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Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (L) met on Friday with Pakistan's PM Imran Khan (C) during a trip to Islamabad.

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Iran, Russia explore ways of expanding railway co-op

TEHRAN — Saeed Rasouli, the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI), met with Russian Railways (RZD) Vice President Alexander Misharin in Tehran to discuss ways of expanding cooperation, the RAI website reported.

According to RAI office of public relations, a Russian delegation from

the country's rail sector are visiting Iran to follow up on previous agreements and explore new avenues of cooperation.

In the meeting, Rasouli welcomed the Russian delegation's visit to Iran and said that Iran attaches great importance to the development of the rail transportation industry's infrastructure. →4

Nation will make economic war planners regretful: Rouhani

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani said on Thursday that the Iranian people will make those in the United States who have waged an "economic war" against Iran "regretful".

"Culture of altruism and resistance should show us the path. The enemies exert pressure against us to make us regret about our dignity and independence. However, the people will once again show that their

plots will yield no fruit and will make the enemies regret," he said during a speech at a national conference praising the sacrifices of war veterans. He noted that the Iranian people will never surrender and will defeat enemies through unity.

"More than one year after the imposition of these severe sanctions, our people have not bowed to pressures despite facing difficulties in their lives," Rouhani said, according to IRNA. →2

Yemeni drone hits Patriot missile system at Saudi airport in Najran

TEHRAN — Yemeni army forces, supported by allied fighters from Popular Committees, have reportedly launched an airstrike against a MIM-104 Patriot surface-to-air missile system stationed at an airport in Saudi Arabia's southwestern border region of Najran.

A Yemeni military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the local

Arabic-language al-Masirah television network that Yemeni soldiers and their allies attacked the U.S.-built system on Thursday, using a domestically-designed and -manufactured Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drone.

The source added that the aerial attack was carried out following close surveillance by Yemeni forces. →13

Tearful May resigns, paving way for Brexit confrontation

TEHRAN — Fighting back tears, British Prime Minister Theresa May said on Friday she would quit, triggering a contest that will bring a new leader to power who is likely to push for a more decisive Brexit divorce deal.

May's departure will deepen the Brexit crisis as a new leader is likely to want a more decisive split, raising the chances of a confrontation with the European Union and a potentially unpredictable snap parliamentary election, Reuters reported.

May set out a timetable for her departure - she will resign as Conservative Party leader on June 7 with a leadership contest beginning the following week. Her voice cracking with emotion, May, who endured crises and humiliation in her failed effort to find a compromise Brexit deal that parliament could ratify, said she bore no ill will.

"I will shortly leave the job that has been the honor of my life to hold," May said. "The second female prime minister, but certainly not the last."

"I do so with no ill will but with enormous and enduring gratitude to have had the opportunity to serve the country I love," May said, with her husband, Philip, looking on.

May, once a reluctant supporter of EU membership, who won the top job in the turmoil that followed the 2016 Brexit vote, steps down with her central pledges - to lead the United Kingdom out of the bloc and heal its divisions - unfulfilled.

"It is, and will always remain, a matter of deep regret to me that I have not been able to deliver Brexit," May said, adding that her successor would have to find a consensus to honor the 2016 referendum result.

■ PM Boris Johnson?

May bequeaths a deeply divided country and a

political elite that is deadlocked over how, when or whether to leave the EU.

The leading contenders to succeed May all want a tougher divorce deal, although the EU has said it will not renegotiate the Withdrawal Treaty it sealed in November.

Sterling reversed initial gains it made on May's resignation.

Boris Johnson, the face of the official Brexit campaign in 2016, is the favorite to succeed May. Betting markets put a 40% implied probability on Johnson winning the top job.

Others tipped by betting markets are Dominic Raab, a Brexit supporter and former Brexit secretary, with a 14% implied probability on his chances.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove, former House of Commons leader Andrea Leadsom and Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt each have a 7% probability, according to betting markets.

'Bahraini regime contributing to liquidation of Palestinian cause'

TEHRAN — Bahrain's main Shia opposition group, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, says the ruling Al Khalifah regime is contributing to the liquidation of the Palestinian cause through hosting a Washington-led conference in support of U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial proposal for "peace" between the Israeli regime and Palestinians, dubbed "the deal of the century."

"The Manama regime, through hosting a U.S.-Zionist conference next month, is helping the obliteration of the Palestinian cause in favor of the Zionist regime (of Israel), and according to Israeli conditions," the deputy secretary general of al-Wefaq, Sheikh Hussein al-Daihi, said on Thursday.

He added, "It's not the first time that the

Bahraini regime stabs Muslims and reneges on their major issue of concern, which is Palestine. The regime has rushed to normalize ties with the Zionist entity."

The opposition figure further noted that the Manama conference scheduled for June 25-26 is a "failed step to establish a new Middle East" according to U.S. standards.

"The hypocrisy of those fooling with the Palestinian cause and Palestinians' sufferings has been unmasked. Their intentions and schemes aimed at liquidation of the Palestinian cause have now been exposed," Daihi pointed out.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Hamas resistance movement have called for an Arab boycott of the Bahrain confab.



EDITORIAL

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Saudi vicious ploy for Quds World Day

This year, Quds International Day will be of special importance since U.S. is planning to officially announce the "Deal of the Century", a deal mainly designed to complete the Zionists' ominous project for pushing Palestinians out of their lands.

This is a critical time, also, because U.S. is especially at work to heighten pressures on Iran, in a bid to hinder the development of the Islamic Republic government and nation.

Over the past weeks, anti-Iran groups and war-advocates both inside and outside the White House have done the most to fuel fears and to fake a pressing situation in which "war or negation" are the only options. They are in fact putting on this show to achieve their own goals which are limiting Iran's power in the region and preparing the ground for official introduction of "the Deal of the Century".

Based on this scenario, the Al Saud regime, who is the top mercenary of U.S. and Zionists in the region, is now trying to hold an urgent meeting with Arab League and Persian Gulf Cooperation Council members in Mecca.

Holding this meeting shows the magnitude of Al Saud viciousness and is important on several accounts:

- According to Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir, the meeting is going to be held on Ramadan 25th which coincides the Quds international Day.

- Instead of running in Saudi Arabia capital in Riyadh, the meeting is going to be held in Mecca which is Muslims' holiest city.

- The main topic of this meeting is both "the Deal of the Century" and "the threats of the Islamic Republic of Iran for Arab countries."

By considering these three points it becomes clear that the Arab-Hebraic-Western think tank is aiming to attack the Islamic Republic of Iran which is the heart and soul of Quds Day and to destroy the idea of this day which is the liberation of Palestine and the holy Quds, so that they can stabilize and normalize the shameful and treacherous Deal of the Century.



ARTICLE

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CBI's new directive on re-injection of export income requires amendment

Central Bank of Iran (CBI) unveiled a directive package on Monday which provides the country's exporters with guidelines about how they should re-inject their foreign currency incomes into the country's economy.

Based on the new directive, for the petrochemical sector, the exporters should present at least 60 percent of their foreign currency incomes into the domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA), and a maximum 10 percent could be injected into the financial system in the form of hard currency and the rest could be used for importing necessary goods.

As for other exporters, at least 50 percent of the total earnings should be presented at the NIMA system and a maximum 20 percent could be distributed in form of hard currency and the rest can be used for imports. Now, this new directive has aroused some debates in the country's private sector and the traders and businessmen want it to be amended.

In an interview conducted by ISNA and published on Friday, Mohammad Lahouti, the chairman of Iran Export Confederation, said the new directive removes some concerns of the private sector, but for having positive results it requires to be amended.

He said, "During several meetings with the CBI over the past weeks, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has announced all the things to be done in management of the foreign currency market and the results were mentioned in a letter sent to the CBI."

"In the new directive, CBI has considered some of our demands but some others are ignored", Lahouti lamented.

According to Lahouti, what has happened during the two-month period from February 20 to April 20 shows that removing some limitations for the exporters has led to supply some import requirement of the country as about \$2.6 billion of imports has been done through re-injection of foreign currency earned from the exports which is an acceptable figure considering the current condition and some part of the country's plants requirement for the raw materials has been supplied through that imports. →4



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Art exhibit on Khorramshahr underway at Tehran gallery

TEHRAN — A multimedia exhibition featuring a historical and abstract account of what has happened in the southwestern Iranian city of Khorramshahr over the past 38 years is underway at Tehran's Farmanfarma Gallery.

A collection of photos, sets of installation and video art and musical performances by 36 artists are on view at the exhibition titled "Khorramshahr + 30", the Persian service of Honaronline reported on Thursday.

The exhibit that is being curated by Fereidun Farbud features the people's resistance before the city was captured by Iraqi forces on October 26, 1980 during the early months of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. →16

Oman says trying to reduce U.S.-Iran tensions

By staff and agency

Oman's Foreign Ministry tweeted on Friday that Muscat is trying "with other parties" to reduce tensions between the U.S. and Iran.

"There is a danger that a war breaks out, hurting the whole world ... Both parties, the American and the Iranian, are aware of the danger," the tweet cited Omani Foreign Minister Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah as saying in an interview with an Arabic publication, according to Reuters.

The Omani foreign minister visited Tehran on Monday. He held talks with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif, discussing the most important regional and international developments, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a press release.

Oman, which is considered the Switzerland of the region, acted as mediator between Tehran and Washington during the Obama administration.

Tension has been rising between Iran and the U.S. since the Pentagon sent the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Persian Gulf and made military threats against Iran.

The USS Arlington transports marines, amphibious vehicles, and rotary aircraft, as well as the Patriot missiles, are planned to join the carrier strike group.

"The acting secretary of defense has approved the movement of USS Arlington (LPD-24) and a Patriot battery to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) as part of the command's original request for forces from earlier this week," a Pentagon statement said on May 10.

In an interview with CNN aired on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that the U.S. is playing a "very very dangerous game" by increasing its military presence in the region.

"Iran is not interested in escalation. We have said very clearly that we will not be the party to begin escalation, but we will defend ourselves. Having all these military assets in a small waterway (Persian Gulf) is prone to accident, particularly when you have people who are interested in accidents. We believe that the U.S. is playing a very very dangerous game," he said.

The chief diplomat said all will suffer if a war breaks out. "There will be painful consequences for everybody. There is an escalation against Iran. That's for sure. The U.S. is engaged in an economic warfare against Iran. It has to stop. Economic war means targeting the Iranian people. That has to stop. The U.S. does not have the legal position, does not have the moral position, does not have the political position and does not have the international position to impose economic war on Iran," he said.

Hassan Danaeefar, the former Iranian Ambassador to Iraq, told IRNA in an interview published on Wednesday that a war between Iran and the U.S. is unlikely. However, he said, it is essential to monitor the enemies' behavior.

"The U.S. knows that Iran can defend itself if a war is waged. So, it is unlikely that they seek a war," he argued.

He added that war serves no one's interests.

European countries will continue efforts to preserve JCPOA: German diplomat

(Press TV) — A senior German diplomat says European countries will continue efforts to preserve a 2015 landmark multilateral nuclear accord between Iran and the world powers.

Jens Ploetner, the political director at the German Foreign Ministry, who visited the Iranian capital on Thursday, met with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, during which he said his country will "remain committed" to the agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), IRNA reported.



(From L-R) Jens Ploetner, the political director at the German Foreign Ministry, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, and German Ambassador to Tehran Michael Klor-Berchtold are seen in Tehran on May 23, 2019. (Photo by IRNA)

He also said, "European countries will keep up their efforts and consultations aimed at meeting Iran's demands and preserving the JCPOA."

Araqchi likewise reminded that Iran's self-restraint in the face of Europe's inaction had reached its end, and that the deal's other parties had to meet their contractual obligations too.

Earlier in the day, a German diplomatic source told Reuters that "at the center of the political director's visit is the preservation of the Vienna nuclear accord."

The agreement was made between the P5+1 group of states -- the United States, the UK, France, Russia, and China plus Germany -- and the Islamic Republic in Vienna in July 2015.

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

The JCPOA was hailed as a pillar of regional and international peace and security, and ratified in the form of a United Nations Security Council resolution, making adherence to it an international legal obligation.

However, the U.S. left it last May, and reinstated the sanctions. It also began threatening the countries retaining their trade with Iran, as the agreement allows, with "secondary sanctions."

Upon the U.S.'s departure, Iran began urging the deal's other signatories to keep their end of the bargain and do not let the U.S.'s pressure affect their transactions with Tehran.

Bowing under Washington's pressure, however, Europe has only been throwing verbal support behind the deal.

On the first anniversary of the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal, Iran announced that it would suspend the implementation of some of its commitments under the deal.

Iran announced that it would stop exporting excess uranium and heavy water, setting a 60-day deadline for the five remaining parties to the deal to take practical measures towards ensuring its interests in the face of the American sanctions.

Zarif meets Imran Khan in Islamabad

Zarif pushes to connect Chabahar and Gwadar in Pakistan visit

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in Islamabad on Friday.

During his meeting with Khan, Zarif said Iran attaches great importance to ties with Pakistan and also cooperation between the Iranian port city of Chabahar and Pakistan's Gwadar in line with tapping the capacities of the two cities for mutual benefit.

Khan said that Pakistan seeks to expand relations and cooperation with Iran. He also highlighted the importance of cooperation between Islamic countries in the region.

The Pakistani prime minister made a high-profile visit to Iran in April.

During a separate meeting with Qureshi, Zarif said that Iran attaches value to Pakistan's efforts to establish peace in the region.

Qureshi said Pakistan would continue its reconciliatory efforts for ensuring peace and stability and reducing tension in the region.

He added that tensions in the region are in no one's interest.

The remarks by Pakistan's foreign minister



FM Zarif held separate talks with his Pakistani counterpart Mehmood Qureshi (right) in Islamabad.

came in the backdrop of rising tension between Iran and the United States.

Qureshi added Pakistan wants settlements

of all issues through diplomatic engagement.

"All stakeholders need to demonstrate

patience and tolerance," Qureshi said.

Military chief: Standoff between Iran and U.S. is 'clash of wills'

POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN — Major General Mohammad Bagheri, the Iranian armed forces chief of staff, said on Thursday that the current standoff between Iran and the U.S. is an arena for "clash of wills."

Bagheri made the remark in a message issued on the occasion of the liberation of Khorramshahr from the Iraqi occupation on May 24, 1982.

"Now, under conditions that, as put by the sage Leader of the [Islamic] Revolution..., the confrontation and faceoff between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the wicked government of America is an arena for 'clash of wills,' reminding the epic victory in Khorramshahr to friends and foes of the Revolution could convey a powerful message," Bagheri stated, Press TV reported.

The top general said the liberation of Khorramshahr sends this message that any misadventure by the United States against Iran will be met with a "crushing and destructive response".

"The translation of that message is stronger and God-based determination of Iran in the face of any possible conflict and warmongering, which will result in a hard, crushing and destructive response to any bullheaded and adventurist enemy."

Iraq captured the city on October 26, 1980 as Saddam Hussein ordered invasion of Iran on September 22, 1980. Iranian forces liberated the strategic port city during a landmark operation code-named Beit ol-Moqaddas in 1982, putting an end to over 500 days of the Iraqi occupation. The victory set the stage for subsequent victories by the Iranian armed forces.

Elsewhere in his message, Bagheri said the most significant consequence of the wartime victory was coming to light of the fact that Iranians' resistance and sacrifice "turned the imposed war from a 'threat' to a golden and strategic opportunity."

The military chief also said in the current situation, the enemy, which has been "subjugated to Iran's will," is seeking recourse to



media outlets to dramatize the threat of an 'imaginary war' to scare the Iranian nation and force the country into submission.

"In such sensitive circumstances," he advised, "a chain of powerful reactions to the enemy's psychological warfare and displaying [Iran's] firm determination can further betray the receding nature of the U.S. and its allies' power."

The U.S. remarkably stoked tensions with Iran last year by leaving a multilateral nuclear agreement with Tehran, and then restoring the sanctions that had been lifted under the deal. The U.S. has also dispatched an aircraft carrier strike group, a bomber taskforce, and an assault ship to the Persian Gulf, citing an alleged likelihood that Iran could target the American interests in the region.

However, American officials have on many occasions gone back on their markedly beligerent rhetoric by either asserting they are not seeking war with the Islamic Republic or alleging that the "Iranian threat" has been put on hold.

Bagheri's remarks came a day after the deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps likewise downplayed the U.S. rhetoric, asserting that despite what Washington was trying to portray, the Islamic Republic's servicemen enjoyed perfect command over the Persian Gulf.

"Over the past many years, our forces have acquired full control of the Persian Gulf in a way that they (U.S. warships) should get permission from us for their movements in this area," Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi said on Wednesday.

Shinzo Abe considering visit to Iran

By staff and agency

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is considering a visit to Iran as early as mid-June.

According to Reuters, NHK national television said on Friday that Abe is likely to discuss his plans with U.S. President Donald Trump when the latter visits Japan from Saturday and a final decision may rest on the results of that.

No Japanese prime minister has visited Iran since 1978.

Asked about the state of preparations for such a visit, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga denied the report.

"Our country has traditionally had friendly relations with Iran," he said, adding that Japan hoped to be able to contribute to peace and stability in the region.

Japan was a major buyer of Iranian oil for decades before the sanctions.

Last November, the U.S. enforced sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic's banking and energy sector. However, it granted waivers to eight countries, including Japan, allowing them to temporarily continue buying Iranian oil without facing U.S. sanctions.

The White House, however, said in a statement issued on April 22 that the U.S. president decided not to renew the waivers for the eight major buyers of Iranian oil.

