline Exporters Club

Elsewhere in his remarks, the managing director said, “turning the country from gasoline importer to the potential exporter is one of the salient achievements of the third phase of the refinery.”

Presently, the country does not need importing gasoline, he said, adding, “with the coordination made in

this regard, we can export gasoline soon.”

Daily Production of 47mn Liters of Gasoline

With the inauguration of 3rd phase of Persian Gulf Star Refinery, gasoline production of the country increased by 15 million liters.

He said, “with the increase of production capacity of former phases and inauguration of 6th phase, gasoline production in the Persian Gulf Star Refinery has hit 47 million liters/day.”

Registering Unique and Unparalleled Records

Dadvar hailed the experienced, competent and skilled manpower of Persian Gulf Star Refinery and added, “the largest reactor of Naphtha Hydrogen Treatment Unit (NHT) in the Middle East, as weigh as 750 tons was loaded with registering new record in 21 hours in the 3rd Phase of Persian Gulf Star Refinery and this issue indicates high specialty and expertise of domestic manpower.”



Persian Gulf Star Refinery stands at between 29.5 and 31.5 percent currently.

Also, the volume of standard sulfur in the gasoline should stand at less than 10 PPM but presently, less than 1 PPM.

In gasoline, the rate of sulfur in the fuel reached to less than 50 PPM and planning has been made to reach less than 10 PPM which is a unique success in the production of quality gasoline.

Human Capitals

Elsewhere in his remarks, Dadvar pointed to the human capitals in the Persian Gulf Star Refinery and added, “regardless of their language and ethnicity, engineers and laborers in Persian Gulf Star Refinery have fully grasped out the significance and importance of the refinery both in national and international levels.”

Given the above issue, industrious workers and engineers of the refinery have rolled up their sleeves vehemently with their unity and amity in line with materializing most objectives of this national project.”

No More Worry about Sanctions Imposed on Iran

In the end of his remarks, managing director of the Persian Gulf Star Refinery said, “we are not worried about sanctions imposed against the country, because, we have attained numerous achievements in a way that most parts and equipment of the refineries are supplied in the country.”

In a nutshell, industrious personnel and engineers of the company have taken drastic measures in line with realizing most objectives of the company. Despite all ups and downs, the company enjoys high capabilities and potentials to realize most of its objectives in sanctions period successfully.”

By: A.Saeidi

Performance of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) since Establishment up to End of Last Year

Hereunder are the performance and activity of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) since its establishment up to the end of the last Iranian calendar year in 1397 (ended March 20, 2019)

Iran, holder of second largest natural gas reserves in the world,
Iran, third largest gas producer in the world,
Management of about 39,000 km gas transmission line and also 82 gas pressure-boosting stations by the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC),
Supplying gas to 1,142 cities
Supplying gas to more than 28,793 villages
Supplying gas to 85 power plants of the country
Capacity of refining and transmitting gas as much as 850 million cubic meters natural gas/day
Injection of gas to Saracheh Storage Tanks in Qom and Shourijeh in Sarakhs



Salient Achievements of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) at a Glance

Introduction:

Undoubtedly, the current Iranian calendar year i.e. 1398 (started March 21, 2019) can be considered as one of the most amazing moments, not only in the past years but also in the recent decades.

The devastating flash flood, landslide, storm and flooding hit most provinces of the country severely in the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year in 1398 (started March 21, 2019).

The management, staff and personnel of the company made their utmost efforts and sent relief operations to the flood-hit areas in the country.

But the vastness of the incident was so high from one province to another province and forced relief workers of the company to mobilize all their means in order to prevent more destruction of homes and gardens, etc. of the flood-stricken people.

Moreover, other responsible organizations and departments as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) rolled their sleeves up and rendering high-quality relief services to the flood-hit people.

In the meantime, the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), as the largest and main supplier of energy basket in the country, played a leading and important role before and after the disaster. The industrious manpower and hardworking personnel of the company made their utmost efforts with their unity and amity as of the earliest outbreak of flood and rushed to help flood-stricken people in the provinces overshadowed with the devastating flash floods.

In continuation, some salient measures taken by the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) across the country especially in flood-hit areas in the provinces of Golestan, Mazandaran, Khuzestan, Lorestan, Ilam and Kermanshah and even Kordestan, Gilan and Tehran are as follows:

Measures Taken by NIGC before Flood Crisis:

Sending instruction to confront flood in industrial installations and buildings to the affiliated and subsidiary companies,

Training manpower in the field of management of crisis properly,

Organizing disaster maneuver including

earthquake, fire, etc.

Preparing necessary machinery and equipment to deal with the crisis across the country including generators, dredgers (sludge pumps) and other parts and equipment

Dividing tasked and duties of the units and operational manpower at the time of occurrence of crisis,

Identifying sections of gas lines and network with rivers across provinces hit by flood,

Controlling, visiting and inspecting all installations including gas transmission lines, gas pressure reduction stations, telecommunications and communication systems, feeding lines, network valves, lightning arresters of masts, etc.

Identifying and studying high-risk regions of gas installations across the country (identifying the sections of gas pipelines and network with rivers)

Opening thoroughfares available in gas installations level,

Dredging and cleaning various waterways in the gas installations level

Strengthening and fortifying gas connections, Alerting staff and personnel of the company according to the schedule predetermined by the company during holidays,

Sending meteorological warnings and emphasizing full preparedness of all manpower in subsidiary companies and units,

Measures Taken by NIGC during Crisis:

Sending instruction to confront flood crisis in industrial installations and buildings for carrying out necessary measures before the crisis to all subsidiary units and departments, following up necessary measures by chief executives of the company as well as carrying out measures to control gas cylinders, replacement of goods at storages, dredging water canals inside and campus of the installations,

Commissioning Disaster Management Center round-the-clock (24hr),

Setting up Disaster Committee and evaluating gas installations in flood areas,

Participating in the meetings of Provincial Disaster Management Council

Updating and presenting list of equipment and machinery for cooperation with the Disaster Management Taskforce,



Studying and analyzing meteorological reports,

Announcing the state of emergency

Deploying all operational teams including relief, repair and maintenance team as well as instrumentation team, etc. in the subsidiary companies of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC).

Sending list of turnkey personnel along with the instruction on the way of establishing relationship at the state of emergency and crisis to the operation, guard, fire and telecommunications units as well as other concerned departments,

Issuing alert to all manpower round-the-clock in order to prevent and confront contingent and probable crises as well as lifting the off-days of personnel during holidays.

Providing personal appliances and tools of relief workers such as rubber boot, waist jacket, tent, umbrella, and rescue ropes

Monitoring risky regions located on the route of flood

Creating proper flood seals in the identified regions and also in the regions exposed to the flood in order to prevent and advance the water to the gas installations, etc.

Announcing the cooperation and coordina-

tion of personnel during drilling operations

Coordinating and identifying the route of gas network and installations as well as monitoring the drillings for change of route of flood and dykes,

Dispatching operational and relief manpower to the required areas at the request of Disaster Management Taskforce and people of the region

Timely presence of personnel at the scene of incident and closing gas current valves and immunizing the location

Visiting and inspecting gas pressure reduction stations constantly,

Visiting and inspecting gas network valves continually,

On-time disconnection of damaged gas pipelines in urban and rural areas of flood-hit areas.

Timely attendance of repair and maintenance team at the damaged areas hit by flash floods and torrential rains,

Repairing gas-supply transmission lines and networks during the construction of dyke by the drilling equipment and machinery of involved organizations,

Decommissioning of gas-pressure reduction stations out of service and supplying gas of subscribers from other stations,

Provision of moto-pool boat for rendering

relief services especially access to gas pressure reduction stations as well as gas networks engulfed by flash floods

Coordinating and supplying people's required fuel through National Iranian Oil Products, Refining and distribution Company and also construction of polyethylene pipelines in different sizes as temporary.

Construction of tens of dykes and deepening seasonal rivers for controlling water as well as dispatching personnel, equipment and machinery for helping flood-hit people in urban and rural areas,

Cooperating with the Disaster Management Taskforce of governor offices of provinces as well as sending relevant equipment and machinery to control and guide floodwaters,

Raising awareness of personnel of the company through Administrative Automation System,

Raising public awareness of people through social networks and mass media groups, etc.

Measures Taken by NIGC after Flood Crisis:

Visiting and reviewing gas-supply installations across the provinces,

Detection of leakage, repair and maintenance of gas networks and connections, connecting gas of subscribers at the flood-hit areas according to the rules and standards of HSE (Health, Safety and Environment) as well as technical inspection in less than 48 hours,

Planning to visit and clean gas valve ponds and networks that have been severely damaged as a result of torrential flash floods,

Repairing gas pressure reduction stations, Making plan after the presentation of engineering details for the construction of new substituted networks,

Renovating and cleaning the regions that have been damaged by flood.

Opening communications routes by the transport forces for rendering fast relief and rescue services,

Cleaning and repairing TBS stations

Detection of leakage of gas in flood-hit areas, Supplying gas to the villages through CNG (compressed natural gas) temporarily.

Pile driving of the two sides of rivers for passing gas pipeline through the air,

Studying crisis, evaluating the dam-

ages incurred to the flood-hit areas and reporting the initial information to the concerned bodies,

Documenting and providing film and photo from the damages installations, etc.

Highlights of Measures Taken by Subsidiary Companies of NIGC in Line with Fulfilling Social Responsibilities

Delivering more than 200-m metal pipes in 12-, 30 and 40 diameters according to the direct order of the respected Minister of Oil to the Disaster Management Taskforce of flood-hit provinces for the construction of temporary and makeshift bridges for passing water and connecting roads,

Providing and collecting more than 15 trucks packed with facilities and foodstuffs including food conserve, mineral water, sanitary and hygienic wares, etc. by the staff and personnel of the company and distributing foods among flood-stricken people,

Providing required equipment and machinery including light- ad heavy machinery, mechanical shovel, excavator, loader, truck, graders, etc. for dredging operations, etc. available to the Disaster Management of provinces of flood-hit areas (about 100 units),

Provision of more than 30,000 liters of fuel, oil and supply of food by Khuzestan Province Gas Company,

Sending about 300 tents to the flood-hit areas,

Allocation of more than 3,000 blankets for fellow countrymen in flood-hit areas,

Setting up stations for the collection of cash and noncash contributions of personnel at the subsidiary companies,

Sending Jihadi groups to the flood-hit areas,

Providing and sending educational and training books for the flood-hit students,

Providing and printing various notifications for the collection of cash- and non-cash contributions of personnel to the flood-hit people in the flood-stricken provinces,

Active presence of staff and personnel of the gas industry in rendering quality relief services to the flood-affected people,

Allocation of a part of salaries of staff and personnel of the company to the flood-hit people voluntarily, etc.