Abe met with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Tokyo on May 16.

"Japan is concerned about surging tensions surrounding the Middle East," Abe said.

During his visit to Japan, Zarif said Iran was committed to its obligations under the international nuclear deal despite the U.S. withdrawal from the landmark agreement. He called the reimposition of U.S. sanctions "unacceptable".

According to the Kyodo News agency, Zarif said that there is no possibility for negotiations with the U.S.



"This is the first time in history that a bully is telling everybody else, important countries, that 'I'm going to punish you if you observe something that I do not like,'" he said.

"Let us assume that a bully is standing in a cross section on the street and telling everybody, 'If you don't pass the red light, I'm going to beat you.' This is exactly what the U.S. is telling them," he exemplified.

On May 8, Iran officially announced that its "strategic patience" has come to an end as the remaining parties to the JCPOA have failed to compensate for the reimposition of sanctions against Iran by the Trump administration.

In the first step, Iran announced that it stops selling stockpiles of enriched uranium and heavy water for 60 days. However, Iran warned if a conclusion is not reached in this time period, it will take other measures step by step and will accelerate its uranium enrichment activities.

Under the JCPOA, Iran's stockpile of low enriched uranium is capped at 300kg and heavy water reserve at 130 tons.

"This announcement is for 60 days. We have announced to the other side, the five countries [Germany, France, UK, Russia and China], that if they come to the negotiating table in 60 days and we reach a conclusion and safeguard our main interests which are oil [sale] and banking relations, we will return to the previous situation of May 7, 2019," President Hassan Rouhani told a cabinet meeting on May 8.

Russia calls U.S. policy against Iran 'very dangerous'

By staff and agency

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said on Thursday that the U.S. seeks to provoke the Iranians, hoping to pressure them into retaliation that would provide a casus belli for a military strike and called Washington's policy "very dangerous".

"This is a very dangerous policy. Not only is it destroying the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program, but also can result in broader destabilization across the whole Middle Eastern Region," she told reporters, according to Newsweek.

Zakharova said the U.S. "is escalating the situation by sending aircraft carriers and bombers to the Persian Gulf region."

"These actions are accompanied by war-mongering statements and groundless and unproven accusations addressed to Iran saying that the country is involved in some sabotaging operations on the adjacent territories and posing threats to American diplomats in neighboring Iraq," she said.

Zakharova said, "It seems that by adopting sanctions, applying military pressure and resorting to sharp and aggressive rhetoric,

Washington is deliberately provoking Iran into sterner retaliation measures and looking for a reason to engage in direct confrontation."

Talking to reporters in Islamabad, Pakistan, on Thursday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the U.S. moves against Iran are undermining international order.

In an interview with the CNN aired on Tuesday, Zarif also warned that "the United States is playing a very, very dangerous game" in the region.

Iran has repeatedly said that it will never initiate a war.



Nation will make economic war planners regretful: Rouhani

1 → "Today is the day of resistance. I tell the Iranian people clearly that we can defeat the U.S., the Zionist regime of Israel and reactionary countries in the region through resistance and unity," Rouhani stated.

The president added that Iran will not surrender to U.S. pressure even if it is bombed.

"We need resistance so our enemies know that if they bomb our land, and if our children are martyred, wounded or taken as prisoners, we will not give up on our goals for the independence of our country and our pride."

During a session of the Administrative Council of West Azarbaijan Province on Tuesday, Rouhani denounced the U.S. sanctions campaign against Iran, saying Washington is "fighting" 82 Iranians not just the Iranian government.

"The United States' current actions against the Iranian nation



are not just war and sanction, but crime against humanity," he said.

Rouhani said the Trump administration will regret its "unwise" approach toward Iran.

"The Americans have repeatedly failed on the same path, but

they are doing it again, and they will regret this unwise action against a great, free nation," he said.

In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled Washington out of the JCPOA (the official for the international nuclear deal) and ordered reimposition of sanctions against Iran. The first round of sanctions went into force on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran's oil exports and banks, were snapped back on November 4.

John Bolton, the national security advisor to Trump, said in November 2018, "We think the (Iranian) government is under real pressure and it's our intention to squeeze them very hard. As the British say, squeeze them until the pips squeak."

Also, on April 22 the U.S. announced that Washington has decided not to extend waivers allowing major importers to continue buying oil from Iran. The waivers ended on May 2.

Khorramshahr liberation is an example to follow: cleric

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — An interim Tehran Friday preacher has said that the liberation of Khorramshahr in 1982 from Saddam Hussein forces is an example to follow.

The remarks by Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Movahedi Kermani comes as the United States has launched an unprecedented economic pressure against Iran and is making repeated threats of war against Iran.

"The operation [to liberate Khorramshahr] baffled military experts, forced America to admit that Iran's military machine had been astonishing," Ayatollah Movahedi Kermani said as Iran is celebrating the liberation of Khorramshahr from the Iraqi occupation in May 1982.

"The third of Khordad (May 24) epic is an example and when a nation believes in what it has, it will succeed in all fields," the cleric remarked.

Iran liberated the southwestern city in a landmark operation code-named Beit Ol-Moqaddas on May 24, 1982, putting an end to over 500 days of the Iraqi occupation.



Iran launched the operation in April 1982 and liberated the city on May 24 of the same

year. In retaking the city, the Iranian forces took some 19,000 Iraqi troops as hostages.

Some 6,000 Iraqi forces were also killed and thousands of others injured during the operation.

The Iraqi army invaded Iran on September 22, 1980, setting the stage for an eight years of war. With a support by certain Arab and Western countries, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein ordered attack on Iran nearly 19 months after the Islamic Revolution.

The war drew to a close in August 1988. The United Nations declared Saddam as the initiator of the conflict.

During eight years of the war, the U.S. provided satellite images of the position of the Iranian forces to Iraq. In addition, Arab countries gave about 100 billion dollars to the Saddam regime. Forces from Egypt and Sudan also fought alongside the Saddam Army against Iran.

Shockingly, certain Western European countries provided materials for manufacturing of chemical weapons to the Saddam regime which it used against the Iranian military and civilians as well as the Iraqi Kurds.

Iran's deterrence power prevents war, commander says



POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Underling Iran's high deterrence power, Iran's navy commander said on Thursday that enemies do not dare to launch a war against Iran.

Addressing a meeting in the northern city of Anzali, Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said, "If we look at the today's complicated security atmosphere, we observe that the enemy has lined up all its instruments near the Islamic Republic's borders, but the Leader said Washington knows that engaging in such a conflict would not be in its interest."

Such a statement, the admiral said, shows that the Leader is fully aware of Iran's deterrence power.

"This shows the Leader's upper hand in information and awareness about the Islamic Republic's deterrence power against enemies."

He also said the U.S. military buildup in Northern Indian Ocean is only meant to play an act of horror and intimidation, but to no avail.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Aya-

tollah Ali Khamenei told a gathering of senior officials earlier this month that he saw no possibility of war between Tehran and Washington, noting that the U.S. military buildup in the region is only aimed at frightening Iran to yield to the White House demands, but Iran stands strong.

The Leader said Washington knows that engaging in such a conflict would not be in its interest.

Ayatollah Khamenei further explained that the confrontation between the two sides is "a clash of wills," asserting that Iran would be the ultimate victor of this battle.

In an article in the Washington Post on Tuesday, Max Boot, a historian and columnist, said if the United States wages a war against Iran, it "will be the mother of all quagmires".

Boot, who is now Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow in National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, added that a conflict with Iran would make the Iraq war "like a 'cakewalk' by comparison".

We are in full control of Persian Gulf: IRGC deputy commander



TEHRAN (Press TV) — A senior Iranian commander has downplayed Washington's stepped-up belligerent rhetoric against the Islamic Republic, saying U.S. warships deployed to the Persian Gulf get permission for movements there from Iranian forces, who are in full control of the strategic waters.

"Over the past many years, our forces have acquired full control of the Persian Gulf in a way that they (U.S. warships) should get permission from us for their movements in this area," Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi, deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Wednesday.

"Everything north of the Strait of Hormuz is under our control," he emphasized, referring to a major oil shipping waterway which connects the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Oman, adding that the American navy ships "cannot approach the waters that fall within our mare clausum."

The crew members of these warships, he said, are even required to know Persian language and there are always interpreters

aboard the ships, adding, "This means power."

Fadavi's comments came a week after the American Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS McFaul and USS Gonzalez sailed through the Strait of Hormuz and entered the Persian Gulf without any incident amid tensions with Iran.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington saw a sharp rise in late April, when the U.S. tightened its oil sanctions against Iran in an attempt to cut the country's oil sales to "zero" a year after Washington pulled out of an international nuclear deal with Tehran, a move that flew in the face of the world community.

Iran has said the U.S. will fail to achieve that goal, and that it has several options on the table to keep up its crude sales and counter Washington, including closing the Strait of Hormuz.

To pile more pressure on the Islamic Republic, Washington said in early May that it was sending military reinforcements to the Persian Gulf, citing alleged, unspecified "threats" from Iran.

Democrats: Trump officials are inflating the Iran threat

"I've read the intel too. And let me be clear: That's not what the intel says," says one Democratic senator

(Vox) — The Trump administration has claimed for weeks to have intelligence showing Iran is planning to attack Americans in the Middle East. But Democrats in Congress who have reviewed some of the intelligence are pushing back, arguing the situation's not as dangerous as Republicans say.

Earlier this month, National Security Adviser John Bolton announced the U.S. was deploying an aircraft carrier and bomber planes to the Persian Gulf in response to "a number of troubling and escalatory indications and warnings" of threats from Iran.

The move, Bolton said, was meant "to send a clear and unmistakable message to the Iranian regime that any attack on United States interests or on those of our allies will be met with unrelenting force." He said that the U.S. "is not seeking war with the Iranian regime," but added, "we are fully prepared to respond to any attack, whether by proxy, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or regular Iranian forces."

Republicans, both in the administration and Congress, have made the case that Iran's actions are purposefully provocative.

After a briefing with National Security Adviser John Bolton on Monday, administration ally Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) tweeted, "It is clear that over the last several weeks Iran has attacked pipelines and ships of other nations and created threat streams against American interests in Iraq. ... If the Iranian threats against American personnel and interests are activated we must deliver an overwhelming military response."

But now Democrats have begun to counter the Trump administration's narrative, and it could signal a major fight in the days to come.

■ What Democrats say about the Iran intelligence
Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT), an outspoken critic of Trump's foreign policy and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee, tweeted Monday that he too knows what the intelligence says. But he has a completely different take.

"I'm listening to Republicans twist the Iran intel to make it sound like Iran is taking unprovoked, offensive measures against the U.S. and our allies. Like it just came out of nowhere," he said. "I've read the intel too. And let me be clear: That's not what the intel says."

He's not alone. Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), a member of the House Armed Services Committee and a retired Marine, also responded directly to Graham on Twitter Monday. "Lindsey and I get the same intel. That is not what is being said," he wrote. "This is total information bias to draw the conclusion he wants for himself and the media."

These statements represent a change in tone from even a few days ago. For example, Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA), the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said last Thursday after a briefing with the White House on Iran that "it's very important that more members hear this story." Even when pressed, he offered few specifics or criticisms.

Now Democrats are openly accusing the administration and Republicans of inflating the Iran threat, which many already suspected officials like Bolton of doing. The newfound directness makes sense as Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo are noted Iran hawks who have advocated for regime change in the past. Trump, however, has signaled he doesn't want a war with Iran, although he relishes his hardline stance against the Islamic Republic.

Pompeo will lead a congressional briefing on Tuesday to show lawmakers more of the intelligence the administration has, perhaps in an effort to make a case that the U.S. should consider a more forceful response and win over skeptical Democrats.

Still, there clearly is fear among the left and some in the general public that Washington and Tehran are headed for war — a fight that could lead to hundreds of thousands



Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) speaks on April 30, 2019, outside the Capitol in Washington, DC. Alex Wong/Getty Images

killed — potentially on the basis of overhyped intelligence.

The chance of full-on war between the two sides is still pretty low, but the possibility for miscalculation is high. On Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told CNN that the US "having all these military assets in a small area is in of itself prone to accidents, extreme prudence is required and the United States is playing a very, very dangerous game."

It's no surprise, then, that some Democrats have started to speak up in order to stave off a potential conflict. The question is how successful they'll be.

'Neither U.S. nor its allies dare to launch war on Iran'



POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — A high-ranking Iranian military official has underlined Iran's high deterrence power, saying this has made the U.S. and its allies avoid a military conflict against the country.

"If the criminal America and its Western and regional allies today do not dare to conduct a direct military confrontation against our country, it is due to the willingness of the people and the youth to resist and make sacrifices," Commander of Khatam ol-Anbia Central Headquarters Major General Gholam Ali Rashid said on Wednesday.

The made the remarks as Iran was preparing to mark the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr from Saddam Hussein's forces on May 24, 1982.

He also described liberation of Khorramshahr as a symbol of national unity and a turning point in the history of Iran, which was achieved through the sacrifices of the men and women of the heroic Iran with God Almighty's help.

Shamkhani: Khorramshahr legacy got us through 40 years of economic war



POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — "The legacy of the liberation of Khorramshahr helped us make victory out of 40 years of military combat, sanctions, terrorism, and economic war," the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council wrote in a message on the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr from Saddam Hussein's invading army back in May 1982.

In his message, published via the Mehr news agency on Friday, Ali Shamkhani said the third of Khordad (May 24) marks the day when the Iranian youth laid the foundation for sacrifice, resistance, and final victory with their own blood.

"On those very days, too, voices rose saying 'today is time for negotiations. If not, then history will punish warmongers,'" Shamkhani wrote.

However, the security chief said, when Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990 all realized that negotiation with the "mad villain" means permanent war and that history finally punished the real warmongers.

Envoy calls Trump's terror remarks against Iran 'idiotic' and show of 'endless hostility'

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations has hit out at U.S. President Donald Trump's "idiotic" terror accusations, saying Tehran has been the biggest victim and strongest enemy of terrorism in the region, Press TV reported.

The strong reaction by Majid Takht-Ravanchi came after Trump on Thursday called Iran "a nation of terror" despite his earlier patronizing messages to the Iranian people, Tasnim reported.

"The U.S. president's contradictory words about Iran clearly show his endless hostility toward Iran and the great Iranian nation," Takht-Ravanchi said.

"These idiotic remarks, more than anything, show [Trump's] ignorance of thousands of years of the Iranian history, and a lack of knowledge about the country," the diplomat added.

Takht-Ravanchi also criticized the silence of the United Nations and the Security Council on crimes against civilians, saying that the political considerations should be avoided to protect civilians in the clashes.

The Iranian diplomat said that there are numerous cases in which the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, has been silenced on crimes against civilians in armed conflicts, according to IRNA.

The envoy emphasized that one of the main problems in protecting civilians in armed conflicts is to make decisions based on political considerations and not identifying the perpetrators of the crimes.

The senior diplomat noted some of these cases, including U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan and Saudi air strikes in Yemen, which resulted in the deaths and injuries of a large number of civilians, including women and children.

He also referenced to the deaths of more than 280 people and the wounding of more than 32,000 Gazan protesters by the Zionist regime's forces last year, saying that silence was the only response by the Security Council to these crimes.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	215168.6
IFX	2671.5

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,833 rials
GBP	53,117 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$67.26/b
WTI	\$58.51/b
OPEC Basket	\$71.03/b
Gold	\$1,282.45/oz
Silver	\$14.59/oz
Platinum	\$809.95/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran, Russia explore ways of expanding railway co-op

➔ "One of our most important programs in this sector is the increase in the share of cargo and passenger traffic in Iranian railways," he added.

Rasouli further noted that currently RAI has several rail projects on the agenda; one of which is the electrification of Garmsar-Ince Bouron line in collaboration with the Russian Railways.

He emphasized accelerating completion of joint projects and the need for cooperation on the completion of the international North-South Transport Corridor.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official mentioned his meeting with the head of RZD during the 70th meeting of CIS Council for rail transport in Helsinki and noted, "At that meeting, we discussed the two countries' relations and cooperation in the rail transport industry and once again the two sides emphasized the determination for expansion of ties."

Misharin for his part, mentioned the two countries' great potentials for railway cooperation saying, "Fortunately, there are plenty of capacities and potentials to develop rail cooperation between Iran and Russia, and we can expand the value of our cooperation up to five billion euros."

Touching upon joint projects, the official noted that the electrification of Garmsar-Ince Bouron line requires technically advanced equipment and technology, and the production process of these equipment has already begun in Russia.

Singapore factory output beats expectations, inching up 0.1% in April

Singapore's manufacturing output edged back into growth territory in April, up 0.1 percent year on year contrary to economists' expectations of a 3.5 percent fall, and improving from March's revised figure of a 4.3 percent fall.

As per business times.com.sg, excluding the volatile biomedical manufacturing cluster, output fell 2.1 percent, according to Singapore Economic Development Board figures on Friday.

Biomedical manufacturing continued to make the strongest showing, with output up 11.2 percent. This comprised a 10.9 percent rise in pharmaceuticals output and a 12 percent rise in medical technology output, with sustained export demand.



Coming a distant second was the chemicals cluster, with output up 1.9 percent in April. The "other chemicals" segment grew 9.3 percent with higher production of fragrances, while specialties output was up 0.9 percent. In contrast, petrochemicals fell 2.8 percent, and petroleum refining throughput was down 4.3 percent due to maintenance shutdowns in some plants.

Offshore engineering

Transport engineering output was down 1.1 percent. A 16.3 percent rise in the aerospace segment was more than outweighed by declines of 12.8 percent in land transport and 18.7 percent in marine and offshore engineering.