By: A.Saeidi

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\$1500
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swimming pool, storage parking,
\$1200
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

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\$800
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Apt in Mahmoodieh
2nd floor, 350 sq.m, 4 Bdrs., lobby
furn, spj, lobby, parking
\$3400
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Jordan
2nd floor, 140 sq.m with
Bdrs., furn, parking 2
\$1000
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

مالکین محترم

ملک های فروش و اجاره ای خود را (آپارتمان،
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Jordan (\$1200) 160sq.m, 2bdrs balcony, pkg, & F.F	Elahieh (\$1800) 170sq.m, 3bdrs S/p, S, J, & F.F	Niavaran bldg 3storey, 10bdrs yard (\$5000)

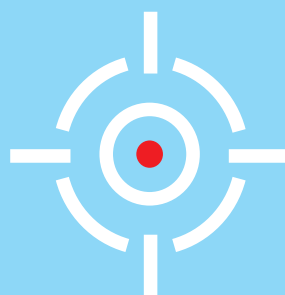
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The Tehran Times new pocket-sized glossary is now available on the market. The reader-friendly is a rich source of the most common journalistic terminology collected by the daily's retired staff.

It can benefit a wide range of tastes from students to professional journalists. Persian equivalents have been given for all entries, including idioms and expressions. The glossary also includes example sentences for entries the authors thought it would be a bit difficult to learn.

For more information contact:

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NASA chief calls for global effort to study asteroid threat

Members of the International Association for the Advancement of Space Safety are tracking an asteroid, 99942 Apophis, which will pass by Earth on April 13, 2029, closer than where weather satellites orbit.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine has called for more global participation in efforts to deflect asteroids that could collide with Earth.

Bridenstine spoke to the 2019 Planetary Defense Conference in Washington, D.C., on Monday morning in an event that was streamed live online. The conference was organized by the International Association for the Advancement of Space Safety.

"We have to use our systems our capabilities to ultimately get more data and we have to do it faster," Bridenstine said. "We need more partners from all over the world."

The conference featured world experts on what is known about potentially hazardous asteroids and comets and how rockets or spacecraft might alter a collision course with Earth.

Bridenstine said asteroid redirection is "not about movies" and not about Hollywood, but it is about "protecting the only planet we know."

"One of the reasons we have to take this seriously is the giggle factor," he said.

NASA already has an asteroid deflection test mission -- Double Asteroid Redirection Test -- scheduled for launch



from California in 2021 aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

The DART spacecraft is designed to collide with a small moon of the asteroid Didymos in 2022, with a mission cost of \$69 million.

Members of the International Association for the Advancement of Space Safety are tracking an asteroid, 99942 Apophis, which will pass by Earth on April 13, 2029, closer than where weather satellites orbit.

According to the association, it will

be bright enough to be visible with an unaided eye for several hours around the closest approach. Named after the ancient Egyptian spirit of evil, darkness and destruction, it is estimated to be about 1,115 feet in diameter.

"If it were to hit, it would cause major damage to our planet and likely to our civilization as well. Fortunately, Apophis will not hit Earth in 2029, but the closeness of its approach will provide an excellent opportunity to study and perhaps send a

spacecraft to this potentially hazardous Asteroid," said a news release from the international association.

Bridenstine said he was glad the association was publicizing the Apophis event, so that the public and leaders in Congress appreciate the opportunity it represents to study a near-earth object or NEO.

He said the European Space Agency is a leader in the effort, and Russia is very aware of the issue because of large meteor events there in 1908 and in 2013.

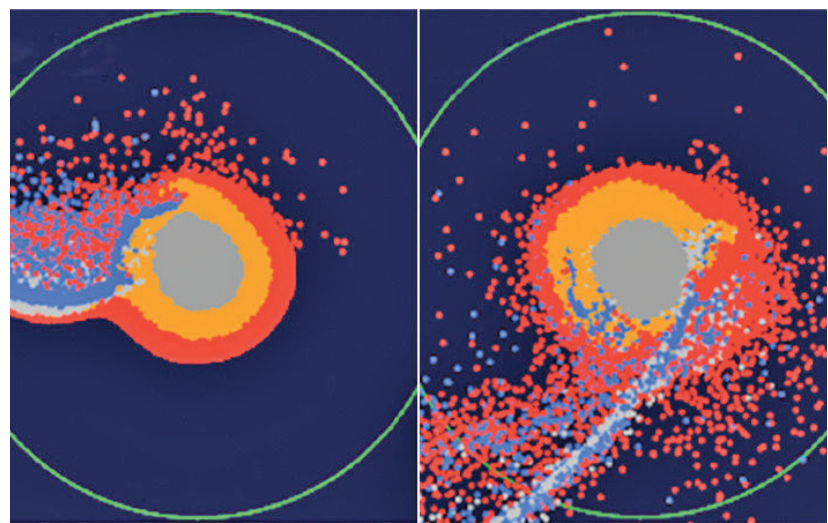
The latter event, the Chelyabinsk meteor, exploded in the sky over Russia, sending out heat and shock waves that blew out windows, injured hundreds of people and set off alarms over a large area. That meteor was 66 feet across.

Larger asteroids or meteors could destroy an entire state or entire European country, Bridenstine said.

NASA's Launch Services Program at Kennedy Space Center in Florida will manage the SpaceX launch service for DART. The DART Project office is located at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland, and is managed by the Planetary Missions Program Office at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, for NASA's Planetary Defense Coordination Office in Washington.

(Source: Space Daily)

Magma is the key to the moon's makeup



For more than a century, scientists have squabbled over how Earth's moon formed. But researchers at Yale and in Japan say they may have the answer.

Many theorists believe a Mars-sized object slammed into the early Earth, and material dislodged from that collision formed the basis of the moon. When this idea was tested in computer simulations, it turned out that the moon would be made primarily from the impacting object. Yet the opposite is true; we know from analyzing rocks brought back from Apollo missions that the moon consists mainly of material from Earth.

A new study published April 29 in Nature Geoscience, co-authored by Yale geophysicist Shun-ichiro Karato, offers an explanation.

The key, Karato says, is that the early, proto-Earth -- about 50 million years after the formation of the Sun -- was covered by a sea of hot magma, while the impacting object was likely made of solid material. Karato and his collaborators set out to test a new model, based on the collision of a proto-Earth covered with an ocean of magma and a solid impacting object.

The model showed that after the collision, the magma is heated much more than solids from the impacting object. The magma then expands in volume

and goes into orbit to form the moon, the researchers say. This explains why there is much more Earth material in the moon's makeup. Previous models did not account for the different degree of heating between the proto-Earth silicate and the impactor.

"In our model, about 80% of the moon is made of proto-Earth materials," said Karato, who has conducted extensive research on the chemical properties of proto-Earth magma. "In most of the previous models, about 80% of the moon is made of the impactor. This is a big difference."

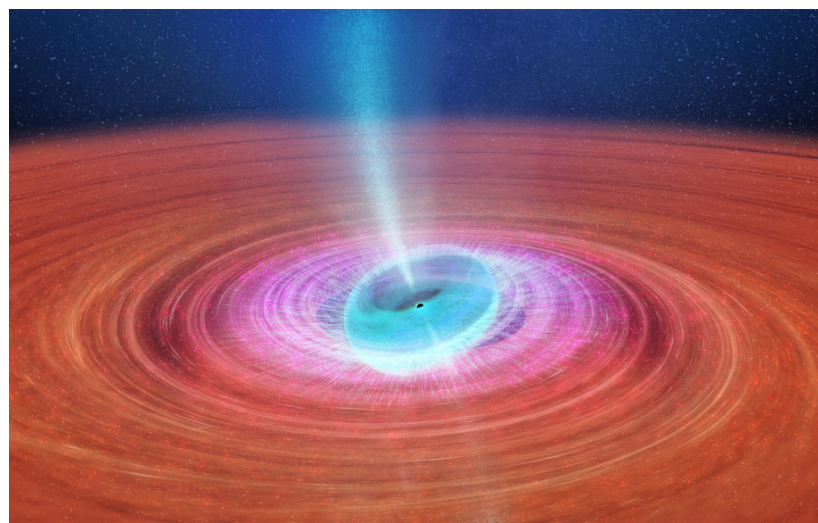
Karato said the new model confirms previous theories about how the moon formed, without the need to propose unconventional collision conditions -- something theorists have had to do until now.

For the study, Karato led the research into the compression of molten silicate. A group from the Tokyo Institute of Technology and the RIKEN Center for Computational Science developed a computational model to predict how material from the collision became the moon.

The first author of the study is Natsumi Hosono of RIKEN. Additional co-authors are Junichiro Makino and Takayuki Saitoh.

(Source: Science Daily)

Misaligned' black hole 8,000 light years



A black hole nearly 8,000 light-years from Earth has been behaving strangely and astronomers are fascinated.

Though it was discovered in 1989, the V404 Cygni black hole first garnered global attention in 2015 when it brightened telescopes for two weeks as it consumed material from an orbiting star.

Not all of the matter was consumed though, some of it, superheated by the gravitational force of the black hole, was shot far into space in bright jets of plasma.

While such outbursts are not out of the norm for black holes, usually they tend to emit from poles and go in the same direction.

However, a closer look at these jets revealed that instead they appeared to be firing in a wobbling pattern known as precession.

On Monday, in the journal Nature, James Miller-Jones, and his team of researchers from the International Center for Radio Astronomy Research in Australia, published their observations on the 2015 event and offered an explanation for V404 Cygni's odd behaviour. The black hole is misaligned.

"We were gobsmacked by what we saw in this system -- it was completely unexpected," said the University of Al-

berta's Gregory Sivakoff in a statement from the National Radio Astronomy Observatory.

The black hole itself is surrounded by a six-million-mile-wide disk of spinning matter known as an accretion disk. Generally, it is expected that the disk spins on the same axis as the black hole itself, but the strange pattern of the jets show that in V404 Cygni's case it is not.

That misalignment was likely caused by the force of the supernova that created the created the Black Hole in the first place and combined with a phenomenon known as frame dragging it creates the spinning type like wobbling effect.

"This is the only mechanism we can think of that can explain the rapid precession we see in V404 Cygni," Miller-Jones said. First posited by Albert Einstein as part of his general theory of relativity, frame dragging happens when the intense gravitational force of the black hole pulls space-time around it as it spins.

Prof Sivakoff said: "Finding this astronomical first has deepened our understanding of how black holes and galaxy formation can work. It tells us a little more about that big question: 'How did we get here?'"

(Source: The Independent)

Gaia survey reveals three new asteroids

Though all of the asteroids identified so far by Gaia have been inhabitants of the main asteroid belt, it's possible the space observatory could spot near Earth objects. Space agencies around the world are working hard to more effectively identify and track the trajectories of potentially hazardous space rocks.

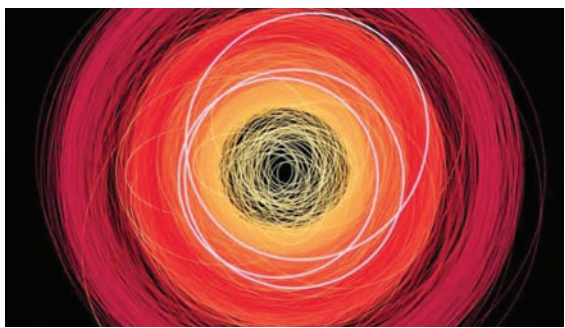
The ongoing Gaia survey has turned up a trio of new asteroids in the solar system.

The Gaia mission is an effort by astronomers to compile the largest and most precise 3D space catalog in history. Most of the space telescope's targets are faraway stars, but the observatory can also pick up objects closer to Earth, including asteroids.

The majority of the asteroids spotted by Gaia are already known, but astronomers found three new asteroids among the observations released by Gaia late last year. The three new asteroids were confirmed by observations made using the Haute-Provence Observatory in France.

The three space rocks are all main-belt asteroids, but the tilt of their orbits are slightly askew, setting them apart from their neighbors.

"The population of such high-inclination asteroids is not as well studied as those with less tilted orbits, since most



surveys tend to focus on the plane where the majority of asteroids reside," the European Space Agency reported. "But Gaia can readily observe them as it scans the entire sky from its vantage point in space, so it is possible that the satellite will find more such objects in the future and contribute new information to study their properties."

An online alert system that scans Gaia data for potential discoveries and idiosyncrasies keeps astronomers all over the world abreast of noteworthy findings. After being sent an alert, scientists can deploy other observatories

for followup imaging.

"Once an asteroid detected by Gaia has been identified also in ground-based observations, the scientists in charge of the alert system analyze the data to determine the object's orbit," according to ESA. "In case the ground observations match the orbit based on Gaia's data, they provide the information to the Minor Planet Center, which is the official worldwide organization collecting observational data for small solar system bodies like asteroids and comets."

Though all of the asteroids identified so far by Gaia have been inhabitants of the main asteroid belt, it's possible the space observatory could spot near Earth objects. Space agencies around the world are working hard to more effectively identify and track the trajectories of potentially hazardous space rocks.

This week, federal agencies in the United States, as well as several international partners, are participating in an asteroid impact exercise at the 2019 Planetary Defense Conference. As part of the tabletop exercise, participants responded to a fictional near-Earth object impact scenario.

(Source: UPI)

Mystery Sea opened up during the Antarctic winter. Now, scientists know why

A swath of ice-free sea that regularly opens up during the frigid Antarctic winters is created by cyclones.

Sea ice in Antarctica is thickest in the winter, so the appearance of open water is perplexing. These open seas are called polynyas. In 2017, scientists spotted one in the Lazarev Sea, which they called the Maud Rise Polynya because it sits over an ocean plateau called Maud Rise.



Now, researchers led by Diana Francis, a New York University, Abu Dhabi atmospheric scientist, find that cyclonic winds push ice in opposite directions, causing the pack to open up and expose open sea.

Polar storms

In mid-September 2017, the Maud Rise Polynya was 3,668 square miles (9,500 square kilometers) in size. By mid-October, it had grown to 308,881 square miles (800,000 square km).

An analysis of high-resolution satellite imagery explained the rapid growth. Warm, moist air flowing in from the western South Atlantic hit cold air headed northward from the south, setting the stage for violent storms. The resulting cyclones rated 11 on the Beaufort Storm Scale, meaning they involved wind speeds of up to 72 mph (117 km/h) and waves up to 52 feet (16 m) anywhere they encountered open sea.

These swirling winds pushed ice away from the cyclonic centers, Francis and her colleagues wrote April 24 in the journal JGR Atmospheres.

■ Cyclones and climate

Polynyas aren't new, or necessarily harmful. According to the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC), they can provide important ocean access for Antarctic animals and habitat for phytoplankton.

However, polynyas may change in a warming future, Francis and her colleagues speculated. Antarctica is expected to experience stronger cyclones as the climate changes, because models show that storms are likely to form more often toward the poles and to be more intense, according to the NSIDC.

(Source: Live Science)

Milky Way star with strange chemistry is from dwarf galaxy

Astronomers have discovered a star in the Milky Way Galaxy with a chemical composition unlike any other star in our Galaxy. This chemical composition has been seen in a small number of stars in dwarf galaxies orbiting the Milky Way. This suggests that the star was part of a dwarf galaxy that merged into the Milky Way.

In the LAMOST (Large Sky Area Multi-Object Fiber Spectroscopic Telescope) survey data, researchers noticed the star J1124+4535 for its unusual chemical composition. Initial observations showed that J1124+4535, located in the constellation Ursa Major (Big Dipper), had low abundances of certain elements, such as magnesium. Follow-up observations with the High Dispersion Spectrograph on the Subaru Telescope confirmed the low levels of magnesium but found comparatively high levels of Europium. This is the first time an element ratio like this has been observed in a star in the Milky Way.

Stars form from clouds of interstellar gas. The element ratios of the parent cloud impart an observable chemical signature on stars formed in that cloud. So stars formed close together have similar element ratios. The composition of J1124+4535 doesn't match any other stars in the Milky Way, indicating that it must have formed elsewhere.

Chemical signatures similar to J1124+4535 have been observed in some stars in dwarf galaxies orbiting the Milky Way. Galaxy evolution models and simulations suggest that galaxies like the Milky Way grow by absorbing neighboring dwarf galaxies. Thus it makes sense that J1124+4535 was born in a now vanished dwarf galaxy which merged into the Milky Way.

(Source: Science Daily)

Space rock left big crater on moon during full lunar eclipse

A space rock left a big crater on the moon during January's total lunar eclipse.

Spanish scientists reported Tuesday the meteoroid hit the moon at 38,000 mph (61,000 kph), carving out a crater nearly 50 feet (15 meters) across. It was the first impact flash observed during a lunar eclipse.

The scientists -- who operate a lunar impact detection system using eight telescopes in Spain -- believe the object was a comet fragment up to 2 feet (60 centimeters) across and 100 pounds (45 kilograms). The impact energy was equivalent to 1 1/2 tons of TNT.

Astrophysicist Jose Maria Madiedo of the University of Huelva says it was "really exciting" to catch the brief flash, after many tries during eclipses.

The findings are in the Royal Astronomical Society's Monthly Notices.

(Source: AP News)



Omani airline to launch Muscat-Tehran route

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Oman’s SalamAir will soon launch direct flights between Muscat and Tehran.

SalamAir’s Tehran service will begin on June 9 that comes months after the airline launched another route to Shiraz, southern Iran, Oman Daily Observer reported.



SalamAir CEO Captain Mohamed Ahmed in an undated photo

Operating three times a week on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, the 2 hours and a 35-minute flight from Muscat International Airport (MCT) departs at 3.05 pm and arrives at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKA) at 6.10 pm. The return journey will leave Tehran at 06.55 pm and a touchdown in Muscat at 9.00 pm.

Many Britons shun holidays in EU amid Brexit uncertainty: travel firm

More people in UK are opting for destinations outside the European Union (EU) for their holidays compared to previous years in the face of a Brexit impasse, according to travel company Thomas Cook.

It said nearly half (48%) of the holidays it sold before the end of February in 2019 were to non-EU destinations — an increase of 10% on 2018.

Repeated delays to Brexit discouraged travelers from booking early and prompted them to look further afield, the travel firm said in a report.

Adding, it was “clear that the prolonged uncertainty around the manner and timing of Britain’s exit from the European Union has led many to delay their decision on when and where they book for their summer holidays.”

However, Spain remained the most popular destination of choice for the 19 million people who book holidays with Thomas Cook every year.

Turkey and Tunisia were among those due to gain the most from the non-EU trend, seeing demand increasing again after a change to Foreign Office advice — terror attacks in both countries stalled bookings over the past few years.

Greece was knocked down from the position of the second most popular destination by Turkey, while Tunisia was the seventh most popular option this summer, up from tenth last year.

(Source: euronews)

 **ROUND THE GLOBE**

Pilgrimage Church of Wies

The sanctuary of Wies, near Steingaden in Bavaria, is a pilgrimage church extraordinarily well-preserved in the beautiful setting of an Alpine valley, and is a perfect masterpiece of Rococo art and creative genius, as well as an exceptional testimony to a civilization that has disappeared.



The hamlet of Wies, in 1738, is said to have been the setting of a miracle in which tears were seen on a simple wooden figure of Christ mounted on a column that was no longer venerated by the Premonstratensian monks of the Abbey. A wooden chapel constructed in the fields housed the miraculous statue for some time. However, pilgrims from Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and even Italy became so numerous that the Abbot of the Premonstratensians of Steingaden decided to construct a splendid sanctuary.

Consequently, work began in 1745 under the direction of the celebrated architect, Dominikus Zimmermann, who was to construct, in this pastoral setting in the foothills of the Alps, one of the most polished creations of Bavarian Rococo. The choir was consecrated in 1749, and the remainder of the church finished by 1754. That year, Dominikus Zimmermann left the city of Landsberg to settle in Wies near his masterpiece, in a new house where he died in 1766.

The church, which is oval in plan, is preceded to the west by a semi-circular narthex. Inside, twin columns placed in front of the walls support the capriciously cut-out cornice and the wooden vaulting with its flattened profile; this defines a second interior volume where the light from the windows and the oculi is cleverly diffused both directly and indirectly. To the east, a long deep choir is surrounded by an upper and a lower gallery.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran airport traffic falls 14%, hit by soaring costs

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran airport traffic has experienced a 14 percent fall in the previous Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended March 20) from a year earlier suffering from escalating costs in the country.

Iran Airports Company registered 427,803 takeoffs and landings in 1397, which shows a 14% decrease compared with the previous year, Eghtesad Online reported.

More than 51.67 million passengers and 515,228 tons of cargos were transported during the period, indicating a 16% and 14% decline respectively year on year, according to data compiled by the IAC.

The latest IAC report also shows 357,411 takeoffs and landings were made by domestic flights, down 13% compared with the year before. More than 41.43 million passengers and 315,566 tons of cargo were transported domestically, both indicating a 15% decline YOY.

Regarding international flights, 70,392 takeoffs and landings were registered, down 19% year on year. A total of more than 10.24 million passengers and 199,661 tons of cargo were transported to and from overseas destinations, posting 19% and 13% decrease respectively compared with the year before, the report said.

Tehran’s Mehrabad International Air-

port was the busiest Iranian airport last year with 126,030 takeoffs and landings, registering a 12% of year-on-year fall. The airport also handled 14.82 million passengers and 102.949 tons of cargo, registering a 15% decline.