Electronics output saw year-on-year decline for a second month, though easing to a 0.6 percent dip, compared to March's 15.1 percent fall. Cumulatively, the cluster's output is down 3.2 percent for the first four months of 2019, compared to the year-ago period.

Within the electronics cluster, the computer peripherals and data storage segments saw declines in April, but semiconductor output growth edged back into positive territory at 0.3 percent. Infocomms and consumer electronics output was up 1.3 percent and that of other electronic modules and components, 12.5 percent.

General manufacturing output was down 1.1 per cent, with growth in food, beverages and tobacco more than outweighed by declines in printing and miscellaneous industries, with the latter reporting lower output in construction-related materials.

Performing worst was precision engineering, with output down 10.4 percent. Although the precision modules and components segment grew 11.6 percent, the machinery & systems segment saw output fall 20.6 percent. In the first four months of the year, precision engineering has been the worst-performing manufacturing cluster, down 12.5 percent year-on-year.

Iran's 4-month non-oil exports to China stands at \$6b

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's **d e s k** value of non-oil exports to China reached \$6 billion in the first four months of 2019, down 20 percent compared to the same period last year, Tasnim reported on Friday, citing the Chinese customs data.

According to the data, the two country's total trade turnover also fell 32 percent in the mentioned timespan.

Iran-China trade turnover stood at \$13 billion in the January-April 2018 while the figure fell to \$8.8 billion in 2019.

China's exports to Iran in January-April 2019 fell 49 percent year-on-year

to \$2.8 billion. In January-April 2018, China exported \$5.6 billion worth of goods to Iran.

The value of Chinese imports from Iran has also fallen. China shipped 7.4 billion dollars in goods from Iran in January-April 2018, down 20% to \$6 billion in January-April this year. Oil is the main import of China from Iran.

In January, the trade between Iran and China stood at \$1.734 billion, registering 54.8 percent decrease in comparison with the same month in the preceding year i.e. \$3.83 billion.

China's exports to Iran in January stood



at \$722 million showing a 58.3 percent drop from its previous \$1.73 billion in the same period in 2018, the report added.

China's imports from Iran also witnessed a sharp drop of 51.9 percent from its previous

\$2.1 billion in January 2018 to \$1.012 billion in the first month of 2019.

China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, and India are among the top destinations for Iranian goods in Asia.

CBI's new directive on re-injection of export income requires amendment

➔ "Once a method brings fruitful results it should not be easily ignored", the chairman of Iran Export Confederation stressed and complained that despite the previous instructions, the new directive says that at least 50 percent of the total export earnings should be presented at the NIMA system and 30 percent will be allocated to the imports; while preserving the previous condition could prepare the ground for more activity of the exporters.

mentioning the other weaknesses of the new directive, Lahouti said it has not specified the NIMA condition for the exports of less than €1 million (which was exempted from re-injection to NIMA in the previous instructions), rial-based exports to countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and also not accepting the re-injection deadline to be extended to six-nine months from the current four-month.

New directive positive while requires amendment

Mohammadreza Hariri, an economic expert who is the vice-chairman of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, evaluates the new directive as positive and says that CBI does not insist on the previous policies and instructions and it amends them if necessary.

"The new directive is positive while there are some



criticisms that should be considered", he said in an interview conducted by ILNA and published on Friday.

He mentioned the unspecified NIMA condition for the exports of less than €1 million as one of the criticisms to the new directive and the deadline for re-injection of exports earnings from some commodities such as carpet and handicrafts as the other weakness of the new instruction.

The economic expert also commented that establishment of an integrated forex market can complete the

Inflation rate at 34.2%: statistical center

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The **d e s k** Statistical Center of Iran announced that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on May 21, which marks the end of the second Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht, stood at 34.2 percent, IRIB reported.

The inflation rate in the mentioned period shows a 3.6-percent rise from the figure of the twelve-month period ended on the last

day of the previous month.

As reported, the average goods and services Consumer Price Index (CPI) stood at 172 in urban areas and at 181.9 in the rural regions in Ordibehesht, indicating 1.6 percent and 1 percent increase, respectively, compared to its previous month.

In the Iranian calendar year 1395 (ended on March 20, 2017), Iran could manage to experience a single-digit inflation rate after

26 years.

The inflation rate stood at 9.8 percent in that year according to the Statistical Center of Iran and at nine percent according to the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

But since the last year's third calendar month of Khordad (ended on June 22, 2018), when the inflation rate stood at 10.2 percent, as announced by the CBI, the country's experiencing double-digit inflation rates again.



Russian economy gives Putin reasons not to extend OPEC+ deal

The OPEC+ pact is hurting the Russian economy, potentially giving President Vladimir Putin a reason not to agree on an extension of the deal.

According to hellenicshippingnews.com, while higher crude prices can bring the Kremlin additional revenue, production cuts are weighing on one of the country's biggest industries. As the Russian leader decides whether to prolong the curbs into the second half, he may have to weigh his desire for faster economic growth against the benefits of his alliance with Saudi Arabia.

The "OPEC+ deal was one of the factors behind slower economic growth in Russia in the first quarter," said Kirill Tremasov, a former economy ministry official who's now an analyst at Loko-Invest in Moscow. "Given the oil price is now comfortable for the state budget and that crude producers are willing to pump up more, Russia may not want to extend the deal."

Russia's GDP unexpectedly grew just 0.5% in the first quarter, below all 14 estimates in a Bloomberg survey. That compares with a 2.7% increase in the last three months of 2018, which was the highest in more than six years as crude output reached a record 11.45 million barrels a day in December, according to ministry data.

In its deal with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Moscow pledged to reduce the country's oil output by 228,000 barrels a day. While many of its OPEC allies, including the group's de-facto leader Saudi Arabia, say they prefer extending the agreement, which expires next month, Russia has talked about relaxing the cuts.



Industrial output

The economy ministry reiterated that the current deal is a "restraining" factor for the nation's hydrocarbon production and mining. Annual growth in industrial output was 4.9% percent in April, exceeding all estimates, with manufacturing being the main driver of the out-performance. There was also an extra work day in the period this year, according to the economy ministry's statement.

Putin, who previously stated Russia will continue cooperation with OPEC+, is keeping all options on the table. "There are plans of our companies to develop new deposits, and we have a very attentive approach to that. We understand that the production shouldn't stop, investment should come to the sector, otherwise that may create problems both for us

Japan cuts view on economy amid U.S.-China trade war

The government on Friday downgraded its assessment of the Japanese economy, adding to signs that China's economic slowdown amid its trade conflict with the United States has been weighing on production and exports.

According to mainichi.jp, the "Japanese economy is recovering at a moderate pace while weakness in exports and industrial production continues," the Cabinet Office said in a monthly report.

It maintained its view that the economy is seeing a moderate recovery on improving employment conditions and robust corporate earnings, but slightly changed its wording on exports and production in the previous report. It had said last month that "weakness is seen recently in exports and industrial production in some sectors."

The downgrading followed a lowered assessment in March when the Cabinet Office cut the headline assessment for the first time in three years.

Looking ahead, the latest report warned that "further attention should be given" to the fallout on the world economy from the U.S.-China trade war.

The report is likely to complicate debate on whether Prime Minister Shinzo Abe can raise the consumption tax in October as scheduled despite fears the move could end Japan's economic recovery.

Earlier this month, the Cabinet Office said in a different assessment that the world's third-largest economy has been "worsening."

Index of business conditions

The wording, used in assessing the

coincident index of business conditions for March, can be seen as signaling that the economy is heading into recession.

The expression was employed for the first time in more than six years, and the move raised expectations that the government would stop describing the economy as recovering in Friday's report.

An official who briefed reporters on the report said the word "recovering" was maintained because overseas risks including China's slowdown are unlikely to hit domestic demand hard anytime soon.

The "economic fundamentals that support domestic demand, including improving employment and salary conditions as well as high levels of corporate earnings, have remained steady," the official said.

On the two differing assessments of the economy, the official said it is difficult to make a simple comparison between them.

While the coincident index is made up of nine indicators, the monthly report covers a wider range of data and other factors.

Among key components of the report for May, the assessment of business investment was also downgraded, with the Cabinet Office saying that "weakness is seen recently in machinery investment."

It also cut the view of industrial production, warning it is "in a weak tone recently."

It continued to say private consumption is "picking up" and that exports are showing a "weak tone." It lifted its evaluation of public investment, citing steady government spending on public works projects.

U.S. grants Iraq waiver to continue importing energy from Iran

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – U.S. has granted Iraq waiver to continue buying gas and electricity from Iran until the end of June, Press TV reported, quoting Joey Hood, chargé d'affaires of the U.S. Mission in Iraq, as saying on Wednesday.

“Iraq has an exemption from the American sanctions, so that it can continue to purchase energy from Iran,” Hood told reporters in Baghdad.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump said in March it was extending a 90-day waiver for the second time to let Iraq continue energy imports from Iran.

Iraq heavily depends on Iranian energy to subsidize its ramshackle power grid and the country has repeatedly rejected U.S. requests for cutting energy ties with Iran.

Earlier, Iraqi Oil Minister Thamer al-Ghazban referred to improbability of cutting gas and power imports from Iran



Joey Hood, chargé d'affaires of the U.S. Mission in Iraq

under current juncture.

Iraqi electricity Minister Luay Al-Khateed has also said that Iraq will need to import

gas and electricity from Iran for at least three more years.

According to Iraqi officials, without

Iranian gas supplies half of Iraq’s natural gas power plants will close down in the summer.

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.

Since 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 and doing so, cutting Iran’s energy exports has been Trump’s top agenda.

NIOC to offer 2m barrels of heavy crude at IRENEX in late May

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) will offer two million barrels of heavy crude oil at the base price of \$64.23 at the international ring of Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) on May 28, Shana reported.

As reported, like previous light crude offerings, the least amount of sales will be 35,000 barrels for this offering which is the second round in the new Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) and it is based on the energy ministry’s new guidelines.

NIOC sold 70,000 barrels of heavy crude oil at IRENEX for the first time on April 30. In the first round one million barrels of heavy crude was offered at a base price of \$60.68.

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

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.

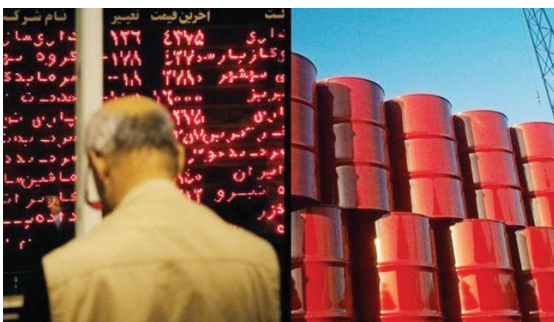
Since the U.S.’s withdrew from Iran’s nuclear pact in May 2018, vowing to drive Iran’s oil exports down to zero, the Islamic Republic has been taking various measures to counter the U.S. actions and to keep its oil exports levels as high as possible.

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.



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.

Oil recovers 1%, but set for biggest weekly loss of 2019

Oil prices recouped around 1% on Friday but were on track for their biggest weekly loss this year after swelling inventories and jitters over an economic slowdown led to big falls earlier in the week.

As per Reuters, Brent crude futures were at \$68.48 per barrel at 0654 GMT, up 72 cents, or 1.1%, from their last close, with prices underpinned by OPEC supply cuts and Middle East tensions.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 66 cents, or 1.1%, at \$58.57 per barrel.

“Multiple supply risks remain, as tension continues between Iran and the U.S., which could turn disruptive,” ANZ bank said on Friday.

The forward price curve for Brent crude futures remains in backwardation, in which prices for prompt delivery are higher than those for later dispatch, implying tight market conditions and making it profitable to produce and sell oil immediately rather than store it for later sale.

“Despite the big declines in the Brent flat price, the backwardation in the forward curve steepened this week,” U.S. investment bank Jefferies said on Friday.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has led supply cuts since the start of the year aimed at tightening the market and propping up prices.



ANZ said U.S. sanctions on Iran’s and Venezuela’s oil industries would likely further reduce crude exports from OPEC, of which both countries are members.

But Friday’s firmer prices could not make up the much bigger slumps earlier in the week, which have put crude futures on track for their biggest weekly losses

this year, with Brent set for a decline of more than 5%.

“Increasing (oil) inventories and slumping U.S. manufacturing activity exacerbated trade related concerns about global demand,” Michael McCarthy, chief market strategist at CMC Markets in Australia, said in a note, pulling WTI below \$60 per barrel and Brent below \$70 per barrel.

And the glut has spread beyond North America. Struggling to cope with an economic slowdown and oversupply from fuels, Asian refinery margins this week fell to their lowest seasonal levels since at least the financial crisis a decade ago, triggering plans for refinery run cuts.

With the trade dispute between the United States and China ongoing, analysts say more drops in financial markets, including crude oil futures, could follow.

“Without a resolution to the ongoing trade dispute quickly, which now looks very unlikely, oil could struggle to push higher,” said Jasper Lawler, Head of Research at futures brokerage London Capital Group.

Stock markets on Friday fell to four-month lows on worries the U.S.-China trade spat was developing into a more entrenched strategic dispute between the world’s two largest economies.

Global energy prices are influenced by the availability of renewable energy at low costs

Blockchain is a decentralized ledger technology that can be applied to the energy sector. In the energy sector, blockchain enables the trading of energy. Blockchain is expected to enable a fundamental shift in the distribution of energy.

According to aindustryreports.com, blockchain technology, when attached to a crypto currency, allows public members to trade freely and encrypts all transactions in a virtually unbreakable way. All transactions are recorded on a shared ledger without the interference of a third party such as bank, stockbroker, or any energy company.

Furthermore, many aspects of the energy revolution are expected to suddenly become connected due to blockchain technology. For instance, townships or counties could tie their own small grids to individual solar systems.

Smart appliances could be connected to specific energy management programs, which could provide real-time data about these secure systems.

■ The global blockchain

The global blockchain in energy market can be segmented based on type, component, end-user, application, and region. Based on type, the global blockchain in energy market can be classified into private and public. The private segment led the blockchain in energy market in 2017, as the private sector provides more security as compared to the public sector for users of blockchain technology.

The blockchain technology in the private sector is completely operated and controlled



by a single organization. In this sector, only predetermined users can make and verify transactions. The blockchain technology in the sector runs significantly faster and exhibits greater efficiency.

In terms of component, the global blockchain in energy market can be classified into platform and services. The services segment dominated the blockchain in energy market in 2017, as most companies are planning to tie up with various blockchain start-ups in order to implement blockchain operations such as grid management, energy

trading, and supply chain management.

Based on end-user, the market can be segmented into power and oil & gas. In terms of application, the blockchain in energy market can be categorized into energy trading, grid management, payment schemes, and supply chain management.

Global energy prices are influenced by the availability of renewable energy at low costs, which has influenced the blockchain in energy market positively. Companies operating in the blockchain in energy market offer customized energy solutions to fulfill

global energy demands. For instance, Elec-Tron, Inc., a major player in blockchain in energy market, planned to contribute to various developments in this blockchain based supply chain management and smart agreement platforms that are used in the oil & gas sector.

■ Renewable technologies

One of blockchain technology’s extremely promising use cases is renewable energy independence and trading on the global level. The world is shifting toward renewable energy and moving away from the use of gas, coal, and petrol. Therefore, blockchain becomes a key way to connect renewable technologies, grids, and devices to people and communities.

Blockchain functions as a public ledger that can take inputs such as amount of energy produced from smart devices such as solar panels. It records these inputs, assigns a price, sends it to smart homes via grid, and records incoming payments for energy purchased.

Europe dominated the global blockchain in energy market in 2017, owing to a significant number of project implementations and the presence of blockchain start-ups in the region coupled with the incorporated regulatory support from the European government. Germany and the U.K. are major countries of the blockchain in energy market in the region. Factors such as increasing investments toward the adoption of blockchain platforms in the region are driving the blockchain in energy market in Europe.

Iran’s petchem feedstock supply capacity to rise 15m tons

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Iranian petrochemical industry’s feedstock capacity is going to increase by 15 million tons, Shana reported quoting the head of National Petrochemical Company (NPC).

“With the implementation of six new petrochemical feedstock supply projects, the industry’s feedstock supply capacity will increase by 15 million tons,” Behzad Mohammadi said.

According to the official, some \$8.3 billion has been invested in these six projects which are going to create several projects in the industry’s downstream sector.

Petrochemical industry is one of the most important pillars of Iran’s economy and one of the main suppliers of foreign currency especially euro for the country.

According to Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, the country is currently producing 62 million tons of petrochemical products annually and with the new projects going on stream the number is expected to jump to 65.5 million tons further cementing the Islamic country’s stance as a major petrochemical supplier to the world markets.

Escalating U.S.-China trade war makes LNG projects vulnerable stateside

By Gaurav Sharma

Trade tension between Washington and Beijing was supposed to ease this month, but instead it has gone into reverse taking a heavy toll on the commodities sphere.

U.S. President Donald Trump surprised the market earlier this month (May 10) by increasing levies on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports to the states from 10% to 25%, after Washington and Beijing failed to reach a deal on trade.

Subsequently, in line with market expectation, China retaliated by announcing plans to raise levies on \$60 billion of U.S. imports from June 1. Inevitably, market focus has turned to U.S. energy exports to China.

While U.S. oil exports, of mainly light, sweet crude to Asia, can find other homes in the East, as Malaysian and Indonesian production declines, the effect of prolonged trade tension on the country’s Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports to China could be disproportionately large.