Mashhad International Airport was the second busiest airport with 60,335 takeoffs and landings, indicating an 18% decrease. It transported more than 8.82 million passengers and 86,086 tons of cargos, indicating a 16% and 9% decline respectively year-on-year.

Imam Khomeini International Airport registered 47,446 takeoffs and landings to register a 19% fall, while transporting more than 7.27 million passengers and around 141,704 tons of cargos to be ranked third on the list of Iran’s busiest airports. The figures show a 19% and 14% decline year on year.

Iran Airports Company is an arm of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, which manages 54 airports across the country.

Back in January, Leyla Ajdari, a tourism official, announced the country’s outbound tourism fell by 30 percent during the first nine months of 1397 compared to the same period a year earlier.

“A total of 5,900,381 Iranians traveled overseas during the first nine months of



the year, indicating a 30 percent decline year on year,” she said.

Sharp rises in the value of foreign cur-

rencies against rial has pushed up the costs of traveling, which seems to be the main reason behind the decline in Iran’s air travels.

Eight Tehran structures added to National Heritage list

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A total of eight aging structures and sites, which are scattered across the Iranian capital, have recently been inscribed on the National Heritage list, IRNA reported.

The new entries are: Amjadieh sports complex, Poulad zoorkhaneh (where a traditional system of athletics used to be practiced), Faculty of Management at the University of Tehran, Padegan-e Sefr-Shish (Garrison 06), Sarpulak Bathhouse, two residential buildings, and a 20th-century military-industrial complex.

The first time Tehran is mentioned in historical accounts is in an 11th-century chronicle in which it is

described as a small village north of Ray.

Ray, in which signs of settlement dates from 6000 BC, is often considered to be Tehran’s predecessor. It became the capital city of the Seljuq Empire in the 11th century but later declined with factional strife between different neighborhoods and the Mongol invasion of 1220.

Tehran has many to offer its visitors including Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Carpet Museum of Iran, to name a few.

World Heritage sites could be transformed by global warming, finds study

Everest climbers could face a starkly different landscape stripped of the dramatic Khumbu Icefall within decades as global warming melts icy landmarks, scientists said on Tuesday.

Glaciers are set to vanish from almost half of UN-designated World Heritage sites in less than a century if greenhouse gas emissions are not cut, according to research published in the journal Earth’s Future.

Sites likely to be affected include the Grosser Aletschgletscher in the Swiss Alps and Greenland’s Jakobshavn Isbrae, researchers said in a study released this week.

The data should act as a wake-up call for nations to step up their commitments to prevent climate change, said the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which collaborated with the University of Fribourg on the study.

“Losing these iconic glaciers would be a tragedy and have major consequences

for the availability of water resources, sea level rise and weather patterns,” said Peter Shadie, the director of the IUCN World Heritage Program, in a statement.

Climate change is becoming one of the most significant risks for World Heritage sites, according to a report released by the United Nations cultural body, UNESCO, in 2016.

Researchers plotted glaciers at World Heritage locations -identifying a total of some 19,000 over 46 sites - and used data modeling to predict ice loss based on how much carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases the world emits between now and 2100.

They found that well-known beauty spots, including the Los Glaciares National Park in Argentina, the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks and Te Wahipounamu in South West New Zealand are expected to lose much of their ice.



Home to some of the largest glaciers on the Earth, Argentina’s Los Glaciares National Park is predicted to lose around 60 percent of its current ice volume by 2100.

Nearly half the World Heritage sites - 21 out of a total of 46 that have glaciers - will lose all their ice by 2100 under a high

emissions scenario, they found.

Even under a low-emissions model, eight of the sites will be ice free by the start of the next century, the report said.

The research found significant melting is expected in all scenarios, with between 33 and 60 percent of the total ice volume in 2017 lost by 2100.

The findings should highlight the threat posed by global warming said Matthias Huss, one of the researchers on the study and the lead at the Glacier Monitoring Network at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland.

“We shed a particular light on glaciers at World Heritage sites because they are the most visible and they’re an important symbol for climate change” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

“Our message is glaciers are retreating... But we can still make a difference.”

(Source: Reuters)

Notre Dame and the farmer who died by the light of the moon

By Michael Harding

I heard a story recently about a farmer’s death. A bachelor who died by moonlight. A man who worked so hard that he could be heard on summer nights in good weather, driving his tractor up and down the road, with a buck rake on the back, carrying hay bales from a big field to the hay shed in his back yard.

As he was reversing to lift the final bale, he drove close to the ditch, and the wheel got caught in a rut and the machine tipped over and pinned his lower body to the ground. He may have shouted for help but nobody heard him. So he died by the light of the moon. And years later, his brother told me the story, with tears in his eyes.

It’s important to remember the dead. People often stand around outside a funeral home or in the back yard of a farmhouse during a wake, talking about some sycamore the deceased planted years earlier, or how she made bread every day, or where she went on her bicycle for eggs in the old days. It’s not really God that matters to people in the end. It’s the stories of remembrance that count.

■ Goddy-woddy stuff

Dawkins and the rest of them are probably right about the goddy-woddy stuff. Even I have outgrown my childhood faith. But the trouble is that I don’t live in the same world as Dawkins. He enjoys the freedom of a modern sophisticated culture, but I still live in medieval Ireland. So even though I’ve lost any religious conviction I once had, I still love liturgies, ritual, holy songs and the empty sanctuary when the service is over.

I only go to church nowadays for weddings and funerals but I love to sit in the pew when all the songs have been sung and the crowd has gone off to the hotel.

Recently I was in the Church of Ireland Cathedral near Lough Oughter, not far from Cavan town.

I was looking for the Bible that Bishop Bedell translated into Irish in the early 17th century. I found it on a table in the sanctuary. And I stood in awe before the book, and read aloud the first line.

■ Sacred space

“Ar dtus, do chruthaidh Dia, neamh agus talamh.”

I remember seeing the same cathedral on YouTube a few years ago; a video shot in winter from a drone. The roof was white with snow and the building stood majestic on a hill surrounded by bare winter trees, like something out of a Russian fable. I grew up less than three miles from that cathedral’s 12th century door and I attended a few carol services at Christmas, when I was a boy. But after my recent trip I was amazed at how much the building mattered to me as a sacred space.

The following evening I turned on the television and saw Notre Dame on fire. And all of a sudden that cathedral felt like it belonged not to Paris but Europe, and the fire seemed to awaken something across the continent. Almost everybody I talked to during the week, had a story about the cathedral and how the fire was a kind of wound.

Even I had some anecdotes about it. Because I once said Mass on a side altar, with Japanese tourists standing behind me, watching me through the bars of a wrought iron gate as if I were an exotic bird in a cage. When I raised the chalice in the air I could feel a hundred camera lenses behind me, clicking in frantic efforts to grasp the moment.

The size of the cathedral and particularly its height had the effect of making it feel like an outdoor space. The vault was so far above that it felt like part of heaven,



Notre Dame cathedral on fire in Paris: “Almost everybody I talked to... had a story about the cathedral and how the fire was a kind of wound.” File photograph: Francois Guillot/ AFP/Getty Images

especially on evenings when moonlight fell in shafts across the sanctuary.

But perhaps that was only because I love the moon, and love to see moonlight, whether falling through the stained glass windows of a sacred building, or shimmering on the surface of Lough Allen.

And I know it is the same moon everywhere and always; shining now through the broken windows of Notre Dame, or illuminating the woodwork in the cathedral in Cavan, as the old Bible is put back in its glass case and the sexton locks the doors leaving the interior empty and silent. The same moon remembered in the story of a farmer’s death, long after the farmer himself has been forgotten.

(Source: The Irish Times)

Bangladesh seeks to boost sci-tech cooperation with Iran

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Iran has a great capacity in the field of knowledge-based economy and Dhaka is ready to boost scientific and technological cooperation with Iran, the Bangladeshi education minister Dipu Moni said, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Moni met Iran's vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari in Tehran to discuss ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries.

In addition to rich civilization and culture, Iran is pioneer in the field of technology, Moni said.

Bangladesh provides infrastructure in the fields of biotechnology and universities, in which the country can boost cooperation with Iran.

There are several technological and scientific fields that Iran and Bangladesh



can cooperate with each other and two parts should facilitate the cooperation, she said.

The powerful startups and knowledge-based companies provide a strong bridge between Iran and other companies, Sattari said.

The governments should provide necessary infrastructures for tech savvies as well as investors, he said.

Despite imposed sanctions, Iran improve the economic relationship as well as international cooperation, he added.

Digital health and IT-based services are the fields in which, Iran has a great progress and services for the society, he said.

Sattari said that the Iranian startups facilitate the everyday life of people and Iran is ready to share the experiences with other countries.

Iran's growth in science and technology 'notable': Nigerian minister

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Despite sanctions, Iran experienced a notable growth in science and technology and is a great example for the nations which sought self-sufficiency and independence, the Nigerian Minister of Education Adamu Adamu said, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Adamu made the remarks during his meeting with the vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari

on Tuesday.

Iran creates a great motivation to other countries and scientific and technological cooperation is a great opportunity for development, he added.

Nigeria has a great capacity in the field of oil and petrochemicals and Iran and Nigeria can have great cooperation in this field, he said.

"We are ready to boost cooperation in different fields

of science and technology as well as economy," he added.

Sattari said that Iran transfer from oil economy to knowledge-based economy stating that university students and innovators are the main resources of the country.

The joint ecosystem for technological cooperation between Iran and other countries is possible through establishment of science and technology parks, innovation factories, accelerators and incubators, he explained.

Platforms for national satellites set up in low-Earth orbit



1 → The third platform is Iran-bus 150, a 150 kg imaging satellite with one to two meter resolution, which is being built by the Iran University of Science and Technology.

In a speech in January 2019, ICT Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi announced that the satel-

lites improve the standard of living, food and water resources security, which are the most important aims for the government.

Azari Jahromi said that Iran will not hold off development in the field of space technology and cannot wait for other countries to meet its needs.

Iran's growth in science and technology 'notable': Nigerian minister



TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Over 6,500 startups are now active in the country, the head of the Strategic Technologies Center announced, Mehr reported on Monday.

Esmail Qaderifar said that the startups should provide innovative models in the market.

He explained that a startup is a company, which provides services based on new technologies and can turn into knowledge-based industrial companies in the future.

The Iranian startup ecosystem is one of the biggest ones in the southwestern Asia and will turn into the most powerful economies in the near future.

How unions are pushing back against the rise of workplace technology

A few years ago, Marriott debuted a new app at hotels in five cities that was supposed to save housekeepers time by telling them which rooms to clean. It was a disaster.

Housekeepers ended up yo-yoing between rooms on different floors, ignoring messy rooms just down the hall. If anything, the cleaners felt that the app made them less efficient, and they worried about being disciplined by their bosses for failing to finish their work on time. "A wild-goose chase" is how Rachel Gumpert, a spokeswoman for Unite Here, the labor union that represents Marriott's housekeepers, describes the episode.