According to Rystad Energy, China’s LNG demand is projected to reach 95 million tons per annum (tpa) in 2025, up from 53 million tpa in 2018, keeping it on track to be the world’s largest LNG importer. Meanwhile, the U.S. is the world’s fastest growing LNG exporter with a near quadrupling of volumes reaching 84 million tpa by 2025 based on currently sanctioned projects.

■ LNG projects

What is potentially a marriage made in LNG heaven could quickly go south now, after Beijing said it will raise the duty on imports of U.S. LNG to 25% from the previous level of 10%, alongside other goods. It may all eventually mount to nothing and tempers in Washington and Beijing might get lowered, but the current situation does nothing for American LNG project sponsors primarily hunting for Asian and Chinese offtake.

Sindre Knutsson, Senior Analyst at Rystad Energy’s gas markets team, says increased tariffs are likely to create additional headwinds for U.S. LNG projects that are currently awaiting final investment decisions (FIDs).

Furthermore, with natural gas prices being at their current low levels of sub \$3/MMBtu stateside, projects on the top end of costing scale are already facing FID deferrals, and the current escalation of trade tensions could not have come at a worse time.

■ Long-term contracts

«Most of these projects need to secure long-term contracts in order to get financing for their development. We expect China to be one of the biggest contributors in sponsoring new LNG projects over the coming years, and there will be a reluctance to signing new deals with U.S. projects as long as this trade war persists,» Knutsson added.

For example, Cheniere Energy and Sinopec agreed late last year on a 20-year deal that would supply 2 million tpa of LNG to China starting in 2023. The «deal could have been signed once the trade tensions were resolved, but due to the heightened tensions this has not happened.»

The longer the situation lasts, LNG projects outside of the U.S. could potentially appear more attractive to Chinese importers. That’s because oil-indexed gas contracts are more common in countries such as Australia, Qatar, Mozambique and Papua New Guinea compared to the U.S., where indexing to the Henry Hub price is more prevalent.

«This means that non-U.S. projects are more competitive in terms of break-even price (delivered), and that China therefore could have greater bargaining power when negotiating new contracts,» Knutsson concluded. (Source: forbes.com)

Red flag for oil markets: Asian refining margins plunge to 16-year low

Persistent pressure on profit margins has forced Asian refiners to start considering a reduction in their run rates, Reuters reports, citing unnamed sources from the industry. According to the sources, higher international oil prices are behind the unfavorable development, which has seen refiners’ margins drop to the lowest since the spring of 2003.

According to oilprice.com, among the refiners considering run rate cuts are South Korea’s SK Energy, the Singapore Refinery Company, and at least one refiner in Thailand. Some Chinese independent refiners are already running at less than 50 percent of capacity because of the pressure on margins, one Chinese analyst told Reuters.

International oil prices have risen since the start of the year on the back of OPEC+ production cuts, which has combined with U.S. sanctions on Venezuela and Iran to shrink supply. The recent spike in U.S.-Iran tensions has also been bullish for prices. Interestingly enough, even so, over the past month both Brent and West Texas Intermediate have generally trended lower despite several spikes. However, this decline has not been enough to push Asian refiners’ margins higher.

There may be another reason for this, too: a fuel glut coming from China. An increase in refining capacity, particularly from the independent refiners, also called teapots, and another increase in oil product export quotas have seen a substantial increase in the availability of Chinese oil products in the region, and this increase has added its own pressure to refining margins.

Bannon promotes economic fascism

GLOBAL TIMES — Former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon told the South China Morning Post on Saturday that the executive order signed by US President Donald Trump that bans Huawei from the US market and cut off vital components is “10 times more important than walking away from the trade deal.”

This is the most hysteric advocacy by this ultra right-wing opinion leader. Bannon is addicted to the rhetoric of general war on China. With China-US relations heading downward, this radical figure makes himself heard by talking loud.

In China even the most radical opinion leaders would not demand to drive Apple or McDonalds out of China. But Bannon’s extreme remarks can exert some impact on US society and he is quite proud of being hawkish, which shows that the rational foundations of the country are being eroded. Extremism is rising.

Bannon’s China policy is a kind of economic fascism. His real objective of forcing Beijing to carry out fundamental reforms is the economic subjugation of China. Bannon’s threatening words toward China are bringing an opium high to some people amid the US frenzy of suppressing China.

Regrettably, besides Bannon, a group of economic fascists have emerged in the US. They view China’s economic development and prosperity as a fundamental threat to the US. Their disruption of the global supply chain is eroding the foundation of globalization, which will jeopardize peace in the 21st century.

We want to make two points. First, the aggressive US attitude toward China will have a certain impact on the Western world. But if the US forces Western countries to decouple from Chinese high-tech companies and incites a technology and economic cold war between the West and China, it is bound to face resistance, as this does not fit the interests of Western countries.

Second, the evil thinking of Bannon against China is the epitome of the vicious ideas of some US elites toward China. It is uncertain whether they will become the real China policy of the US administration.

As the trade war escalates, Chinese society should be prepared for deranged US policies. China’s high-tech companies in particular should take precautions.

All Chinese companies wishing to get to the high-tech mountaintop should learn from Huawei’s composed example. If only there were a group of Chinese companies sharing intellectual property with foreign partners, then certain malicious forces would hesitate at a crackdown.

There are high-tech companies from South Korea and the island of Taiwan that lead some specific areas. The Chinese mainland is not lagging behind and so it is quite possible for Chinese companies to develop their own ace in the hole if they work harder.

The Chinese government announced a preferential tax policy for the semiconductor industry on Wednesday, aiming to counter US suppression. Hard-working companies with support from the government and the people will help China win the game against the US. The huge Chinese market will provide the best conditions for high-tech innovation. Sometimes misfortune is a blessing in disguise.

Can Japan stand up to U.S. request to contain China?

By Ai Jun

GLOBAL TIMES —Two days before U.S. President Donald Trump’s visit to Japan, a fake news story caught the globe’s eye on Thursday - Japan’s Panasonic said it was suspending business with Huawei “to comply with US restrictions,” according to Reuters. It was reported that roughly 25 billion yuan (\$3.6 billion) worth of Panasonic goods were procured by Huawei in 2018. That being said, if the news were true, Panasonic’s move could be equated to cutting its own wrists. But Panasonic soon denied the rumor saying “currently Panasonic Corp is still supplying Huawei.”

The story hype has an inextricable connection with Trump’s upcoming visit to Japan.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited the U.S. in April. Trump is expected to attend the G20 summit next month in Japan. Then why bother visiting Japan again in May? Some say it is because of the honor to be the first state guest to meet with the new emperor. But Trump’s real purpose is more about turning Japan into the biggest pawn to contain China.

In terms of procuring core parts, Japan is a crucial source for Huawei. According to The Nikkei, “Huawei procured roughly 700 billion yen (\$6.3 billion) worth of goods from Japanese companies” in 2018. At a time when an increasing number of Japanese major companies, including Toshiba, Mitsubishi and NEC, all shut down their smartphone business, Huawei’s orders are revitalizing mobile phone parts manufacturers in Japan.

China is not the only victim of the US-launched trade war. Japan is too. Setting aside US-Japan controversies in tariff cuts on automobiles, agricultural products and the fact that Washington failed to award immediate exemptions for Japanese products with US steel tariffs in 2018, quite a few products produced by Japanese companies in China are expected to be sold on the US market. They can hardly remain unscathed during the China-US trade conflicts.

If US demand for China’s high-tech products is to be greatly reduced, relevant Japanese industries such as semiconductor manufacturers, which have been exporting substantial quantities of components to China, will be hurt.

Many Japanese companies rely on doing businesses with their Chinese partners like Huawei. Mature industrial chains have been shaped between China and Japan. When China’s business is jeopardized, Japan will also suffer losses.

It’s time for China and Japan to find a stable path of cooperation amid Washington’s attempted containment of Beijing. The trade war might serve as a new opportunity for Asia to promote regional collaboration, a China-Japan-South Korea free trade zone and currency exchanges, and more importantly, to safeguard regional trade stability.

Emphasizing “America first,” Trump has seldom provided Japan any benefits. But in the meantime, China-Japan ties have finally returned to the right track after twists and turns with emerging economic and trade potential. Does acting at Washington’s beck and call prove rewarding for Tokyo? It’s time for Abe to think this through.

British PM’s late resignation and gray situation in London

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Finally, the British prime minister officially announced that he would resign from his post. Theresa May leaves the power while the British withdrawal from Europe remains unabridged. Nobody also knows British Prime Minister as a professional and powerful politician! Undoubtedly, the British PM’s resignation does not mean a political calm in this European country! In the near future, Britain will become the focus of political conflicts. Since 2016, many political analysts have warned of this.

People like Boris Johnson and conservative figures demand a “hard Brexit” and a clean break from the EU, and there are those like Labor Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn who called for early elections and the withdrawal of May from power. British PM May was trying to present Plan B to the Parliament, although the plan did not seem to meet the demands of the opposition.

In other hand, Brexit continues to be an implicit term in the Britain’s political equations. Complicating the process of the British withdrawal from the European Union is a joint measure taken by the British government and European authorities. At the same time, the British government, with its widespread negative propaganda against the Brexit, is seeking to re-arrange a referendum. In other words, the European authorities are trying to direct the public opinion about the Brexit. Recently, some western



news sources are speaking of an issue called “repeating the Brexit referendum”, and name it as a possible option! An option that had been previously denied by British authorities.

■ UK is in bad shape

However, reviewing news and analysis of the British PM’s resignation from power shows that much confusion is now taking place in London. Here are some reports on Theresa May’s resignation:

As The Guardian reported, It’s finally happened! Theresa May has announced her departure from 10 Downing Street. In a speech this morning following a meeting with Sir Graham Brady, the chair of the 1922 Committee of Tory backbenchers, the prime minister said she would stand aside on Friday 7 June, with the process to select a new Conservative party leader starting the following week. Fighting back tears, she said:

I will shortly leave the job that it has been the honour of my life to hold. The second female prime minister but certainly not the last. I do so with no ill will, but with enormous and enduring gratitude to have had the opportunity to serve the country I love.

The Conservative party chairman, Brandon Lewis, confirmed that nominations to replace May would close in the week beginning 10 June. Then successive rounds of voting by Tory MPs will take place to decide which candidates will be put a vote of the party’s members. That process should be completed by the end of June, leaving time for hustings with the finalists – to which non-party members will be invited. The final votes will be cast and the result announced by the time parliament rises for the summer in mid-July.

Jeremy Corbyn has issued a statement calling for a general election. “Whoever becomes the new Conservative leader must let the people decide our country’s future, through an immediate general election,” he said. The Lib Dem leader, Vince Cable, and Green party’s Westminster leader Caroline Lucas both repeated calls for a second Brexit referendum. “Conservative party interest has always trumped national interest, and yet Conservative MPs continue to demand an ever more extreme Brexit policy,” said Cable. “The best and only option remains to take Brexit back to



People like Boris Johnson and conservative figures demand a “hard Brexit” and a clean break from the EU, and there are those like Labor Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn who called for early elections and the withdrawal of May from power.

the people. I believe the public would now choose to stop Brexit.”

Also CNBC reported that Theresa May said she will resign as the British Prime

perhaps the most honest statement May has ever given on her own feelings about the premiership.

Listing the exhaustive steps she took to find a way through the Brexit impasse, she said: “I offered to give up the job I love earlier than I would like...” It is said that May was eager to beat former Prime Minister Gordon Brown’s tenure of two-years and 319 days in office, a feat she will reach on May 28.

Listening to her passion for being prime minister, one was left wondering how it could possibly be so. For most of her time in office — at least since her disastrous decision to break her promise not to call a general election — she has been a national figure of fun and the target of jibes. Most, such as “Maybot,” were cruel because they were so accurate.

May never recovered from the humiliation of losing her majority in June 2017, and by the time she had begun seriously to grapple with the thorn in her premiership that was Brexit, it wasn’t just the public that had fallen out of love with her. Seeing her flail these last months has been like watching a magnificent but ultimately rather pointless exotic creature, a giraffe, perhaps, brought low

Minister, effective June 7. May announced her resignation outside 10 Downing Street in London, on Friday afternoon. May set out a timetable for her departure: She will resign as Conservative Party leader on June 7 with a leadership contest in the following week. “I will resign as leader of the Conservative and Unionist party on Friday, 7 June so that a successor can be chosen,” May said outside 10 Downing Street.

May, once a reluctant supporter of EU membership, who won the top job in the turmoil that followed the 2016 Brexit vote, steps down with her central pledges - to lead the United Kingdom out of the bloc and heal its divisions - unfulfilled.

She endured crises and humiliation in her effort to find a compromise Brexit deal that parliament could ratify and bequeaths a deeply divided country and a political elite that is deadlocked over how, when or whether to leave the EU.

May’s departure will deepen the Brexit crisis as a new leader is likely to want a more decisive split, raising the chances of a confrontation with the European Union and a snap parliamentary election. The leading contenders to succeed May all want a tougher divorce deal, although the EU has said it will not renegotiate the Withdrawal Treaty it sealed in November.

■ **The tragedy of Theresa May** Meanwhile, some journalists and analysts also focus on Theresa’s political personality. For example as Rosa Prince wrote in Politico, After months if not years in which British Prime Minister Theresa May defied political gravity, clinging to office despite the seemingly insurmountable opposition of public, parliament, press and party, the end of May has at last brought about the end of May. Like a toddler refusing to leave a party, she did not go quietly.

The count of three was given, more than once. There were warnings, threats, promises and enticements until finally the reluctant child was dragged bodily, screaming and with birthday cake still smeared across her face, from the soft play center that is 10 Downing Street.

The speech that ultimately precipitated her eviction, in which she overplayed her hand by detailing plans her Cabinet had not signed up to, contained

in 2016 was delicious affirmation. It was just a shame she wasn’t very good at it. If you look at her premiership by numbers alone, the verdict is damning: May has mislaid a staggering 51 ministers since polling day less than two years ago, including 34 resignations in which some or other aspect of her Brexit policy was named as the cause.

She failed at her first attempt to push her Brexit deal through the House of Commons by 203 votes, the largest parliamentary defeat for a governing party in history. In the vote of confidence called on her leadership in December, 117 of her own MPs sided against her, a third of the total number.

It is said that May was eager to beat former Prime Minister Gordon Brown’s tenure of two-years and 319 days in office, a feat she will reach on May 28. Another day, and she’ll overtake the Duke of Wellington. By the time the contest to replace her is concluded, she’ll have outlasted Neville Chamberlain.

Once she has gone, what will she have to show for her time as the 33rd (of 54) longest serving prime minister in British history, other than a masterclass in remaining in office when no one really wants you there? It is the damning truth that the answer must be: very little.

Britain is a hopelessly divided place; perhaps no politician could have made a success of Brexit. Theresa May certainly tried her very hardest. It was not enough. In coming to office, May spoke of wishing to establish a meritocracy, a country in which a person’s life chances would not be defined by their background.

There were hints at action on housing, women’s rights, the reform of social care, fairness between the generations and above all a boost for those “ordinary, working-class [families]” May memorably suggested had been overlooked by Westminster.

None of the “burning injustices” May identified in making her pitch for the premiership were doused during it; today they blaze as brightly and as shamefully as ever. It is May’s tragedy that she was both brought to office and dispatched from it as a result of Brexit, despite having shown little interest in the European Union before her coronation, and none of the nimbleness and dexterity needed to negotiate with it. Britain is a hopelessly divided place; perhaps no politician could have made a success of Brexit. Theresa May certainly tried her very hardest. It was not enough.

■ Gray situation in the UK

UK does not have a good political situation right now! On the one hand, nationalists insist on leaving their coun-



try from the European Union. On the

other hand, it seems that some politicians in the UK are about to repeat the referendum. Theresa May’s resignation strengthens political and social uncertainties in London.

Supporters of the People’s Vote campaign are currently trying to convince the public for holding a new referendum on Brexit. “The People’s Vote campaign seeks to ensure that the government’s Brexit deal is put before the country in a public vote so that we can decide if a decision that will affect our lives for generations makes the country better or worse off. Good deal or bad deal, it’s definitely a big deal – and that’s why it should be put to a People’s Vote”, that’s how the campaign’s supporters define their goal!

Eventually, UK will become one of the main centers of the crisis in Europe in the coming months. Staying British in the EU or leaving the UK from the EU is both hard and costly. In this equation, it does not matter who is at Downing Street No. 10! Britain will face a crisis in the future where the leaders of both the conservative party and the Labor Party will not be able to manage and confront it.

Becoming prime minister unopposed

Western MSM parrot flawed narrative on Fujairah “sabotage”

By Alireza Hashemi

TEHRAN — The May 12 explosions off the coast of Fujairah, United Arab Emirates—one of the oil-shipping hubs across the globe—has become a controversy shrouded in mystery that could serve the interests of those seeking escalated tensions in Iran relations.

With details of the incident remaining obscure over a week later, it's still unclear what happened and who was behind the explosions.

But a close look at the coverage of the incident by Western corporate media indicates they parroted the UAE/Saudi narrative and assisted them to cover up the real magnitude of the incident, instead of practicing skeptical professional journalism.

Media also worked hand in hand with the two oil kingdoms and also some western governments to implicate Iran in the case.

This is while there are plausible reasons those governments could have incentives to distort the genuine account and point a finger at Iran.

What Happened?

The incident was first emerged on May 12 morning by the Beirut-based TV channel Al-Mayadeen, which quoted “Gulf sources” as saying explosions were heard at the port, and seven ships anchored nearby had been damaged.

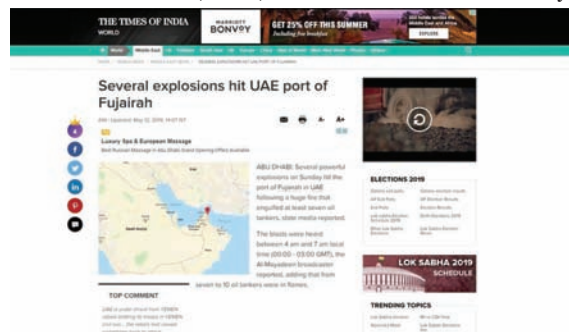
The Fujairah Media Office initially dismissed the reports, insisting it was business as usual at the port.

In the evening, however, the UAE Foreign Ministry released a short, vague statement that acknowledged the incident, but sought to play it down.

The statement said only “four” of what it called “commercial vessels” had suffered “sabotage” near its territorial waters close to Fujairah, and there were no injuries, and no spill of chemicals or fuel.

Act of Sabotage?

Outlets in Russia, India, Iran and elsewhere immediately



Russian, Iranian and Indian publications including the Times of India picked up the story from Al Mayadeen and reported there had been explosions.

picked up the Al Mayadeen report, but the Western agencies were silent until hours later, when the UAE issued its statement.

Even after the Western agencies published reports on the incident, they simply repeated the UAE and Saudi narrative. Typically, Western news media echoed the “sabotage” as if it were fact, sourcing their information to the Saudi and Emirati officials. As an example, Time headlined one of its stories “The U.S. Issues a Warning Amid Reports of Ships Being Sabotaged off the UAE Coast”.

At this time, there was no verifiable information about the “sabotage.” All they had were claims from Saudi and UAE officials, the same people who claim people disappear into thin air while in consulates, or that Yemeni children are massacred in air strikes by “mistake,” or that political dissidents are “terrorists” who must be beheaded by sword (FAIR.org, 5/15/19).

Advocates or Journalists?

The Western agencies chose not to question the UAE/Saudi claims about what had happened.

Instead, some agencies inquired claims disputing the UAE/



Saudi narrative, perhaps to further legitimize their account of the incident. As an instance, Reuters (5/12/19) contacted “trading and industry sources” and wrote in the third paragraph of its article that “operations were running smoothly” at the port.

Moreover, the US-based Associated Press (5/12/19) reported that claims by the “pro-Iran” Al-Mayadeen that “explosions had struck Fujairah’s port” were “false,” after it spoke to Emirati officials and local witnesses. AP makes the accusation in the lead of its main article on the incident, indicating the agency wants to put particular emphasis on its claim. The Al-Mayadeen report attributed to “Gulf sources” might contain some inconsistencies, but it seems AP appeared more like an advocate for the UAE and Saudi Arabia than a neutral news agency just doing its job.

Most other Western news media adopted the same reliance on the official Saudi and Emirati claims.

Playing Favorites

One wonders if Western outlets would treat the incident the same way if Saudi Arabia or the UAE were not client states who lavishly exchange their nations’ petrodollars for the West’s support. And this is not something new. The western outlets, claimed to be freest and fairest in the world, have for a very, very long time been favoring Saudi Arabia and its wealthy Arab neighbours in their reporting.

An interesting illustration is New York Times, which for over 70 years has been working to put the Saudi family in a good light, according to a report.

A more recent example was the case of Jamal Khashoggi’s slaughter. Four days into the late journalist’s disappearance, the Saudi government gave an exclusive tour of the building to Reuters to demonstrate that Khashoggi was not there. Amusingly, Reuters quotes Saudi consul-general Mohammad al-Otaibi as saying there was no footage of Khashoggi inside the building as “the consulate was equipped with cameras but they did not record footage”! However, Reuters refuses to bring into question al-Otaibi’s account, as if the whole report was an expensive advertorial.

The same Western agencies who seem so credulous when citing Saudi/Emirati claims are highly skeptical toward assertions by official enemies like Iran. As an illustration, some Western agencies sought to cast doubt on Iran’s official account in 2017 when it launched missile attacks against ISIS positions in Syria; Reuters, for example, wrote in an article that “it could not independently verify the report” that Iran had targeted ISIS. In another instance, the Associated Press called into question an Iranian rocket launch in 2017 by headlining its report, “Iran Claims Launch of Satellite-Carrying Rocket Into Space.”

Oil Factor at Play?

The behavior of the Western corporate media regarding the Fujairah incident was similar to their treatment of reports on Saudi port of Yanbu published earlier this month.

On May 6, several outlets in Yemen, Iran and elsewhere reported that powerful explosions had been heard in Yanbu, the main shipping terminal for Saudi exports to the US and Europe. Western agencies ignored the reports, toeing the line of Saudi officials, who refused to provide comment on them.

This is while similar attacks against the port in 2017 and 2018 had been confirmed by Saudi sources, including the state-funded Al-Arabiya, which in 2018 claimed the Saudi forces had destroyed a Yemeni ballistic missile en route to Yanbu.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have an incentive to play down such incidents, lest the global oil market be negatively impacted at a time when escalating US pressure to cut off Iran’s oil exports has created worries over upsetting the oil market. The shortage of oil in the global markets, resulting at least partly from the US decision not to extend sanctions waivers for Iran’s oil customers, has already led to increased fuel prices in the US and Britain.

Iran Taking Blame

More than nine days into the incident, little information has been offered on what sort of weapon was used and who did it.

Yet many Western media linked the incident to the Iran/US standoff and went into detail regarding Iran’s role in the region, implying that Iran was the main culprit. Many outlets, notably BBC, Reuters and AP, covered extensively claims by the US officials that Iran was most likely behind the case but failed to report Iran’s position.

This is while Iranian officials almost immediately condemned the attacks, with Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson warning against a “conspiracy orchestrated by ill-wishers” and “adventurism by foreigners” to undermine the Gulf region’s stability and security.

False Flag Operation?

Taking into account the incident came at a particularly sensitive time in the region and as the US is stepping up its “maximum pressure” campaign against Tehran, one could



Al Mayadeen first broke the news oil tankers anchored just off the coast were on fire.

easily argue the explosions could be a well-planned false-flag operation organized by a state actor to incite hostilities with Iran.

But given the US government’s eagerness to make accusations against Tehran and the corporate media’s willingness to suggest Iranian culpability, it appears that this incident could be seized upon by those eager to see tensions with Iran escalate.

With the results of a joint investigation by the UAE, the US and France to be announced in the coming days, one could anticipate western governments who have been busy wreaking havoc in the Middle East for the past couple of decades to rush to accuse Iran of disrupting peace in the region and call for measures to protect “security” and “stability” in the Persian Gulf.

The UAE has refused to elaborate on the nature of the “sabotage,” perhaps to prepare the ground for a powerful smear campaign against Iran, aided by outlets who feel no compunction about presenting unsubstituted claims as unchallenged facts.

Let’s hope the world has become smart enough not to be fooled into buying lies.

Real patriotism on memorial day means losing fewer soldiers in meaningless

By Ivan Eland

ANTIWAR — Most people, when thinking of Memorial Day — if they don’t confuse it with Veterans Day — think of the start of the summer season or great sales at the stores and online. Yet the holiday is supposed to honor those who died in America’s wars. Even some of the limited remembrance on TV and in the news is more superficial than deeply reflective.

Perhaps the greatest tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice might be to reduce the number of those who die in future wars. Unfortunately, throughout U.S. history, but especially after the Cold War ended, politicians of both parties have been too quick to send American boys (and now girls) into harm’s way, rather than thinking of war as a last resort — as the nation’s founders did.

The original patriots realized the expenditure of blood and treasure for the leaders’ political goals usually fell to common citizens. The founders believed that war severely undermined the American republic.

“Of all the enemies to public liberty war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other,” wrote James Madison, our fourth president and an author of our Constitution. “War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes; and armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few. In war, too, the discretionary power of the Executive is extended; its influence in dealing out offices, honors and emolu-

ments is multiplied; and all the means of seducing the minds, are added to those of subduing the force, of the people. ... No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.”

Modern politicians have forgotten Madison’s words and have put the country into a state of multiple continuous wars in faraway places that are only tangentially related to U.S. national security. For example, the U.S. government has been sending American service personnel to be killed in a futile, never-ending nation-building war in Afghanistan since 2001. The United States needlessly invaded Iraq, then fought an eight-year war of occupation, withdrew in 2011, and then went back for more in 2014.

The U.S. government took a look at the chaos caused by its overthrow of Saddam Hussein and promptly replicated that mayhem by overthrowing Moammar Gadhafi in Libya — in which the United States is still conducting military activity.

The United States is conducting ongoing military operations in Syria, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Niger and perhaps other places that have been kept secret.

The nation’s founders would have been nervous that such wars would have undermined freedom at home and created needless entanglements abroad. Just the example of the significant erosion of cherished U.S. liberties at home during the never-ending quagmire in Afghanistan should confirm the strong urge of the founders to, if possible, avoid war.

The founders, having broken away from a British king, were leery of expanding presidential power to wage war. Congress has abetted such exec-

utive aggrandizement, creating an “imperial presidency” by failing to fulfill, since World War II, its constitutional responsibility to declare war.

Most of our current wars have been unilaterally conducted by the president, without any congressional approval on behalf of the American people.

Geography still matters and the founders realized the United States had the tremendous advantage of being located away from the world’s centers of conflict — possessing perhaps the most intrinsically secure position of any great power in world history. For most of the country’s history, major American wars were infrequent — allowing the nation to grow into the world’s primary economic juggernaut.

Now the nation is \$21 trillion debt and accounts for 37 percent of the world’s military spending but only 24 percent of its GDP. Such overextension, which has led to excessively expansive and expensive U.S. military commitments overseas, can no longer be afforded.

President Trump alluded to some of these problems during his campaign but has only accelerated these brushfire wars. He is proud of keeping his campaign promises in other areas, yet strangely has been co-opted by Washington’s foreign policy elite and military brass. Such wars should not be draped in faux patriotism.

This Memorial Day, the most genuinely patriotic response to show support for our troops in harm’s way might be to ask politicians of both parties, including President Trump, why they still need to be in such God-forsaken hell holes.

First Announcement



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NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 31-32-95204-53-011

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04	LINE PIPE, API 5L, GRADE B, SEAMLESS, SQUARE ENDS BLACK, EXTRA STRONG, ELECTRIC FURNACE, OR OPEN HEARTH STEEL, PIPE SUPPLIED BARE UNOILED., IN RANDOM LENGTHS OF OM FROM 5 M TO 7.5 M., 1/2 IN NOW, 21.3 MM OD KG/M, SCH. 80, 3.6 MM WT. 1.622(5400 Meter).	900
05	LINE PIPE, API 5L, GRADE B, SEAMLESS, SQUARE ENDS BLACK, EXTRA STRONG, ELECTRIC FURNACE, OR OPEN HEARTH STEEL, PIPE SUPPLIED BARE UNOILED., IN RANDOM LENGTHS OF 6M FROM 5 M TO 7.5 M., 1 IN.NOM 33.4 MM OD KGM, SCH. 80, 4.5 MM WT. 3.230(3000 Meter).	500

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their «intention To Participate» letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 3,712 EURO or 177,300,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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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.

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SpaceX launches first batch of 60 Internet satellites in landmark mission

SpaceX just vaulted a rocket full of 60 satellites into the sky, marking a huge leap forward on its mission to put up a megaconstellation that could beam cheap broadband all over the planet.

This is the first dedicated mission for SpaceX's Internet constellation, called Starlink. It kicked off when the company's towering Falcon 9 rocket blazed toward the sky from a launch pad at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station at 10:30 pm ET.

Around 11:30 pm ET, the second stage of the rocket deployed what's called a payload stack — holding all 60 satellites. It slowly began to drop the individual satellites into orbit.

Musk said the satellites would fan out in a way that will look like "spreading a deck of cards on a table."

He confirmed in a tweet not long after deployment that all 60 satellites were "online," and that the devices would soon spread out their solar arrays, which power the satellites while in orbit.

It's not year clear if all 60 satellites are fully functional, but tweets from Musk and SpaceX appeared to confirm everything was running smoothly in the hours after launch. This mission, if fully successful, will mark



the largest step forward for any company attempting such a project. It could even set SpaceX up to beat out competitors such as Amazon and SoftBank-backed OneWeb, which each want to form Internet constellations of their own.

SpaceX ultimately wants Starlink to grow to include potentially thousands of satellites over the next few years. The company says it could make available low-cost Internet for a significant portion of the world's population that isn't yet online and offer a competitive

alternative for people who aren't happy with their broadband provider.

Getting SpaceX's full constellation up and running will cost in the ballpark of \$10 billion dollars, and Musk has conceded that such efforts have bankrupted others, such as the satellite operator Iridium. But when asked about funding for Starlink last week, he said the company has "sufficient capital" to carry out its plans. He added that SpaceX's latest funding round attracted "more interest than we were seeking." In April, the company sought to raise about \$400 million.

But before launch, Musk was only tepidly optimistic it would go off without a hitch.

"There is a lot of new technology here, so it's possible that some of these satellites may not work," Musk said last week, adding that there is a "small possibility" that none will work.

SpaceX will need another six missions, Musk said, before Starlink can provide consistent Internet coverage for small parts of the world. It will take 12 launches before the company can provide coverage for a significant portion of the world's population, according to Musk.

(Source: CNN)

Ammonium fertilized early life on Earth



A team of international scientists -- including researchers at the University of St. Andrews, Syracuse University and Royal Holloway, University of London -- has demonstrated a new source of food for early life on the planet.

Life on Earth relies on the availability of critical elements such as nitrogen and phosphorus. These nutrient elements are ubiquitous to all life, as they are required for the formation of DNA, the blueprints of life, and proteins, the machinery. They are originally sourced from rocks and the atmosphere, so their availability to life has fluctuated alongside significant changes in the chemistry of Earth's surface environments over geologic time.

The research, published in Nature Geoscience, reveals how the supply of these elements directly impacted the growth of Earth's oxygen-rich atmosphere and were key to the evolution of early life on Earth.

The most dramatic change in Earth history followed the evolution of oxygenic photosynthesis, which fundamentally transformed the planet by providing a source of carbon to the biosphere and a source of oxygen to the atmosphere, the latter culminating in the Great Oxidation Event (GOE) some 2.3 billion years ago.

Despite the critical importance of nutrients to life, the availability of nitrogen and phosphorus in pre-GOE oceans is not well understood, particularly how the supply of these elements drove and/or responded to planetary oxygenation.

Using samples of exceptionally well-preserved rocks that have been associated with early evidence for oxygenic photosynthesis

2.7 billion year ago, the team of researchers examined Earth's early nitrogen cycle to decipher feedbacks associated with the initial stages of planetary oxygenation.

"There is precious little rock available from this time interval that is suitable for the type of analyses we performed. Most rocks that are this old have been deformed and heated during 2.7 billion years of plate tectonic activity, rendering the original signals of life lost," says Christopher Junium, associate professor of Earth sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The rock samples showed the first direct evidence of the build-up of a large pool of ammonium in the pre-GOE oceans. This ammonium would have provided an ample source of nitrogen to fuel the early biosphere and associated oxygen production.

Research team leader Aubrey Zerkle, reader in the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of St Andrews, says: "Today we think of ammonium as the unpleasant odor in our cleaning supplies, but it would've served as an all-you-can-eat buffet for the first oxygen-generating organisms, a significant improvement on the dumpster scraps they relied on earlier in Earth's history."

As well as helping scientists better understand the role of the nitrogen cycle in global oxygenation, the new findings also provide context for other nutrient feedbacks during early planetary evolution.

"It is becoming ever more clear that the game of nutrient limitation has tipped back and forth through Earth's history as life has evolved and as conditions have changed," Junium says.

(Source: Science Daily)

Sea dragon exhibit dazzles visitors at California aquarium



At first glance, it looks like a branch of kelp, but then an eye moves among its leafy appendages, and ridges of tiny, translucent fins start to flutter, sending the creature gliding through the water like something from a fairy tale.

A Southern California aquarium has built what is believed to be one of the world's largest habitats for the surreal sea dragons, whose native populations off Australia are threatened by pollution, warming oceans and the illegal pet and alternative medicine trades.

The Birch Aquarium at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego hopes the exhibit, which opened this month, will lead to the leafy sea dragon, the lesser-known cousin of the seahorse, being bred for the first time in captivity.

"It literally just looked like a piece of kelp," said Steven Kowal, 25, who was visiting San Diego from Greensboro, North Carolina, and took time to see the exhibit. "It was crazy to me that it was, like, actually living and swimming around, so that's cool. I've never seen anything like that."

That's a common reaction.

"They look like something out of this world," said Leslee Matsushige, the aquarium's associate curator, who noted the sea dragons' amazing ability to camouflage themselves. "When people see them move, you hear them say, 'What? That's alive? Wow! That's crazy.'"

Scientists like Matsushige hope the creatures' magnetic power will prompt people to read the signs next to the tanks that outline ways to protect them and what can be done to make oceans healthier, such as picking up trash and stopping pollutants

from going down the drain.

Few aquariums have sea dragons. There are only two types of sea dragons, the leafy and the weedy, each representing its own genus. Both kinds are found only in a small area of temperate waters off the southern and western coasts of Australia.

Little is known about them because their populations are so small and in remote areas.

So far, only the weedy sea dragon, a bony fish that resembles seaweed when floating, has been bred in captivity, and only a handful of times.

The Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach was the first in the world to breed the weedy sea dragons in 2001. It also is trying to breed leafy sea dragons.