Several months after the union became aware of the problems the app was causing, Marriott's hotel workers went on strike, partly because of new technologies like the housekeeping app. In

December, after intense negotiations, the hotel workers won a remarkable concession—a new contract that requires management to tell them 150 days in advance about new technology so they can raise any concerns.

The Marriott agreement highlights how unions are increasingly pushing to protect employees from the unrelenting march of technology into the workplace. Recently, casino workers, journalists, and even professional basketball players have negotiated contracts that dictate terms like retraining workers who are displaced by technology and limiting how businesses can use data they collect about employees from their devices.

Corporations have said little publicly about the phenomenon. Marriott, for example, de-

clined to comment beyond a statement that it has since modified its housekeeping app so that employees have more control over their daily work assignments. "It is customary for us to work with our associates and solicit feedback when implementing new procedures at our hotels," Marriott said.

Matthew Scherer, a lawyer who specializes in technology for law firm Littler Mendelson, which represents corporations in labor matters, says that most businesses are oblivious to employees' increasing worries about tech. When talking with corporate clients, Scherer says he recommends that they take worker misgivings seriously so that managers can address them before they bubble over and disrupt business.

"It's not entirely clear to me how corporate

America is going to respond or when it's going to have its Sputnik moment, as it were," says Scherer, who declined to discuss specific companies his firm represents.

Whatever the case, everyone agrees that innovation will eliminate some jobs while opening the door to newer ones. The battle is over how to cushion the impact of, say, stores switching to using self-checkout systems instead of employing human cashiers.

In the past, workers have often organized to resist new technology and, in some cases, even to rebel against it, as in the 19th century when tailors in Europe burned down factories filled with newfangled power looms. But these days, union leaders are taking a more measured approach. (Source: Fortune.com)

How technology is transforming the food industry

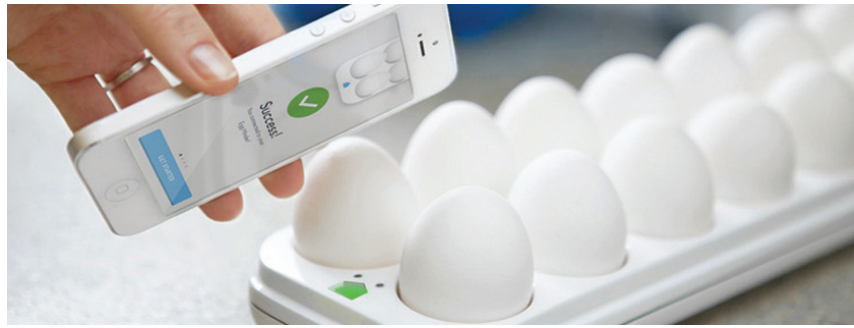
When it comes to food, tech isn't always the first thing that comes to mind. However, technology over the years has changed how we produce and find our food through applications, robotics, data and processing techniques.

According to a recent report from ING, technology helps food manufacturers produce more efficiently for a growing world population. There are 7.5 billion people in the world right now and that means a higher demand for food each year. By using tech to improve processing and packaging, it can improve the shelf life and safety of food.

Robotics and machines

The use of machines in the food industry also ensures quality and affordability. By using machines, it drives down the costs of keeping the food fresh and increases productivity. According to the report, "The rise of robotics in the food industry is a tangible example of food tech. The number of robots in the European food industry is well over 30,000, while the number of robots per 10,000 employees rose from 62 in 2013 to 84 in 2017. Although Germany is the largest market, robot density is relatively highest in Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Italy."

Robotic machines can help to eliminate safety issues for the more dangerous jobs in the food industry. In 2016, a tech company rolled out a program for butchery. By using robots to cut the more difficult of the meats, they



can save many work injuries. This is just one of the many ways technology can improve the industry.

3D printing

In the past few years, 3D printing has really taken off across many industries and the food industry is one of them. There have been several applications of 3D printing food from NASA printing a pizza to creating soft foods for those who cannot chew hard food to consume. It opens the door for innovation being able to create many things that we were unable to before while also being able to help with food sustainability. There are many ways 3D printing is shaking up the industry.

Drones

Precision agriculture is a major player when it comes to how technology can make a difference. It is the use of GPS tracking systems and satellite imagery to monitor

crop yields, soil levels, and weather patterns to increase efficiency on the farm. Not only can they see all that is happening across the fields, but they can also use analysis from the findings to test the soil and the health of the crops. A major way they are doing this is through the use of drones. These drones can locate and identify diseased or damaged crops and tend to them immediately. The use of these robots does not eliminate the need for food workers but helps them be more efficient with their work. With strict product requirements at large volumes and demand for lower pricing, the robotic elements help create a faster environment to produce more goods than regular labor.

Packaging and waste

One of the biggest concerns for consumers right now is having healthy and sustainable goods. Consumers pay attention to labels and

harmful ingredients, especially with social media, there is not much that companies can get away with anymore. Many companies use technology to help them "go green." By using robotics and digitizing, companies in the food industry are able to find alternatives to plastics and other harmful packaging to the environment.

There are many different ways we are using technology in packaging now from edible packaging, micro packaging and even bacteria fighting packaging.

Consumers are also looking for where companies are sourcing their products and how they are handling their waste. Currently, 40% of America's food is thrown away each year. With the help of technology, there are strides being taken to reduce that number and utilize the extra food.

One app, Copia uses its extensive food waste reduction dashboard to connect businesses with surplus food to local shelters, after-school programs, and other nonprofit organizations. Copia's analytic software manages and tracks their surplus to save money and reduce their overall food waste.

With all these advancements in technology, there are so many different ways that it can really change how we produce food. Evolving technology could be the key to eliminating world hunger and solving our waste problem—we will just have to wait and see.

(Source: forbes.com)

Your company needs a strategy for voice technology

Voice assistants, smart speakers, and all manner of voice-first technology have enjoyed remarkable growth and adoption. Voicebot.AI reports that the smart speaker install base within the U.S. grew 40% from 2018 to 2019, now exceeding 66 million units. International markets have grown even more dramatically — Dutch adoption of smart speakers exploded from 0% to 5% in just four and a half months, for example, with no sign of slowing down.

Voice-first doesn't mean voice-only, though. Smart speakers with screens — generally referred to as "smart displays" — are surging in popularity as well. In January of 2018, there were 1.3 million smart display owners in the U.S., and by the end of the year, that number had risen to 8.7 million — an increase of 558%. Products like Amazon's Echo Show and the Google Home Hub upped the ante on expectations for voice-first technology.

The emergence of voice, which serves as the front door for artificial intelligence and machine learning, is already making a mark on a wide variety of industries. Consider these examples:

Health Care

Seniors often suffer from loneliness, isolation, and depression, and smart speakers have demonstrated effectiveness in counteracting this within nursing homes and senior living facilities.

Ambulances in New England have gone voice-first, shedding unnecessary paperwork for emergency techs.

Publishing

Simon & Schuster released a "Stephen King Library," an Alexa skill which asks readers a variety of questions before then presenting them with the Stephen King novel they should read next.

Novel Effect, the first company accepted into the Alexa Accelerator (a joint venture between Amazon and Techstars), created technology which complements in-person live readings with audio soundscapes. In educational contexts, this technology has increased reading comprehension and retention.

Banking

Capital One was the first financial company to introduce an Alexa skill offering customers the ability to interact with their accounts, all the way back in 2016. Since then, many other credit card companies and financial institutions have followed suit.

Florida-based Best Innovation Group launched a platform which enables credit unions and retail banks from across the U.S. to offer voice-first banking. Customers can pay their mortgage, transfer between accounts, access account histories, and more using the company's platform, which works with both Alexa and Google Assistant.



Hospitality

Marriott rolled out Alexa-enabled devices across five of its major hotel lines, while Google Assistant has been integrated by Hyatt to provide translation functionality for guests.

Extending beyond just hotels, travel companies such as Expedia and KAYAK provide various voice-first capabilities to customers, while restaurants such as Dunkin' Donuts, Pizza Hut, and Starbucks have all rolled out voice ordering within the last 12 to 24 months.

Automotive

Believe it or not, voice assistants are more popular and more prevalent in cars than in homes. According to recent data from Voicebot.AI, 77 million adults in the U.S. use voice assistants in the car, compared to 45 million adults using them on in-home smart speakers.

Almost every car from major automakers rolling off the manufacturing line has voice-first technology integrated, from Mercedes-Benz and BMW to Tesla to Chevrolet and Ford.

Gaming

After seeing the success of DC Comics' Alexa skill "The Wayne Investigation," a mystery game promoting the 2016 movie "Batman vs. Superman," Amazon introduced an incentive program encouraging developers to create voice-based games.

Activision's Destiny 2 pioneered having an Alexa skill to provide in-game lore, equip items, and message friends.

Voice-enabled games have come so far that Drivetime.FM, a Bay Area startup, raised \$4 million in seed funding to create voice-first games to be played exclusively in the car.

Beyond Alexa and Google Home

While mainstream voice assistants like Alexa and Google Home have been carving out a significant share of the smart speaker market, an equal market has been created for voice-first technology that eschews the major tech companies in favor of a more private, data-secure approach. Kansas City-based Mycroft successfully crowdfunded more than \$1 million from over 1,500 investors to deliver Mycroft AI, an open voice ecosystem which differentiates itself with a localized, secure architecture that avoids sending data back to Silicon Valley tech giants.

Much like the web back in the '90s, voice represents a vast blue ocean of possibilities and potential. As voice assistants become more context-driven, they'll become more proactive, rather than just reactive. They'll find new ways to serve us and improve our lives, while also finding new ways to challenge our notions of privacy and security.

What matters right now is for companies to test voice-first technology for themselves and begin to learn what works for their business and what doesn't. Start by assigning an internal champion or hiring an external partner to develop a pilot voice experience for your organization. That initial experience can then be discussed internally, shared externally at conferences, and built upon for future growth. A good initial project might be to take aspects of your company's website, or other individual components of your company's branding, and build a voice experience around those before moving on to more vanguard uses of voice-first technology.

Companies that aren't paying attention to voice are already getting burned. For example, this recent report from Forbes, which my company spearheaded, shows that major publishers could be losing as much as \$46,000 per day — \$17 million over the course of 2019 — due to voice tech failing to help consumers buy the books they want. This loss could balloon to upwards of \$50 million in 2020. Don't wait for a similar report to come out for your industry — now is the time to invest, while voice-enabled purchasing is still new and not as widely adopted.

It won't be long before every company will be expected to own and manage its own voice-first presence and capabilities, much like every company is expected to own and manage their web presence and capabilities. In fact, every time you see someone asking Siri to give them information, or someone asking Google Assistant for directions, you'll realize that your customers are already way ahead of you.

(Source: hbr.org)



For the First Time in World
A Great Honor for Kermanshah
Access of Kermanshah Oil Refinery
(Private Sector)
in Manufacturing Various Types of
Injectable Oil Sludge Catalysts

برای اولین بار در جهان
افتخاری بزرگ برای کرمانشاه
دستیابی پالایشگاه نفت کرمانشاه
(بخش خصوصی)
به ساخت انواع کاتالیست های تزریقی لجن های نفتی

روابط عمومی و امور بین الملل شرکت پالایش نفت کرمانشاه

Public Relations and Intl. Affairs Dept.
of Kermanshah Oil Refining Co.

The French diplomat went on to say that Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner "doesn't know the history" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, "noting, 'He may neglect the point that if you offer the Palestinians the choice between surrendering and committing suicide, they may decide the latter. Somebody like Kushner doesn't understand that.'"

Chelsea’s Rudiger out for season after knee surgery

Chelsea defender Antonio Rudiger will miss the remainder of the season after undergoing knee surgery for an injury sustained in Sunday’s 1-1 Premier League draw at Manchester United, the London club said.

Rudiger, who hurt his left knee and limped off after 65 minutes, will miss Chelsea’s final two league matches against Watford and Leicester as well as their Europa League campaign where they take on Eintracht Frankfurt in the semi-finals.

“Toni Rudiger successfully underwent surgery on his left knee meniscus today. He will miss the rest of this campaign and will rehab over the summer to be back early next season,” Chelsea said on their website.

Andreas Christensen is expected to fill in at centre back for the 26-year-old Germany international when Chelsea visit Frankfurt for the first leg on Thursday.

“What a pity I won’t be able to help my team during the last games of the season. But my knee surgery went well and I’m already positive again,” Rudiger said on Instagram.

Chelsea are fourth in the Premier League with 68 points and looking to secure the position to ensure Champions League soccer next season.

(Source: Eurosport)

Villa’s El Ghazi has red card rescinded, Leeds’ Bamford charged

Aston Villa forward Anwar El Ghazi’s red card in Sunday’s 1-1 Championship draw with Leeds United has been overturned while Leeds striker Patrick Bamford has been charged with deceiving the referee, the English Football Association (FA) said.

El Ghazi was shown a red card following an altercation with Bamford in the second half after Mateusz Klich had opened the scoring with a Villa player down injured on the pitch.

“Anwar El Ghazi will be available for Aston Villa’s next three matches after a claim of wrongful dismissal was upheld by an Independent Regulatory Commission,” the FA said in a statement.

“Patrick Bamford has subsequently been charged with ‘successful deception of a match official’.

“It is alleged the Leeds United player’s behaviour in the 72nd minute of the fixture, which involved committing a clear act of simulation that led to Anwar El Ghazi being dismissed, amounts to improper conduct.”

Bamford faces a two-match ban which would rule him out of Leeds’ final game of the regular season against Ipswich Town and the first leg of their play-off semi-final.

He has until Wednesday to respond to the charge. Both clubs were charged with failing to ensure their players conducted themselves in an orderly fashion in the second-half melee after Leeds scored. They have until Friday to respond.

(Source: Mirror)

Alonso to leave Toyota WEC team after Le Mans

Fernando Alonso will be replaced by New Zealander Brendon Hartley in the Toyota World Endurance Championship (WEC) team after the 24 Hours of Le Mans in June, the Japanese manufacturer announced on Wednesday.

Toyota said twice Formula One world champion Alonso “will explore new motorsport adventures within the Toyota Gazoo Racing family”.

No details were given but the Spaniard recently tested a Toyota Dakar Rally car in South Africa. The next edition of that race will be held in Saudi Arabia in January 2020.

Alonso won Le Mans with Toyota last year and will be trying to win the Indianapolis 500 with McLaren later this month to become only the second driver to complete the so-called “Triple Crown of Motorsport.”

“Now is a good time to take on new challenges and there are many interesting opportunities to explore within Toyota Gazoo Racing,” said the 37-year-old, who left Formula One last year. “We still have two important races remaining as we are still in the fight to become WEC World Champions and I will be pushing hard to win both of them.”

Hartley won Le Mans with Porsche in 2017 and is a two-time World Endurance champion. He raced in Formula One with Toro Rosso last year.

(Source: Reuters)

Brain injury charity wants temporary substitutes after Vertonghen clash

Soccer authorities should introduce temporary substitutions, a brain injury charity said after defender Jan Vertonghen tried to play on following a head clash during Tottenham Hotspur’s Champions League semi-final.

Vertonghen collided with team mate Toby Alderweireld while trying to beat Ajax Amsterdam goalkeeper Andre Onana to the ball in what Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino described as a “big knock” during Tuesday’s semi-final first leg.

Referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz spoke to the Spurs medical staff before allowing Vertonghen back onto the pitch, only for the 32-year-old Belgian to quickly go off again.

British charity Headway said in a statement on Wednesday that rolling substitutes in cases of head injury would allow a team’s medical staff to conduct longer off-pitch assessments.

“Assessing a player for three minutes – or even five, as was the case with Jan Vertonghen – does not allow for medical staff to make a reliable diagnosis,” Headway’s Luke Griggs said.

“The pressure on club medical staff is enormous and unfair, particularly in such high-stakes games such as a Champions League semi-final.

(Source: Guardian)

Real Madrid legend Iker Casillas, 37, rushed to hospital after heart attack

Real Madrid legend and Porto star Iker Casillas has been rushed to hospital after suffering a heart attack.

The 37-year-old goalkeeper was taken to the Hospital CUF in Porto earlier today.

Porto confirmed the terrifying news to TVI, but say the Spanish stopper is stable and “doing well”.

Casillas is now expected to be ruled out for at least the rest of the season after the traumatic ordeal.

The star married Spanish TV journalist Sara Carbonero, 35, in 2015 and the couple have two sons, Martin and Lucas.

Casillas is one of the most-decorated footballers on the planet after a glittering playing career.

He came through the ranks at Madrid and went on to become arguably the finest ‘keeper ever to grace the hallowed Bernabeu pitch throughout his 16-year stay.

During the highly-successful period, with the majority spent as club captain, he won La Liga five times and also lifted



the Champions League trophy on three occasions.

Casillas also counts two Copa del Rey titles, two Uefa Super Cups, one Intercontinental

Cup and the Fifa World Club Cup among his accolades.

He played a staggering 725 times, the second most in Madrid’s history, before joining Porto on a free transfer in 2015.

And he has continued the success in Portugal by capturing the Primeira Liga and Supertaca Candido de Oliveira crowns to his collection over the past two years.

But undoubtedly his greatest achievement came at international level as he kept guard for the legendary Spanish side throughout their four-year reign as the planet’s most-feared football nation.

Casillas was in goal as La Roja claimed back-to-back European Championships in 2008 and 2012, sandwiched between the 2010 World Cup triumph in South Africa.

After making his debut in 2000, he went on to win a national record 167 caps for his nation - making him the joint-most capped male footballer in history.

(Source: the Sun)

Ronaldo ‘buys world’s most expensive car’ worth €11m!



Cristiano Ronaldo is rumored to be the new owner of the one-off Bugatti La Voiture Noire - reportedly the most expensive car ever built.

Reports suggest Ronaldo has spent €11million (£9.49million) on the unique Bugatti which was first presented to the world at the Geneva Motor Show 2019.

The French luxury company built only one of the prototype supercar and it is a tribute to the 110th anniversary of the founding of the company.

The car is a modern interpretation of the mythical and legendary Bugatti Type 57 SC Atlantic, four of which were built between 1936 and 1938.

The car is powered by an 8.0-litre turbo-charged W16 engine and can reach 260mph. Bugatti have confirmed the one-off model now has an owner, but have refused to officially identify them.

Spanish sports paper Marca reports that the new owner is the legendary footballer, despite previous claims that it was bought by Ferdinand Piech, former chairman of the Volkswagen Group.

The owner will not be able to drive the

car until 2021 as the company still needs to finalise some small details on the prototype, according to reports.

Ronaldo has a fleet of luxury cars which reportedly include a Mercedes C Class Sport Coupe, a Rolls-Royce Phantom, a Ujn Ferrari 599 GTO, a Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4, an Aston Martin DB9, a McLaren MP4 12C and a Bentley Continental GTC Speed.

MARCA reports that Bugatti has not confirmed the buyer, and the driver will not be able to actually get their hands on it until 2021, when the final touches will be complete.

But if it did end up in Ronaldo’s garage, it will sit alongside some of the flashiest, fastest, and rarest cars in the world.

Ronaldo bought a bright white Rolls Royce Cullinan reportedly worth \$360,000 earlier this year, an SUV that was added to a collection that included a Bentley, a Porsche, and a Ferrari.

As this Business Insider list shows, it is not just cars he likes to buy, as Ronaldo also spends his money on expensive suits, \$20,200 Tag Heuer watches, and incredible properties around the world.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Emery turns to Europa League once more to salvage Arsenal’s season



Unai Emery’s first season in charge at Arsenal is in danger of imploding unless the Spaniard can again prove himself to be a Europa League specialist and cover up an alarming dip in the Gunners’ Premier League form.

Arsenal have lost four of their past five league games to Everton, Crystal Palace, Wolverhampton Wanderers and Leicester City to slip down to fifth and relying on more favours from Chelsea or Tottenham to have any chance of a top-four finish.

However, winning the Europa League would also offer a much-needed return to the Champions League next season after a two-year absence.

For 20 years under Arsene Wenger, Arsenal enjoyed the riches and the glamour of the Champions League and the impact of missing out has had serious implications on the budget Emery has had to work with.

In January, he revealed the club could not afford to make any permanent signings.

Emery is a specialist in Europe’s second-tier competition, winning it three times when at Sevilla, and he is also well acquainted with Arsenal’s semi-final oppo-

nents, Valencia, who he managed between 2008 and 2012.

Emery also did a stellar job at the Mestalla, leading Valencia to three consecutive third-placed finishes behind dominant Barcelona and Real Madrid sides managed by Pep Guardiola and Jose Mourinho.

“Emery was inducted into the Valencia hall of fame as one of the managers to have spent most time at Valencia, qualifying the team for the Champions League and performing well in it,” Valencia-based journalist Luis Cortes told AFP.

However, doubts remain over his ability to lead Arsenal’s rebuild back to the heights they once enjoyed under Wenger.

The same defensive issues that haunted the Frenchman’s final years in charge have been in evidence in recent weeks, conceding three times in three consecutive league defeats for the first time since 1967.

Emery has constantly changed personnel and formations, but is yet to find the right balance with one of his two star forwards Alexandre Lacazette and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang often left out.