The Birch Aquarium's 18-foot-long (5.5-meter-long) tank has three leafy sea dragons — two males and one female — and 11 weedy sea dragons. The 5,300-gallon (20,062-liter) tank is a vast space, especially for the smaller leafy sea dragon, which grows to only about 14 inches (36 centimeters) in length. The tank has grassy plants, a sandy bottom and rocks.

Scientists hope the large space will foster breeding. Sea dragons mirror each other in a courtship dance, spiraling upward before the female deposits her eggs onto a patch on the underside of the male's tail. Like seahorses, the male carries the young and gives birth.

"We're already seeing great courtship behaviors, and so we're hopeful we can get some egg transfers really soon," said Jenn Nero Moffatt, director of animal care at the Birch Aquarium.

(Source: AP)

Could fundamental constants be neither fundamental nor constant?

Is it possible for light to travel faster or slower in the distant corners of our universe? The speed of light, like dozens of other so-called fundamental constants, is essential to how physicists understand the cosmos. These numbers even help define our units of measure, such as the meter, the second and the kilogram. However, there is no scientific consensus as for why the constants must be constant, or fundamental.

A new paper in the journal Physical Review Letters proposes experiments to investigate whether these unwavering pillars of physics are, in fact, fluctuating over space-time. If so, scientists will need to reevaluate the current models of our universe -- or at least give these numbers a different name.

How fundamental are the constants?

"Fundamental constants are essentially just parameters that appear in a theory," said Peter Mohr, a physicist from the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, Maryland, who was not involved in the new paper. "They have fundamental importance to the theories, but their values are not predicted by the theories and have to be measured experimentally."

Mohr and his colleagues were part of the international effort to create a new definition for the kilogram -- one that is derived from fundamental constants rather than a block of platinum alloy that's been sitting in France since 1889. The goal was to create a standard for measuring mass that can withstand the test of time and not gain or lose weight through contaminations and degradations like a physical block of material would. The change took effect this Monday, May 20, on World Metrology Day.

It might seem like shifting fundamental constants would negate the whole premise of the redefinition.

But decades of experimental data have shown that any potential changes to the constants would be incredibly tiny -- less than one part in a hundred thousand trillion.

"That's pretty stable," said Mohr. "The variations -- even if they're there -- would be so small that we won't even have to think about them in most experiments."

Indeed, if these constants are changing too much, the Standard Model, a bedrock theory of particle physics, wouldn't have withstood decades of rigorous experiments and led to the prediction and subsequent detection of elementary particles such as quarks and the Higgs boson, for instance. The Standard Model describes what matter is made up of and how it interacts with all the known forces except gravity.

While the possible variation of the fundamental constants may be too small to upend modern physics, it can still significantly change our views on yet-to-be-understood things such as dark matter.

"We know that we need to go beyond the Standard Model, but it's unclear which direction we should go, whether it's string theory or supersymmetry or some other theory," said Lukas Pasteka, a physicist at Comenius University in Slovakia who was the lead author of the new paper.

According to Pasteka, some of these existing hypotheses actually include predictions of variations in fundamental constants. A precise enough experiment can test these predictions and help thin out the herd.

A new test

If you have a ruler the length of the entire solar system, a change of one part in a hundred thousand trillion of that ruler would be roughly equal to the width of a human hair. At first blush, measuring this level of variation may sound ludicrously hard, but is it?

Meet the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory -- with two arms each more than two miles long and a sensitivity to variations of less than one part in a billion trillion, LIGO can detect a length change equal to a thousandth the width of a proton. It was part of the global effort that detected gravitational waves for the first time, coming from two colliding black holes more than a billion light-years away.

According to Pasteka and his colleagues, this level of sensitivity is just what they need to go beyond the current limit and detect changes in the -- pardon the irony -- fundamental constants.

By looking at past and future data gathered by LIGO, they hope to detect signatures stemming from changes in a number of fundamental constants, including the speed of light, the Planck's constant, the charge of an electron, and the proton-electron mass ratio.

They also proposed a different method that can be carried out using smaller, desktop instruments to directly monitor atomic bond distances, such as those between gold atoms, over long periods of time. This method may be more straightforward but less sensitive compared to using LIGO, but both will take at least several years, if not longer, before producing meaningful data.

"They will need to run for at least a year or two just to account for certain cyclicalities such as the Earth revolving around the Sun," said Pasteka.

(Source: Inside Science)

Look out, songbirds, baby sharks want to eat you

Birds that live on land were recently found for the first time in a very unexpected place: the stomachs of sharks.

In 2010, biologists surveying populations of tiger sharks (*Galeocerdo cuvier*) along the coasts of Mississippi and Alabama were surprised when one of their shark subjects regurgitated some unusual feathers that did not resemble those from a seabird.

Visual and DNA analyses revealed that the feathers were from a ground-dwelling brown thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*), the scientists reported in a new study. Over the next eight years, the scientists examined the stomach contents of 105 tiger sharks. The researchers found that songbird-eating happened far more frequently than expected, identifying 41 sharks that had eaten terrestrial birds -- 11 species in all, including barn swallows, wrens, sparrows and meadowlarks.

Nearly half of those bird-eating sharks were youngsters, according to the study.

It's not unheard of for both juvenile and adult tiger sharks to eat seabirds such as gulls and pelicans, though those birds typically make up only a small percentage of the sharks' diets, lead study author J. Marcus Drymon, an assistant extension professor at Mississippi State University's Coastal Research and Extension Center, told Live Science in an email.

But how were the sharks catching songbirds, which live on land? The sharks' avian prey were likely blown out to sea by storms during seasonal migrations, the scientists wrote. Seabirds can easily alight on the ocean surface and take off again, but exhausted and soggy songbirds would flounder. That would make them easy targets for even very young sharks that weren't experienced hunters.

(Source: Live Science)

3 million-year-old “mighty mouse” fossil still has red fur

A few million years ago, a little red mouse with a tiny white belly ran through the fields of what's now a German village named Willershausen. Researchers know that because they found an incredibly well-preserved fossil of the now-extinct mouse, which they dubbed "mighty mouse." And the technology they used to study it could change the way scientists study the fossil record.

It's the first time researchers have been able to detect the chemical signature of red pigment in an ancient fossil, according to a study published Tuesday in Nature Communications. Color is part of how animals have adapted to survive and has played a key part in evolution over millions of years.

The researchers didn't know what they would find when they studied the mouse fossil, but the surprise was worth their efforts.

"What we found is that the mouse is preserved in absolutely stunning detail, nearly all of the skeleton and most of the soft tissue of the body, head, feet, and tail can easily be recognized," Uwe Bergmann, study co-author and distinguished staff scientist at the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, wrote in an email. "The X-ray maps show that not only are structures preserved, but original biochemical information is resolvable. That was a wonderful surprise."

An illustration of the mouse as it appeared in life, left, and the analysis of the fossil, revealing pigmented color.

But determining color pigments in species that have long been extinct isn't easy, especially with certain colors.

Ten years ago, the team of researchers was able to isolate the chemical signature of black pigment, like the kind in crow feathers. And now, they have found red pigment, like the color of fox fur. Red pigment becomes less stable over time and is incredibly difficult to detect.

"In mammals and other animals there are two types of melanin, the brownish black eumelanin and the reddish pheomelanin," Bergmann said. "The importance is not so much the fact that this mouse had this reddish pigment, but the fact that we could identify it in a three million year old fossil. This has implications that there is hope of identifying pigments in many other fossils."

Intense X-ray tools, like the SLAC's Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Lightsources and the Diamond Light Source in the UK, provided the brightest sources of light possible to study the fossil.

"The biggest impact to me is the fact that we have now X-ray tools that can recover information about a fossilized organism from tiny traces preserved for millions of years," Bergmann said. "This was not easy and required a team of scientists with different expertise, including paleontology, geochemistry, and of course X-ray spectroscopy and imaging, which is my field. Being part of such a diverse and interesting team is incredible."

(Source: CNN)

Ancient Patara Lighthouse to be rebuilt with original stones in southern Turkey's Antalya

The restitution project has been completed for the Patara Lighthouse, which was initially constructed in 64 CE in the ancient city of Patara, located in the Kas district of southern Turkey's Antalya province, and now the ancient structure will be reconstructed on its original stones.

The original stones used in the construction of the lighthouse located in what was once the capital of the ancient Lycia region were unearthed during the ongoing excavation works in the region, Turkish daily Hurriyet reported Thursday.



Havva Isik, the professor who will be leading the archaeological works on the lighthouse noted that the structure is not the earliest-known lighthouse, but the earliest lighthouse whose original material remains.

"The earliest of the lighthouses is the Lighthouse of Alexandria, which also gives its name to these structures. However, Patara Lighthouse is the only lighthouse that can be reconstructed with its original material," Isik said, adding that it is one of Turkey's most important cultural heritage.

The Patara Lighthouse was introduced to the world by William Gell, who carried out research visits on behalf of the Society of Dilettanti – an association examining ancient Greek and Roman arts – between 1812 and 1813, while the term lighthouse was first used by Turkish professor Fahri Isik who inaugurated the excavations in 1988.

The second excavations to unearth the original stones used in the construction began in August 2004.

The lighthouse consists of two main sections – a podium and a tower – while the tower consists of two interlocking cylindrical structures connected by a spiral-shaped ladder. The wall thickness is 1.2 meters (4 feet). The tower will reach a height of about 26 meters (85 feet) on the podium after it is rebuilt.

Patara was one of Lycia's major naval and trading ports, located at the mouth of the Xanthos River. Patara's oracle at the renowned temple of Apollo, which has not been discovered yet, was said to rival that of Delphi and the temple equaled the reputation of the famous temple on the island of Delos. It was believed that Apollo lived on Delos during summer but spent the winters in Patara.

The city surrendered to Alexander the Great in 333 BC. During the Hellenistic Period, the Lycian Council Building was built. It is regarded as a symbol of democracy in Lycia and a sign of its ancient glory.

The Roman general Brutus captured Patara in 42 BC. The Lycian settlement was then annexed by Emperor Claudius and turned into a magnificent Roman site with mesmerizing beaches along the Mediterranean Sea.

The city later came under Byzantine and Ottoman control. Modern visitors still flock to Patara's wide, tranquil beaches.

(Source: Daily Sabah)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Borobudur Temple

A UNESCO World Heritage, the Borobudur Temple is one of the greatest Buddhist monuments in the world, and was built in the 8th and 9th centuries CE during the reign of the Syailendra Dynasty.

The temple is located in the Kedu Valley, in the southern part of Central Java, at the center of the island of Java, Indonesia.



The main temple is a stupa built in three tiers around a hill which was a natural center: a pyramidal base with five concentric square terraces, the trunk of a cone with three circular platforms and, at the top, a monumental stupa.

The walls and balustrades are decorated with fine low reliefs, covering a total surface area of 2,520 m2. Around the circular platforms are 72 openwork stupas, each containing a statue of the Buddha.

The Temple should also be seen as an outstanding dynastic monument of the Syailendra Dynasty that ruled Java for around five centuries until the 10th century.

The temple was used as a Buddhist temple from its construction until sometime between the 10th and 15th centuries when it was abandoned. Since its re-discovery in the 19th century and restoration in the 20th century, it has been brought back into a Buddhist archaeological site.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran makes debut at renowned Révelations

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Ten top **d e s k** Iranian handcrafters are showing skills at the Révelations – Fine Craft and Creation Fair, which is underway at the Grand Palais in Paris.

On Thursday, Tehran Ambassador to Paris Bahram Qassemi along with tens of French and international envoys attended the opening ceremony of the event, CHTN reported.

"This is the first time that Iranian artisans are taking part in the important and global fair of Fine Craft [and Creation Fair] and this [participation] is of high importance because of the current state of the country, which is in under unjust sanctions [imposed by the United States]," said Pouya Mahmoudian, a deputy for the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

Traditional ceramics, potteries, metalwork, and enameled works were among Iranian offerings for the 4th edition of the biennial that runs until May 26, the official said.

Overall, 450 creators and artists from 33 countries are present at the event, according to its organizers.

Dozens of Iranian handicrafts have gained the UNESCO Seal of Excellence during the past couple of years.

Initiated by Ateliers d'Art de France since 2013, Révelations reunite general public, amateurs and collectors, architects, decorators, gallery owners, purchasing offices, and artistic directors.

In 2017, 40,268 visitors were welcomed at the Grand Palais that is a large historic site, exhibition hall and museum complex located at the Champs-?lysées.



Tehran Ambassador to Paris Bahram Qassemi (5th L) visits Révelations – Fine Craft and Creation Fair – on May 23, 2019.

Iran-Germany archaeological survey ends in Jiroft

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A team of Iranian and **d e s k** German experts has finished their fifth season of archaeological survey in Jiroft, an ancient city in Kerman, southeastern Iran.

Over 2200 ha of lands were studied during the survey jointly conducted by Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Center and Germany's Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Studies (IANES) of the University of Tübingen, IRNA reported.

Nader Alidad-Soleymani from Iran and Professor Peter Pfalzner from Germany co-led the survey, which has covered Kahnouj, Rudbar and Manujan counties.

The survey was carried out in various arenas comprising methodology of the research that includes field sampling methods, manners of pottery documentation, and setting up a database system, the report said.

Furthermore, Alidad-Soleymani, Mohammad



Karami and Pfalzner respectively presented recent archaeological findings along with objectives and plans of the archaeology season. They also turned the spot-

light on sites of high importance, new findings on [carbon] dating and [ancient] settlement systems.

Back in 2008, Piotr Steinkeller, professor of Assyriology in Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of Harvard University, announced that Jiroft is the lost ancient city of Marhashi.

Steinkeller presented his theory during the first round of an international conference on Jiroft civilization, held in Tehran on May 5 and 6, 2008. Marhashi, (known in earlier sources as Warahshe) was a 3rd millennium BC polity, which was formed east of Elam on the Iranian plateau.

Big, sprawling Kerman Province is something of a cultural melting pot, blending various regional cultures over the course of time. It is also home to rich tourist spots and historical sites including bazaars, mosques, caravanserais and ruins of ancient urban areas.



Travelers visit Arasbaran protected area in northwest Iran. Arasbaran, which has been put forward as a candidate for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list, embraces rich vestiges of historical monuments.

JICA completes first phase of Iran's tourism development project

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Japan **d e s k** International Cooperation Agency has recently accomplished the first phase of a tourism development project, which is carried out in a vast span of land in northwest Iran.

The first phase of the project was launched with the cooperation of Japan's tourism specialists, Mehr quoted Alireza Rahimi, the director of Iran's tourism planning and development as saying on Wednesday.

The project goes through three phases of primary studies, field visits and the development of a comprehensive tourism plan in northwest of the country, the official said.

Referring to scientific and specialized capacity of the Japanese agency, he mentioned that a team of advisers along with the provincial supervisors will pay visits to six provinces of Iran including West and East Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Kordestan, Zanjan and Qazvin in order to investigate their untapped potential.

Rahimi said that the JICA experts have so far investigated capabilities for the Aras Free Zone and Maku Free Zone, adding, they have also visited three UNESCO World Heritage sites in Iran.

The experts have also investigated Sabalan Mountain and its hot-water spas as a potential World Heritage.

How Amsterdam is fighting back against mass tourism

Famous for its tolerance as much as its narrow houses and broad canals, Amsterdam is undergoing a radical change of attitude when it comes to the millions of tourists that flock to see it each year.

Tolerance, it seems, has reached its limits in the Dutch capital, which is now actively urging visitors to head elsewhere as frustrated locals complain of feeling besieged by visitors using the city's bicycle-thronged streets as a travel playground.

"The pressure is very high," says Ellen van Loon, a partner at Dutch architectural firm OMA who is involved in adapting the city for the future. "We don't want to turn into a Venice. The problem we are currently facing is that Amsterdam is so loved by tourists, we just have so many coming to the city."

While Van Loon acknowledges the positive aspects of tourism, which earns the Dutch economy around 82 billion euros (\$91.5 billion) a year, like many locals she's worried that soaring visitor numbers are destroying the soul of this vibrant cosmopolitan city.

Like Venice and other destinations across Europe, Amsterdam has become a byword for overtourism -- a phenomenon closely linked to the rise in cheaper air travel that has seen visitors flood certain places, often spoiling the very spot they came to enjoy.

While some cities are still formulating ways to cope, Amsterdam -- where a decade-long surge in visitor numbers is forecast to continue, rising from 18 million in 2018 to 42 million in 2030, or more than 50 times the current population -- has simply decided it's had enough.

Netherlands tourist officials recently took the bold decision to stop advertising the country as a tourist



The Dutch capital's "I amsterdam" sign has been moved because it's too popular with tourists.

destination. Their "Perspective 2030" report, published earlier this year, stated that the focus will now be on "destination management" rather than "destination promotion."

The document also outlines the country's future strategy, acknowledging that Amsterdam's livability will be severely impacted by "visitor overload" if action isn't taken.

Solutions listed include working to dissuade groups of "nuisance" visitors by either limiting or completely shutting down "accommodation and entertainment products" aimed at them, as well as spreading visitors to other parts of the Netherlands.

Some of these measures have already come into play. Last year, the famous "I amsterdam" sign was removed from outside the Rijksmuseum, the city's main

art gallery, at the request of the city of Amsterdam, as it was "drawing too big of a crowd to an already limited space."

The two-meter high letters have been relocated to various "lesser-known neighborhoods" in a bid to entice travelers away from the center of the city.

Mass tourism has also impacted one of Amsterdam's other famous symbols, tulips.

While today's billion dollar trade grew from tulip mania -- the 17th century economic bubble, when bulbs sold for more than a year's wages -- Dutch floral fervor hasn't waned.

"Flowers really belong to our culture, our heritage," says Florian Seyd, florist and co-founder of Wunderkammer.