(Source: AFP)

Green: Ref chatter after Game 1 ‘embarrassing’

Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green acknowledged that all the chatter surrounding the officiating in Game 1 of their Western Conference semifinals series with the Houston Rockets was “embarrassing” for the game, and he said he was happy that both teams were less demonstrative toward the referees in the Warriors’ 115-109 victory in Game 2 on Tuesday night.

“I think both teams just realized what the hell was going on the last two days,” Green said. “You can’t really turn a blind eye to anything in today’s day and age, with social media and all these things. So everyone was aware of all the talk about officiating and about foul calls -- come out and play the game. And I think both teams did a great job of that.

“They weren’t complaining about many calls, we weren’t complaining about many calls, because it’s kind of embarrassing for the game of basketball, how much has been talked about, about fouls and officiating. What about beating your man? What about stopping your man? No one talked anything about schemes the last two days. It’s all been about foul calls. I think both teams were locked in on coming out and playing the game to the best of their ability. You have to give credit to both clubs, both teams did that.”

After arguing with referees about many calls throughout Game 1, both teams showed noticeably less emotion toward the officials at the start of Game 2. Neither team had many



complaints about the officiating after Tuesday night’s game.

“I didn’t even notice the officiating,” Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. “I don’t think anybody did. I think that’s the best compliment you can give them. They did a great job. This game was just about basketball.”

For the Rockets, the lack of arguments with officials throughout much of the game took on added significance, given that referee Scott Foster was part of the crew Tuesday night. Foster had not refereed a Rockets game since Feb. 21, a game in which Harden fouled out and said afterward that Foster should no longer be part of a crew assigned to Rockets games. Harden was fined \$25,000 for his comments,

Paris Saint-Germain ready to cover De Gea in gold

Manchester United’s David De Gea tops Paris Saint-Germain’s wish list this summer and the Ligue 1 side are preparing a big-money offer for the Spaniard.

De Gea has seen contract talks at Old Trafford fall apart of late and it looks as though his stay in England could be coming to an end, with his current deal set to expire in 2020.

PSG, according to the Daily Star, are willing to offer him an incredible 24 million euros per year. Gianluigi Buffon arrived at the Parc des Princes last summer with the Parisians

looking to conquer Europe but, with the move seen as something of a failure, they’ve turned their attention to De Gea.

(Source: Marca)

IPL: Persepolis held by Tractor Sazi in Tabriz

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team were held to a 1-1 draw by Tractor Sazi in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Wednesday.

In the match held in Tabriz's Yadegar-e Emam Stadium, Kamal Kamyabinia gave the visiting team a lead in the 11th minute, slotting home a cross from Bashar Resan.

Persepolis could have scored the second goal in the 25th minute but Ahmad Nourollahi's shot was saved by Tractor Sazi goalkeeper Mohammadreza Akhbari. Persepolis were dominants in the second half and Mehdi Torabi could register the second goal for the visiting team in the 56th minute with a long-range shot.

Danial Esmailifar equalized the match in the 79th minute after Persepolis defenders failed to clear Ehsan Haji Safi's long throw.

"I am satisfied with my players' performance. We could have won the match but conceded a late goal," Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic said in the post-match news conference.

"We keep going to win the IPL title for the third time in a row. In the match against Machine Sazi in Tehran, we should defeat them in front of our fans," the Croat added.

Persepolis are leaders with 57 points, followed by Sepahan who have 51 points and one game in hands.

The Iran Professional League is the highest division of professional football in Iran. The league was also known as the Persian Gulf Cup from 2006.

It is the top-level football league in Iran since its foundation in 2 November 2001. Each year, the top finishing team in the Persian Gulf Pro League becomes the Iranian football champion, and the lowest finishing teams are relegated to Azadegan League.



Pochettino says Spurs still alive

Tottenham Hotspur are still "alive" in their Champions League semi-final despite losing 1-0 at home to Ajax in the first leg, says manager Mauricio Pochettino.

Donny van de Beek's goal gave the Dutch side victory over a lacklustre Spurs in north London on Tuesday.

"It's going to be difficult, but it's still open," said Pochettino.

"It's about preparing for the second leg. We will try to win. It will be tough for us, but also tough for them."

History is against Spurs as only one of the 17 previous teams to lose a home first leg of a European Cup or Champions League semi-final has progressed into the final.

The Premier League side paid the price for a slow start, with

midfielder Van de Beek scoring the only goal on 15 minutes.

"I think the attitude was there, but we didn't find a way to play," said Pochettino. "We didn't show the energy we wanted to show and the way that we conceded the goal was painful. We struggled in the first half an hour."

"The second half was much better, we forced them to play deeper. We pressed in the way we wanted to press. The second half gave us hope for the second leg."

And the Argentine took responsibility for his side's early struggle, acknowledging that a change of shape from a five-man defense to a back four aided his side.

"I can accept it was a mistake, the shape we used," he

told BT Sport. "But there were not too many options. I am not happy - you cannot guess what happens if we play in a different way."

"It was the not the shape that conceded the goal. Our approach to the game was not good. I am the manager so I have responsibility."

In addition, Pochettino was keen to praise his players for reaching Spurs first semi-final in Europe's premier club competition since 1962.

"My players are heroes to be in the situation that we are in," he said. "We need to give them full credit."

(Source: BBC)

Olympic gold medalist Caster Semenya loses appeal against IAAF testosterone rules



Two-time Olympic champion runner Caster Semenya lost her appeal Wednesday against International Association of Athletics Federations rules designed to decrease high testosterone levels in some female runners.

The Court of Arbitration of Sport's panel determined that the IAAF's proposed rules on athletes with "differences of sex development (DSD)" are discriminatory but should be applied. The three-judge panel also "dismissed both requests for arbitration" from Semenya and the IAAF.

The panel ruled 2-1 that "on the basis of the evidence submitted by the parties, such discrimination is a necessary, reasonable and proportionate means of achieving the IAAF's aim of preserving the integrity of female athletics in the Restricted Events."

Semenya, a South African runner who won gold in the 800-meter event in the 2012 London Olympics and 2016 Rio Olympics, will be forced to use medication to suppress testosterone levels to defend her world championship in

September in Qatar.

Semenya tweeted a photo with a message on it after the ruling was handed down.

The panel "strongly encouraged" the IAAF to note their concerns when it applies their rules - which judges believe might have to be amended in the future.

"Indeed, it may be that, on implementation and with experience, certain factors may be shown to affect the overall proportionality of the DSD Regulations," the court said.

The IAAF argued that female runners with high testosterone levels have an unfair advantage, scientifically, in events from the 400-meter race to the mile.

The judges want the IAAF to apply the rules up to the 800-meter event because the evidence wasn't clear that women with hyperandrogenism have a competitive advantage in the 1,500M event, which could give Semenya a path to competing in that event in the upcoming world championships.

(Source: AP)

Man United to face Solskjaer's hometown club in preseason friendly - sources



Manchester United are in talks with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's hometown team Kristiansund about a preseason friendly this summer, sources have told ESPN FC.

United are already scheduled to play warm up games in Australia, Singapore, China and Cardiff ahead of next season and have started negotiations about playing an extra match in Norway in July.

After playing Perth Glory and Leeds United in Perth, Solskjaer's team are due to face Inter Milan in Singapore on July 20 before travelling to Shanghai to play Tottenham on July 25.

They will also play AC Milan in Cardiff on Aug. 3 -- a week before the Premier League season is due to start on Aug. 10.

The game against Kristiansund, based in Solskjaer's home town and the 10th-placed side in the Norwegian top flight, could take place between the fixtures against Tottenham and Milan. United's summer plans have been

complicated by the prospect of playing a Europa League qualifier on July 25 -- the same day they are due to play Tottenham in China.

United will be involved in a Europa League second qualifying round first leg on July 25 if they finish sixth and Watford beat Manchester City in the FA Cup final.

Sources have told ESPN FC that the club have a contingency plan in place if that situation arises which could include fulfilling both fixtures with separate squads.

United, sixth in the table after Sunday's 1-1 draw with Chelsea, can still finish in the top four and qualify for next season's Champions League.

However, with just two games remaining and three points adrift of fourth-place Chelsea it is likely they will miss out on a place in Europe's top club competition for the third time in six years since Sir Alex Ferguson's retirement in 2013.

(Source: ESPN)

IPC congratulates Zahra Nemati on 34th birthday

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) congratulated Iranian Para archer Zahra Nemati on his 34th birthday.

Nemati turned 34 on April 30. The Paralympic archer became the first Iranian woman to win gold at either the Olympic or Paralympic Games in 2012.

Nemati competed in both the Olympic and Paralympic Games at Rio 2016, and was also Iran's flag-bearer at the Olympics.

She won her first gold at the individual recurve W1/W2 in London 2012 Paralympic Games and also claimed the second gold at the same event four years later in Rio de Janeiro.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Farah declines marathon spot at World Championships

European record holder Mo Farah has declined a chance to contest the marathon in the World Championships in Doha, increasing the possibility of a return to the track.

Farah, a four-times Olympic champion over 5,000 meters and 10,000 meters, retired from track athletics to focus on marathon events in 2017. The 36-year-old has since broken the European record when winning the Chicago Marathon last October, but only finished fifth at the London Marathon last weekend, over three minutes behind Kenyan great Eliud Kipchoge.

British Athletics on Wednesday announced their marathon participants for the World Championships in September - the men's lineup consisting of Callum Hawkins and Dewi Griffiths -- and Farah was the notable absentee.

Earlier this year, the three-time 10,000m world champion Farah said watching Briton Laura Muir claim the European Indoor 1,500m and 3,000m double made him realize how much he missed the track.

"Having seen my fellow athletes, who I've competed against in the past, and watching the European Indoor Championships on TV, I was thinking 'Oh man! I want to get back out there,'" he said in March.

"That's just me. If things are going well and I've got a chance to win a medal then I'd love to come back and run for my country."

"Part of me when I watch track races I'm like, 'can I still do it? I want to do it'. I do miss the track."

(Source: Reuters)

UWW praises Iranian wrestling teams

The Asian Championships, which were the fifth and final Continental Championships, wrapped up last weekend in Xi'an, China.

Iran put on an impressive showing in both freestyle and Greco-Roman, winning the team titles in each, while Japan won the women's wrestling team title.

In freestyle, Iran annihilated the competition, wrapping up the team title with seven champions and three bronze-medal finishers. Their ten-medal performance was good enough for 220 points, which was 65 points ahead of second place India, who had 155 points.

Kazakhstan rounded out the top three in the freestyle department with 129 points.

Iran also won the Greco-Roman team title. They did so by narrowly sneaking past second place Uzbekistan by two points.

Majority of Iran's 165 points came from their four champions and a trio of bronze-medal finishers. Uzbekistan, who had 163 points, had more finalists than Iran, but dropped three of those five gold-medal bouts, falling just short of the podiums top spot.