"In the beginning tulips came from Turkey, and were grown mainly in palaces. Then a few bulbs came to Netherlands and started to multiply. I think that's when the big love from the Dutch for flowers started."

While tulips aren't as hard to come by here nowadays, they remain enormously important to the country, with its bulb region of Bollenstreek, located just outside Amsterdam, drawing plenty of visitors during spring.

But selfie-seeking tourists have been damaging fields, leading the tourist board to issue a "dos and don'ts" guide to taking photos next to them.

In addition, signs emblazoned with the slogan, "Enjoy the flowers, respect our pride," have been erected around fields in the region to deter visitors from trampling tulips while posing for pictures.

Some farmers have even opted to fence in their fields to protect them.

(Source: CNN)

Tourists warned not to write in sand dunes in Japan

When traveling abroad, it's important to not seem like an obnoxious tourist wherever you go.

After all, you wouldn't want to give other tourists a bad rep. This means you have to play by the local rules. But sometimes, some people just don't get the memo.

Much like Florence, Italy banning tourists from snacking in the street, or Rome arresting people for swimming in the Trevi fountain, authorities near the Tottori dunes

in Japan are asking tourists to stop writing in the sand or face a fine.

According to Lonely Planet, local authorities in Japan are doubling down on their efforts to stop anyone from writing messages "and other annoying acts" along the Tottori coastline. The famous dunes found in San-in Coast National park gets millions of visitors every year. According to the Mainichi Shimbun, the number of visitors staying overnight in Tottori topped 3.29 million in

2018. It's not clear whether all visitors visited the sand dunes.

Unfortunately, so many visitors can also cause problems for the environment. Back in 2008, the government was already aware of the "sand graffiti" problem and issued an ordinance that says anyone caught writing sand messages larger than 10 square meters (107 square feet) would face a fine of ¥50,000 (about \$456 USD), Lonely Planet reported.

(Source: travelandleisure.com)



Malaria, still a challenge in Sistan-Baluchestan

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — Malaria is still a challenge in some parts of Iran, especially in Sistan-Baluchestan Province, said Dr. Christoph Hamelmann, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Iran.

“Sistan-Baluchestan is a big province though it has a scattered population. It borders Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, some diseases aren’t controlled by the borders and threaten all the people in adjacent areas,” IRNA reported Hamelmann as saying on Thursday.

Sistan-Baluchestan, located in the south-east of the country, is the second largest province of Iran.

According to Hamelmann, three universities of medical sciences in the province are doing their best to control communicable diseases in the area and WHO helps them to provide better and more comprehensive medical care to local people.

“Iran health and medical systems have been working very well; the kind of health coverage and health packages provided to people in Iran is unparalleled with other countries in the region,” Hamelmann added.

Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes which is preventable and curable.

Communicable diseases threaten Chabahar

On Wednesday, the director of Communicable Diseases Department at the Health Ministry announced that communicable diseases such as Malaria, Crimean–Congo



hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) and HIV infection are threatening Chabahar.

According to Mohammad Mahdi Guya,

Chabahar is an important area with economic, business and tourist attractions, so preventive measures should be taken to control com-

According to Hamelmann, three universities of medical sciences in the province are doing their best to control communicable diseases in the area and WHO helps them to provide better and more comprehensive medical care to local people.

Researchers offer model for optimizing lip-reading

HEALTH **TEHRAN**— Researchers in Amirkabir University of Technology have proposed a new method for automating lip-reading process to aid people with hearing difficulty.

The study investigates a model that can use hybrid visual features for optimizing lip-reading. Lip reading, also known as speech-reading, is a technique of understanding speech by visually interpreting the movements of the lips, face and tongue when normal sound is not available.

Experiments over many years have revealed that speech intelligibility increases if visual

facial information becomes available.

The research was carried out by Fatemeh Vakhshiteh with the supervision of professors Farshad Almasgan and Ahmad Nickabadi.

In an interview with ISNA, Vakhshiteh said using a variety of sources for extracting information substantially helps the lip-reading process.

According to Vakhshiteh, this model was inspired by the function of the brain because the human brain also processes several sources of information in production and reception of speech.

In this model, deep neural networks are

used to make the recognition of lip-reading as well as phone recognition easier, she said.

“The neural networks were specially used for situations that audial and visual features must be processed simultaneously.”

“This is especially helpful in noisy environments where the audial data produced by speakers might become less clear or incomprehensible.”

“This would also help the people with speech difficulty because they can use their visual data to compensate for the interruption in the speech signal they receive,” she added.

The research results demonstrated that

municable diseases in this region.

Chabahar County, located in Sistan-Baluchestan, is a free port on the coast of the Gulf of Oman, and is Iran’s southernmost city.

Guya made the remarks in a meeting on health and food safety in Sistan-Baluchestan.

The health threat from livestock and free-ranging dog

According to Guya, the Veterinary Organization must closely screen the imported livestock so the diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans can’t come into the country.

Free-ranging dogs are another threat to the health of local people, he said.

According to the health deputy of Zabol University of Medical Sciences, there are currently more than 40,000 street dogs in Sistan County that are posing a threat to the health of people.

The pressing problem of water

Over the meeting, an official with Sistan-Baluchestan Municipality highlighted the water problem in the province.

According to Rahman Bameri, Chabahar, with a 300,000 population, has 488 villages, but it is the only area in the country where water is transferred to them with tankers.

“Another problem is the big population living on the outskirts of Chabahar. Around 70,000 people live in such areas without access to clean water, electricity, education or proper health care.”

In such areas, he said, communicable diseases are transmitted easily.

More attention should be paid to fighting and controlling communicable diseases in Chabahar, he added.



the proposed method outperforms the conventional Hidden Markov Model (HMM) and competes well with the state-of-the-art visual speech recognition works.

Women less likely to be resuscitated and survive a cardiac arrest than men, study finds

Women are less likely to be resuscitated and survive a cardiac arrest than men, a new study has found.

The research, published in the European Heart Journal, found women and men received unequal treatment when suffering a cardiac arrest.

It found women who have a cardiac arrest outside the hospital setting are less likely to receive resuscitation from passersby and more likely to die than men.

The disparity in treatment they received in the community was found to be partly to do with the fact that people did not recognize that women who had collapsed were having a cardiac arrest – prompting delays in calling the emergency services and delays in delivering resuscitation treatment.

Cardiac arrest takes place when the heart goes into an irregular rhythm and then stops beating entirely. It is different from a heart attack.

Dr Hanno Tan, a cardiologist based at the University of Amsterdam, said: “We found that the worse outcome in women is largely attributable to the fact that women had about half the chance of having a shockable initial rhythm compared to men.”

Dr Tan, who led the research, and his team analyzed data from all resuscitation attempts made by emergency services between 2006 and 2012 in one province in The Netherlands. They identified 5,717 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests treated during this period – 28 per cent of which occurred in women.

They found women were less likely than men to receive a resuscitation attempt by a bystander – 68 per cent rather than 73 per cent. The figure was virtually the same even when someone witnessed the collapse.

Survival from the time of the cardiac arrest to admission to hospital was lower in women – 34 per cent versus 37 per cent. Women were less likely to survive from admission to discharge – 37 per cent rather than 55 per cent.

Overall, the chances of women surviving to be released from hospital was around half that of men. Researchers consider this is largely explained by the lower rate of shockable initial



rhythm in women – 33 per cent versus 52 per cent – and found several reasons that might explain this difference.

Shockable initial rhythm is the heart rhythm recorded when someone with cardiac arrest is connected to an electrocardiogram machine. It is highly fast – often more than 300 beats a minute – and chaotic. Death takes place within minutes unless the heart can be shocked back to a normal rhythm by means of an electrical current from a defibrillator.

Dr Tan said that even when they adjusted their findings to take account of pre-existing diseases and factors relating to the way in which resuscitation was provided by professionals – for example how long it took for the ambulance to arrive – they still found women were half as likely as men to have shockable initial rhythm.

“This suggests that the lower proportion of women with shockable initial rhythm is not fully explained by women being more likely to have pre-existing diseases or by different resuscitation factors, and that other, as yet undiscovered, factors also play a role,” he added. “However, when we looked only at cardiac arrest victims who did have a shockable initial

dawn to sunset.

The researchers found that practicing this type of fasting for 30 days raised the levels of certain proteins that can improve insulin resistance and stave off the adverse effects of a diet rich in fats and sugar.

Dr. Mindikoglu and team presented their findings at the Digestive Disease Week, a conference that took place recently in San Diego, CA.

Timing and duration between meals’ is key

Dr. Mindikoglu and colleagues studied 14 people who were healthy at baseline and who fasted for 15 hours each day from dawn to sunset as part of Ramadan.

While fasting, the participants did not consume any food or drink. Before the start of the fast, the researchers took blood samples from the participants. The scientists also tested the participants’ blood after 4 weeks of fasting and 1 week after fasting ended.

The blood samples revealed higher levels of proteins called tropomyosin (TPM) 1, 3, and 4. TPM is “best known for its role in the regulation of contraction of skeletal muscle and the heart.”

However, TPM is also key for maintaining the health of cells that are important to insulin resistance and repairing them if they sustain damage.

(Source: Medical News Today)

AEOI to build 50 blood centrifuges

HEALTH **TEHRAN** — The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) is going to build 50 blood centrifuges, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

AEOI signed a memorandum of understanding with Iran Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) to build the centrifuges. IBTO needs blood centrifuges for fractionating the whole blood that is donated to the organization.

Blood fractionation separates the whole blood into its component parts such as red blood cells, platelets and blood plasma.



According to the agreement, AEOI will build the centrifuges by using local knowledge and homegrown equipment.

Currently, IBTO buys its required centrifuges from foreign companies.

In April, AEOI announced that it has begun installing 20 advanced IR6 centrifuges at a nuclear enrichment facility.

AEOI Chief Ali Akbar Salehi said that Iran has made headways in the nuclear industry, which has also contributed to progress in other industrial and medical sectors.

How lack of sleep harms circulation

Scientists have long been aware of the relationship between insufficient sleep and poor cardiovascular health. However, exactly how the lack of adequate sleep can harm circulation has remained unclear. A new study now uncovers some of the potential mechanisms.

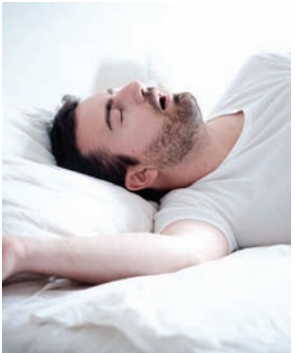
Sleeplessness impairs crucial mechanisms that keep cardiovascular problems at bay, shows a new study.

Having a good night’s sleep, which amounts to an uninterrupted 7 hours of sleep or so per night, is crucial to maintaining good overall health. Poor sleep hygiene disrupts both short- and long-term health, according to evidence from numerous studies.

One aspect of health that a person’s quality of sleep can influence is cardiovascular health. For example, research findings from the start of this year showed that sleeping for less than 6 hours per night rather than for 7–8 hours could increase a person’s risk of atherosclerosis – a condition in which plaque builds up inside the arteries – by as much as 27%.

Another study from this year explains how good sleep can help keep the arteries supple, thus maintaining good circulation.

Now, research from the University of Colorado Boulder has pinpointed a potential biological mechanism explaining the reverse of the medal – how lack of sleep affects circulation by promoting the buildup of fatty deposits in the arteries (atherogenesis), which can increase a person’s risk of experiencing a stroke or heart attack. The findings, which appear in the journal *Experimental Physiology*, tie sleeplessness to changes in the blood levels of micro RNA (miRNA), noncoding molecules that help regulate protein expression.



“This study proposes a new potential mechanism through which sleep influences heart health and overall physiology.”

How poor sleep promotes vascular problems

In the current study, the researchers collected blood samples from 24 healthy participants aged 44–62 years, who also provided information about their sleeping habits. Of the participants, 12 reported sleeping 7–8.5 hours per night, while the other 12 said that they only slept for 5–6.8 hours per night.

The team found that the participants who slept for less than 7 hours per night had blood levels of three key circulating miRNAs – miR-125A, miR-126, and miR-146a – that were 40–60% lower than those of their peers who slept for 7 or 8 hours. These three miRNAs, the researchers note, suppress the expression of proinflammatory proteins.

Having low levels of these molecules is problematic, because, as Prof. DeSouza explains, “[t]hey are like cellular brakes, so if beneficial microRNAs are lacking, that can have a big impact on the health of the cell.”

In this case, insufficient circulating miR-125A, miR-126, and miR-146a could lead to vascular problems, including inflammation, as well as a higher risk of experiencing cardiovascular disease-related events, such as stroke or a heart attack.

Prof. DeSouza and his team had already found another worrying pattern in a previous study, for which they recruited adult men who slept for less than 6 hours each night. The study showed that the participants’ endothelial cells – which make up the lining of blood vessels – did not function properly.

As a result, their blood vessels were unable to dilate and contract properly to allow blood to flow efficiently to different organs and parts of the body. This situation, Prof. DeSouza and colleagues have explained, poses another set of risks to cardiovascular health.

7 hours of sleep for cardiovascular health

“Why 7 or 8 hours [of sleep per night] seems to be the magic number [in maintaining health] is unclear,” Prof. DeSouza admits.

“However,” he continues, “it is plausible that people need at least 7 hours of sleep per night to maintain levels of important physiological regulators, such as microRNAs.”

Commenting on the current findings, Prof. DeSouza argues that it may be possible to diagnose cardiovascular disease by performing blood tests. Laboratory technicians could assess a person’s levels of circulating miRNAs and look for the presence of the atherogenic signature that the study has identified.

At present, the senior researcher and his team are working to find out whether improving a person’s sleep habits can help reestablish healthy levels of important miRNAs in the blood.

In any case, Prof. DeSouza emphasizes that the findings of the recent study corroborate what sleep studies have been suggesting all along – that sleep quality influences unexpected aspects of health.

“Don’t underestimate the importance of a good night’s sleep,” he stresses.

(Source: Medical News Today)

How fasting may prevent obesity-related insulin resistance

New research adds to the mounting evidence that fasting may be helpful in the fight against obesity and its related conditions. By increasing certain proteins, the practice may protect against metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and liver disease, but the timing of and duration between meals’ is key.

Fasting from dawn to sunset for 30 days could help treat conditions relating to obesity, a new study suggests.

The health benefits of fasting have been the subject of much hype in recent years. More and more people now fast, not just for religious purposes but also to lose weight and boost metabolism.

Restricting food intake may increase metabolic activity more than researchers used to believe, studies suggest, and the practice may even help fight aging.

Fasting may also improve gut health, according to other research, and strengthen circadian rhythms, thus boosting overall health.

New research adds to this body of evidence by zooming in on a specific type of fasting and its benefits for obesity-related conditions.

Dr. Ayse Leyla Mindikoglu, who is an associate professor of medicine and surgery at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX, and her colleagues used the Islamic spiritual practice of Ramadan to study the benefits of fasting from

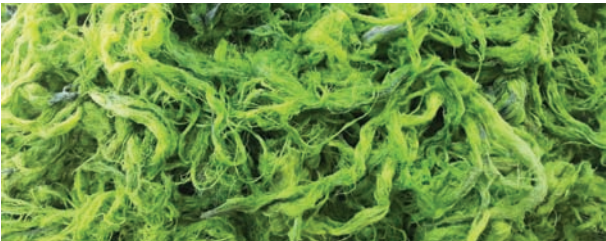
Incredible algae potentials

By Mohammad Pourkazemi

Maybe for some people it seems a little strange and unrealistic to use medicines and foods from algae, but these aquatic organisms have an incredible potential that will lead researchers to investigation in this area.

According to available information, there are more than one million algae species in the world, of which at least 340 species have been identified in Iran. Therefore, our researchers active in fisheries sciences are facing a wide range of research in this area, which fortunately have reached acceptable results so far. The establishment of the working group on algae and aquatic plant studies and determination of the Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute, as the Secretariat of this workgroup, is a sufficient reason to demonstrate the importance of this issue.

One of the products of algae is the production of bio-fertilizer, which can create enormous changes in agricultural lands and minimize environmental pollution from chemical fertilizers.



Agar production is another project that will have an extraordinary effect on the industrial cycle. At present, an average of about 6 million dollar is spent annually on imports of pigments and hundreds of tons of agar. Also, import of Sodium Alginate, which is very essential in the pharmaceutical and textile industry, is expected to reach about 600 thousand tons annually. All of these products are now being extracted by the investigators of the Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute, and there is not much time to mass production.

Another example, which may surprise the aquatic plant's effectiveness, is the production of edible oil from algae. The statistics indicate that 90 to 95 percent of the country's eatable oil need comes from abroad every year. For this reason, the level of dependency in this sector is very high. While it is possible, with correct and scientific planning, we can produce 10 to 20 percent of the country's need for eatable oil from these algae in production reactors without using agricultural lands.

Generally, if knowledge based companies are in tested in investing in the field, especially macro-and micro-algae, in the long run, not only will the country become less dependent on imports of foreign products, but also foreign exchange revenues from exports of its products can rise to thousands of dollars.

FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) statistics show that 20 million tons of macro algae and aquatic plants are produced every year, with a multibillion-dollar turnover. While at least an average of 2,000 tons of algae per year is obtained through seas in our country. But there are countries like China, Taiwan, and Thailand, which arranged fields for breeding these plants, and they have done something similar to what is known as "production of fish in cages" in Iran for the cultivation of algae.