Kazakhstan had 134 points and finished in third place in Greco-Roman.

In women's wrestling, powerhouse Japan won the team title with nine finalists and four champions. The lone wrestler who missed out on competing for a gold medal was four-time Olympic champion Kaori ICHO, who was making her return to international competition for the first time since her history-making performance at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

Icho scored a win in the 57kg bronze-medal bout, giving Japan, who had 215 points, a medal in all ten weight classes.

China (183 points) and India (113 points) finished in second and third respectively in the women's wrestling competition.

(Source: unitedworldwrestling.org)



Arsenal midfielder ruled out for rest of season

Aaron Ramsey's Arsenal career is over after it emerged he will miss the rest of the season with a hamstring injury.

The midfielder was substituted after 34 minutes of the Gunners' Europa League quarter-final second leg win at Napoli.

It was hoped Ramsey, 28, might feature before the end of the Premier League campaign or a potential Europa League final but he needs longer to recover.

He will leave Arsenal when his contract expires on 30 June and join Italian champions Juventus as a free agent.

The club issued an update on Ramsey's injury on Wednesday, stating he will continue to "receive treatment and further assessment" and confirmed he will miss Thursday's Europa League semi-final first leg against Valencia.

He moved to Arsenal in 2008 from Cardiff City and is currently the Gunners' longest-serving player.

The Welshman was in talks over a new deal, but Arsenal withdrew the offer in September for football and financial reasons.

He has scored six goals in 40 appearances this season and 64 in 369 since moving to Emirates Stadium for £4.8m.

Ramsey scored the winning goals in the 2014 and 2017 FA Cup finals, also lifting the trophy in 2015.

(Source: BBC)

Teams confirmed for Thailand 2019

Korea Republic, Australia, Vietnam and Myanmar have completed the line-up for the AFC U-19 Women's Championship Thailand 2019 after the conclusion of the Round 2 Qualifying on Tuesday.

Title holders Japan automatically qualified for the tournament which will be held from October 27 to November 9 in Thailand following their success in 2017 and they will be joined by the last edition's runners-up DPR Korea and third placed China PR. Thailand qualify as the host nation.

The remaining four slots were determined after two qualifying stages with Australia sealing a place in the AFC U-19 Women's Championship Thailand 2019 following an impressive qualifying campaign where they topped Group A and were undefeated.

They will be joined by second placed Myanmar who punched their ticket to the Championship later this year.



Korea Republic finished on top of Group B while Vietnam completed the final eight teams after edging Islamic

Republic of Iran on lower fair play points.

The AFC U-19 Women's Championship Thailand 2019 will be also see the top three teams qualify for the 2020 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup.

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) General Secretary Dato' Windsor John congratulated the eight Asian teams who successfully qualified for the showpiece.

He said: "It is great to see the rapid rise of women's football in Asia and the AFC is proud to give these young women footballers a platform to shine and showcase their talent on the international stage."

"The AFC U-19 Women's Championship Thailand 2019 is an important competition and I wish the best to all teams as the top-three teams will represent Asia and their countries in the 2020 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup."

(Source: AFC)

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**GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING**

Obtain knowledge wherever possible...
The worth of everyone depends on what
he knows.
Imam Ali (AS)

South Korean ambassador,
Iranian deputy culture
minister meet

A R T **TEHRAN** — South Korean Ambassador d e s k Ryu Jeong-Hyun met the Iranian Deputy Culture Minister for Cultural Affair, Mohsen Javadi, on Wednesday.

The meeting was held during Ryu’s visit to the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance announced.



South Korean Ambassador Ryu Jeong-Hyun (L) and the Iranian Deputy Culture Minister for Cultural Affair, Mohsen Javadi, meet during the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair on May 1, 2019.

In addition to the close economic and political relations, both countries should also take measures to expand cultural ties, Ryu said.

He announced Korea’s plan to organize numerous cultural festival for autumn, and invited Iranian artists and cultural figures to attend the events.

He said that participation in the cultural program can provide a useful perspective on more extensive cultural collaborations between the two countries.

He also expressed his hope that his country will host Iran as a guest of honor at the Seoul International Book Fair in the future.

Ryu also asked the Iranian culture ministry to give an opportunity to South Korea as a special guest in one of the next editions of the Tehran book fair to introduce its culture.

Javadi, who is also the director of the Tehran book fair, said that Korean films and art and literary works have been warmly welcomed in Iran over the past decade and added that the culture ministry also welcomes any plan to boost cultural ties between the two countries.

“Umbra” competing in
Brussels Short Film Festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Saeid d e s k Jafarian’s drama “Umbra” is competing in the Brussels Short Film Festival, the organizers have announced.



A scene from Iranian director Saeid Jafarian’s drama “Umbra”.

The film tells the story of a young woman who realizes a few minutes after midnight that her partner has disappeared. She goes out worriedly to seek her partner in the darkness of streets.

The festival, which is currently underway in the Belgian capital, will come to an end with honoring its winners on May 5.

IIDO director says translation
cannot fill cultural vacuums in Iran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Islamic d e s k Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO) director Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi has said that translated books cannot fill the cultural vacuums in Iran.

In a visit to the children’s book section at the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair, Qomi lamented the lack of proper controls over children’s books in the country and noted, “Our cultural environment is not of the type in which translated books could fill its cultural vacuum.”

“I have my own personal reasons for visiting the children’s book section,” said Qomi, describing his visit as a labor of love.

“I read books for my daughter, I generally regard children’s books as crucial,” he said while his little daughter accompanied him during the visit.

Qomi, who was appointed to the IIDO in August 2018, said, “I always have visited the children’s book section during previous editions of the book fair when I was not in charge of the organization.”

“To clarify the pure Islam, and in order to make changes in people’s beliefs, which make up the public culture, we need to invest heavily in children’s books,” he concluded.

The Tehran International Book Fair, which opened last week with the slogan “Reading IS Ability”, will wrap up on Saturday.



Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO) director Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi and his daughter visit the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair on April 30, 2019. (Mehr/Hamid Vakili)

“Lotus” director Mohammadreza
Vatandoost honored at Beirut festival



“Lotus” director Mohammadreza Vatandoost in an undated photo.

A R T **TEHRAN** — d e s k Mohammadreza Vatandoost from Iran was selected as best director for his acclaimed documentary “Lotus” at the 18th Beirut International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Sunday.

The film tells the story of an old woman who is waiting for a permit

to enter an island to visit her son’s grave.

“McQueen” co-directed by Ian Bonhote and Peter Ettedgui from England received the audience award, while “Facing Death with a Wire Cutter” by Sarwar Abdullah from Iraq was picked as best documentary.

Climate mural emerges after London
protests; Is it Banksy?



A young boy points a camera he was playing with towards a new piece of street art believed to be by street artist Banksy on a wall where Extinction Rebellion climate protesters had set up a camp in Marble Arch, London, Friday, April 26, 2019. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham)

LONDON (AP) — Officials in London are trying to determine if a stenciled mural that appeared at a base camp for climate protests was created by the street artist Banksy.

The mural is on a wall at Marble Arch, where the group Extinction Rebellion had an encampment for 10 days until Thursday and disrupted transportation in the British capital with daily, targeted non-violent protests.

The artwork shows a child holding an Extinction Rebellion sign beside the words “From this moment despair ends and tactics begin.”

Nickie Aiken, the leader of Westminster Council, a local authority that oversees the area, said “we believe it’s genuine and are working to confirm that it is the case.”

“This street art has clearly captured the public mood and imagination, and so we’re looking to keep it in a public place for people to enjoy,” she said.

There was no mention of the work

Friday on Banksy’s website or Instagram account, where he typically confirms authorship. Banksy’s spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

More than 1,100 people were arrested for blocking roads and bridges during more than a week of Extinction Rebellion protests aimed at alerting the public and politicians to the “climate emergency.”

Banksy, who has never disclosed his full identity, began his career spray-painting buildings in Bristol, England. He has become one of the world’s best-known artists through works tinged with satire and social commentary.

Last year his painting “Girl With Balloon” sold for 1 million pounds (\$1.3 million) at a Sotheby’s auction — and was immediately partially destroyed by a shredder that the artist had concealed in the frame.

The buyer went ahead with the purchase.

Iranian films to compete
in Ecozine



A scene from Mohammad Ehsani’s documentary “Karun”.

A R T **TEHRAN** — A lineup d e s k of five Iranian movies will go on screen at the 12th Ecozine Film Festival, an international event dedicated to movies on the environment, which will open in Zaragoza, Spain on Friday.

“Karun”, a documentary by Mohammad Ehsani about the largest Iranian river, Karun, which is at risk of destruction due to climate

change, water transfer plans and dumping sewage, is a highlight of the lineup.

Short animations “The Last Fish” by Seyyed Mahmud Saemin, “On the Cover” by Yeganeh Moqaddam and “The Last Eagle” by Reza Golchin and the short film “Fishnet and the Fish” by Ali Nikfar are also among the films.

The festival will run until May 19.

“Long Shot” pairs Charlize Theron, Seth
Rogen in political romance



Seth Rogen (L) and Charlize Theron accept the CinemaCon Comedy Stars of the Year Award during the CinemaCon Big Screen Achievement Awards ceremony at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada, U.S. April 4, 2019. (Reuters/Steve Marcus)

LONDON (Reuters) — Oscar winner Charlize Theron and comedy actor Seth Rogen join forces in rom-com “Long Shot”, playing an unlikely love pairing between a powerful politician and an unemployed dishevelled journalist.

The 43-year-old actress takes on the role of U.S. Secretary of State Charlotte Field in the movie, an ambitious and respected politician looking to run for president.

In a chance encounter she bumps into Fred Flarsky, played by Rogen, a liberal and at times clumsy reporter she babysat as a child and he begins working for her as a speech writer.

“I read a couple of biographies on female secretary of states. We had some speechwriters on the set who were really helpful and just kind of explaining logistics of the job,” Theron told Reuters about preparing for the role.

“I never really wanted her to be based on somebody, I just wanted it to be believable.”

Rogen said his character, who stumbles down stairs and stands out for his casual

wear, was “stylistically based on some of the journalists that have interviewed me in the past.

“I notice that a lot of them dress like 12-year-olds,” he added in a joint interview with Theron. The romantic comedy, with plenty of laugh out loud moments, follows the pair as Field travels the world working on an environmental campaign and their romance blossoms.

Director Jonathan Levine said the actors did a lot of improvisation on set and that the movie sought to touch on some real life matters in a funny way.

“Once we figured out we needed to make it close enough to real life that we could comment on real life but far enough that we wouldn’t inspire people’s anger about everyday things, that’s when we really felt like we had found our lane,” he said.

“We were able to use comedy as a tool to comment and maybe even make people think about stuff.” “Long Shot” hits cinemas worldwide from Wednesday.