Now, the question arises as to whether Iran can step in this direction? Fortunately, the answer is yes. Because now there is a technical knowledge in our country that can deliver the farmer at least 20 tons of algae per hectare on the basis of the scientific principles provided by fisheries scientists. This happens without using a particle of soil or a drop of fresh water.

Since one of the priorities of the Ministry of Agriculture- Jihad and the Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute is the development of algae and aquatic plant technologies, they have supported investors, researchers and knowledge based companies in this field and will not hesitate for supporting production dependent on these plants.

The Institute's priority is to plan and create models for the production of algae for the purpose of value added as well as dietary supplements in livestock, poultry and aquaculture, which is now being supplied from abroad.

Dr. Mohammad Pourkazemi is the Director of Iranian Fisheries Science Research Institute.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Malaria vaccine initiative

A donation by the founder of Microsoft to the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases could eventually lead to a vaccine against malaria. Dr Graham Easton of BBC Science reported. The plan is that the US\$ fifty million **grant used** to set up the Malaria Vaccine Initiative last year **will soon be helping** the Institute's scientists to make a real impact on the development and testing of a much-needed malaria **vaccine**. Each year, malaria kills about 2 million people; mostly children and mostly in developing countries. Hopes are **pinned on** a vaccine because some **strains** of the parasite have developed **resistance** to drug treatments and mosquitoes are fighting back against traditional insecticides.

A vaccine would offer **cheap and lasting protection**. There are three or four **promising** vaccines in trial at the moment, and money at this stage can speed things up. But history shows that money alone is unlikely to beat malaria. Many groups have been working for years on a vaccine, but the **parasite** that causes the disease goes through a **complex life cycle** and it's an expert at escaping attack from the **human immune system**. Unfortunately any amount of money won't change that.

■ **Words**
grant: money given to an organization for a purpose such as research
used: (which was) used
will ... be helping: the future continuous tense shows that this will happen over a period of time
vaccine: a vaccine contains a harmless form of the germs that cause a disease to prevent people getting the actual disease
pinned on: people hope that a vaccine will be successful
strains: varieties of malaria
resistance: it is no longer harmed by traditional insecticides used to kill it
cheap and lasting protection: it would stop people from getting the disease for a long time and would not cost a lot
promising: it seems likely they will succeed
parasite: a small organism, animal or plant that lives inside a larger one and gets its food from it
complex life cycle: its life has different stages, and is hard to understand
human immune system: the system in our bodies which prevents us from catching diseases

(Source: BBC)

Salt harvesting; a way of survival for Lake Urmia

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — The results of recent studies showed that salts encrusted the Lake Urmia's bed are required to be extracted to prevent from reduction of water level and becoming a salt flat, deputy chief of the Department of Environment (DOE), Masoud Tajrishi, has said.

Lake Urmia, in north-western Iran, was twice as large as Luxembourg and the largest salt-water lake in the Middle East. The volume of water at the lake measured at 30 billion cubic meters in 1997. However, after 2 decades, the water level has drastically decreased to only 2.5 billion cubic meters.

Low precipitation rate, water resources mismanagement and inefficient agricultural methods are believed to be the main culprits for converting the so-called "turquoise solitaire" to a partially dry and white surface.

"Studies conducted by a group of foreign researchers in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy have shown that in the next 500 years, Lake Urmia will be a playa (dry lake) and turns to a salt flat," Tajrishi stated.

A dry lake (or playa Spanish word) is formed when water from rain or other sources, like intersection with a water table, flows into a dry depression in the landscape, creating a pond or lake. If the total annual evaporation rate exceeds the total annual inflow, the depression will eventually become dry again, forming a dry lake. Salts originally dissolved in the water precipitate out and are left behind, gradually building up over time. If the floor of a dry lake is covered with salt, it is known as a salt flat.

"In the last few years, due to shrinking water level in Lake Urmia, its bed generally encrusted with precipitated salts, so salt harvest will not interrupt the restoration programs, but helps to revive the lake," Tajrishi added.



All the lakes in the world have an average lifespan, in fact, the current lakes were once a sea, for example, the Caspian Sea and Lake Van were connected thousands of years ago, but the water gradually shrank and led to their separation.

He went on to say that accordingly, salt mining is possible in case the DOE issue a permit, while withdrawal must be carried out on designated locations in order not to bring irreparable damages to the lake.

All the lakes in the world have an average lifespan, in fact, the current lakes were once a sea, for example, the Caspian Sea and Lake

Van were connected thousands of years ago, but the water gradually shrank and led to their separation, he explained.

Geologically, all the lakes will dry up in the future, and with restoration measures, we try to make their life time longer, he regretted, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Of course, all these measures should be

Charity donates home appliances, livestock to flood victims in North Khorasan

SOCIETY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam also known as Setad-e Ejrai-y-e Farman-e Hazrat-e Emam has donated some 2,000 packages of home appliances as well as 1,000 livestock to the flood victims in northeastern province of North Khorasan.

Heavy rainfall, beginning on March 19 has led to flooding in 28 out of 31 provinces affecting 42,269,129 inhabitants in 253 cities and causing widespread damage to municipal facilities, houses, infrastructure, livestock and crops.

Aref Norouzi, deputy director of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam has explained that the organization has so far provided 3 million home appliances as well as other equipment's to the flood hit regions.

Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam has



committed to provide the areas hit hard with floods with home appliances and livestock, create employment and reconstruct and rehabilitate the houses, Norouzi highlighted.

He went on to say that "we have reached an agreement with Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation to rebuild and rehabilitate 20,000 housing units in flood-stricken areas."

"In North Khorasan we will be creating 3,000 job opportunities as well," he added.

Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam has pledged to pay some 8 trillion rials (nearly \$190 million) in areas hit with floods, he said.

Since the beginning of the floods Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam has dispatched 30,000 home appliances and 10,000 livestock, in addition to creating 50,000 jobs.

7 Persian fallow deer born in wildlife refuge in northern Iran

ENVIRONMENT d e s k **TEHRAN** — Since the beginning of the current year (March 21), seven Persian fallow deer have been born in Dasht-e Naz wildlife refuge in northern city of Sari, Mazandaran province, Fars news agency reported on Friday.

The Persian fallow deer is a rare ruminant mammal. They are nearly extinct today, inhabiting only a small habitat in Khuzestan, southern Iran, two rather small protected areas in Mazandaran (northern Iran), an island in Lake Urmia in north-western Iran, and in some parts of Iraq.

They were formerly found from Mesopotamia and Egypt to the Cyrenaica and Cyprus. Their preferred habitat is open woodland.

Habitat destruction of tamarisk, oak,

and pistachio woodlands, in which the deer are found, has contributed to their population decline. Around 10% of their former range still exists for habitation. The Persian fallow deer is a grazing herbivore, with grass comprising 60% of its diet along with leaves and nuts.

Since the Persian fallow deer is a primary consumer in its ecosystem, it is negatively affected by the destruction of the habitat that supports the primary producers on which it feeds. The decline of the Persian fallow deer's habitat is also likely to have contributed to increased pressure from predators due to the loss of dense areas that can be used as a refuge from predators.

Persian Fallow deer is listed as endangered by International Union for

Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2015.

According to the IUCN the species has experienced numerous threats such as intensive hunting pressure, habitat destruction, natural predation and competition with livestock, and this led to its long decline and near extinction. Today in Iran, habitat destruction, competition with livestock, lack of freshwater and increasing levels of tick infestation are considered significant threats to the species, as well as the effects of small population size, such as isolation and inbreeding.

The overall population of the Persian fallow deer lingered around 250 individuals in 2005, and suffers from the effects of small population size, notably inbreeding. Genetic variation is a major concern in small populations because inbreeding can



cause further loss of genetic variation, an effect known as inbreeding depression.

For Persian fallow deer, little genetic variation exists for the entire species because all the animals that currently exist were bred from a relatively small surviving group that was found living in the wild; genetic studies have shown that the individuals alive today are similar in 95% of their genes.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

Tehran to host autism conference

The 4th conference on autism disorder with a theme of empowering human resources and families will be held in Tehran on February 20. The event is organized by the Charity Foundation for Special Diseases in cooperation with the Special Education Organization, the Ministry of Health, the Welfare Organization and the Health Psychology Association.

Empowering human resources, discussing academic topics revolving around autism, and describing the parent's role in promoting and improving the autistic patient's condition will be among the subjects to be discussed in the conference.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-et, -ette”

■ **Meaning:** small
■ **For example:** This *marionette* performance was the best school program I have seen in my 21 years of teaching.

PHRASAL VERB

Hand something around

■ **Meaning:** to offer something to each person in a group
■ **For example:** Willie helped hand the mugs around.

IDIOM

(As) broad as it's long

■ **Explanation:** this expression means that there is no real difference which alternative is chosen
■ **For example:** A: “Do you prefer the white or the red car.” B: It's as broad as it's long. I'll only have it for a day.”

برگزاری همایش اوتیسم در تهران

چهارمین همایش «اُتیسم، توانمندسازی نیروی انسانی و خانواده» اول اسفند ماه در تهران برگزار می‌شود.

این همایش توسط بنیاد امور بیماری‌های خاص و با مشارکت سازمان آموزش و پرورش استثنایی، وزارت بهداشت، سازمان بهزیستی، و انجمن روان‌شناسی سلامت ایران برگزار می‌شود.

محورهای این همایش، وضعیت منابع انسانی و سرفصل‌های دانشگاهی حوزه اوتیسم در ایران و نقش والدین در ارتقاء و بهبود وضعیت افراد با اختلالات طیف اوتیسم است.

Yemeni drone hits Patriot missile system at Saudi airport in Najran

➔ According to Yemeni sources, this is the third consecutive attack by Yemeni forces' drones on the Saudi airport.

The development came a day after Yemeni soldiers and fighters from Popular Committees launched a drone into the same Saudi region, targeting military aircraft hangars at the airport.

On Tuesday, a Yemeni drone strike on an arms depot at Najran airport also caused a huge fire and considerable damage.

According to Press TV, Yemeni air defense forces and their allies shot down a Saudi-led and U.S.-built MQ-1 Predator combat drone with a surface-to-air missile later in the day.

An unnamed Yemeni source said the unmanned aerial vehicle was brought down as it was on a mission in the skies over Dian area in the Bani Matar district of the coun-



try's western-central province of Sana'a.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a non-profit conflict-research organization, estimates that the Saudi-led war has claimed the lives of over 60,000 Yemenis since January 2016.

The war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN says over 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including 10 million suffering from extreme levels of hunger.

Syria urges civilians to evacuate Idlib ahead of offensive

TEHRAN — The Syrian army has warned civilians to leave the country's northwestern Idlib province as it prepares for a final military campaign to flush terrorists out of the region.

Leaflets were distributed from Syrian helicopters urging residents to leave the entire province in order to protect their lives, the Syrian al-Watan newspaper reported.

The impending operation comes amid an escalation in clashes in the province after the Syrian army launched an offensive to

counter numerous terrorist violations of an earlier de-escalation agreement.

According to Press TV, under the agreement, which was signed between Russia and Turkey last year, Takfiri groups had to withdraw from areas bordering government-controlled areas in the region.

Despite Turkey's pledge to implement the deal, the Takfiri groups have never complied with the agreement and have periodically launched attacks against Syrian troops from the buffer zone.

Bomb in Afghan mosque kills senior cleric during Friday prayers

TEHRAN — A bomb exploded in a mosque in the Afghan capital, Kabul, during Friday prayers, officials said, killing three people including a senior preacher and wounding at least 20 men who had gathered for worship.

The preacher, Samiullah Raihan, was a supporter of the Western-backed Afghan government which Taliban militants are trying to bring down. He was also a member of the National Ulama Council, Afghanistan's top Muslim clerical body.

Firdaws Faramarz, a police spokesman, said explosives were apparently placed near the altar of the Al-Taqwa mosque, a place used by the mosque leader to initiate the prayers.

The neighborhood where the bombing took place is dominated by Sunni Muslims. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack but the Taliban and ISIL fighters regularly stage attacks in the capital.

The explosion hit at a time when dozens of men had gathered for prayers. The death toll could rise, said a second official.

N. Korea blames U.S. for failed summit, urges 'new calculation'

TEHRAN — North Korea said on Friday an "arbitrary and dishonest" U.S. position had resulted in the failure to reach a deal during a second North Korea-U.S. summit, warning the nuclear issue would never be resolved without a new approach.

A spokesman for North Korea's foreign ministry accused the United States of trying to shift the blame for the breakdown of the summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump in February by raising a "completely irrelevant issue". He did not elaborate.

"The underlying cause of setback of the DPRK-U.S. summit talks in Hanoi is the arbitrary and dishonest position taken by the United States, insisting on a method which is totally impossible to get through," the unidentified spokesman said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency.

"The United States would not be able to move us even an inch with the device it is now weighing in its mind, and the further its mistrust and hostile acts toward the DPRK

grow, the fiercer our reaction will be."

The official was referring to North Korea by the initials of its official name - the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

According to Reuters, the statement was the latest criticism of the United States since the failed summit in Vietnam, where Kim had sought sanctions relief in return for the partial dismantling of North Korea's nuclear program.

Trump called for a full roadmap for denuclearization including the transfer of bombs to the United States.

Tension has again mounted in recent weeks. The North fired short-range missiles early this month and Washington unveiled the seizure of a North Korean ship suspected of illicit coal shipments in breach of sanctions.

Kim has set a year-end deadline for the United States to show more flexibility, but Trump and other U.S. officials have brushed that aside, calling for Kim to take action on a commitment to denuclearize.

Unless the United States offered a new method of calcu-



lation, the stalled nuclear talks would never be restarted, the foreign ministry spokesman said.

"And by extension, the prospect for resolving the nuclear issue will be much gloomier," the official said.

Instructions from headquarters: ISIL's new guerrilla manual

TEHRAN — After losing territory, ISIL terrorist group fighters are turning to guerrilla war - and the group's newspaper is telling them exactly how to do it.

In recent weeks, ISIL's al-Naba online newspaper has encouraged followers to adopt guerrilla tactics and published detailed instructions on how to carry out hit-and-run operations.

The group is using such tactics in places where it aims to expand beyond Iraq and Syria. While ISIL has tried this approach before, the guidelines make clear the group is adopting it as standard operating procedure.

According to Reuters, at the height of its power ISIL terrorist group ruled over millions in large parts of Syria and Iraq.

But in March it lost its last significant piece of territory, the Syrian village of Baghouz, and the group has been forced to return to its roots: a style of fighting that avoids direct confrontation, weakening the enemy by attrition and winning popular support.

This attempt to revive ISIL has so far been successful, analysts say, with many global attacks in recent weeks, including in places never before targeted by the group.

"The sad reality is that ISIL is still very dangerous," said Rita Katz, executive director of the SITE Intelligence Group, which tracks extremists. "It has the tools and foundations needed to build insurgencies across the world."

In a rare video published by ISIL's Al Furqan network in April, the group's leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi encouraged followers to fight on and weaken the enemy by attrition, stressing that waging war is more important than winning.

It was more downbeat than his only other video appearance from the pulpit of the Grand al-Nuri Mosque in Mosul in 2014,

when he was dressed all in black and sporting a fancy watch.

In the new video, he sat cross-legged on a mattress as he spoke to three aides. A Kalashnikov rifle rested against the wall behind him — the same type of weapon that appeared in videos of Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden and Baghdadi's predecessor Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who both adopted the guerrilla warfare tactic.

"He appeared as a commander of hardened mujahideen, of an insurgency group, not the pampered leader of a well-off caliphate," said Katz. "His appearance totally mobilized ISIL's supporters all over the world."

the Hindu majority could imperil their livelihoods.

Modi's pledge of a strong stand against a separatist movement in Muslim-majority Kashmir has fuelled tension with nuclear-armed rival Pakistan, although its prime minister, Imran Khan, congratulated Modi on his win.

"Look forward to working with him for peace, progress and prosperity in South Asia," Khan tweeted.

Besides a harder line on national security, BJP members will look to Modi for progress on a project to building a Hindu temple on the site of a mosque demolished by Hindu zealots in the northern holy town of Ayodhya in 1992.

According to Reuters, Modi was under pressure when he began campaigning, losing three state elections in December amid rising anger over farm prices and unemployment.

"Climate change doesn't respect borders, climate change will at some point become irreversible," said one protester, Berlin student Aaron Languth, 21. "That's why we have to do something now."

"The students realize that there's no point going to classes if they don't have a future."

Many of the banners, posters and protest cries reflect a rising sense of frustration and anxiety about inheriting a warming planet with melting ice caps and glaciers that is battered by worsening droughts, floods and storms.

Maduro accuses U.S. of planning to destroy emergency food program

TEHRAN — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro says the United States is poised to destroy a military-run emergency food program which is feeding millions of people across the crisis-hit country.

Maduro said in a televised speech Thursday that Caracas would push ahead even though Washington was preparing sanctions to destroy the food program, known by its Spanish acronym as CLAP.

"Do what you want to do, Venezuela will continue with the Local Supply and Production Committees," he said, referencing the full name of the CLAP program.

Unnamed sources told Reuters that the U.S. would unveil measures against the aid program, which will feed some six million families across Venezuela, within the next 90 days.

The Maduro government launched the plan in 2016 in response to a severe shortage of food, as the oil-rich nation has been struggling under severe economic contraction, hyperinflation, power cuts, and shortages of basic items under harsh U.S. economic sanctions.

Under the program, the government sells boxes of food that include products such as rice, pasta, oil and powdered milk at subsidized prices.

MBA agrees to support Sudan's military if it keeps forces in Yemen

TEHRAN — Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has reportedly pledged to continue supporting Sudan's military transition council if Khartoum agrees to keep its forces in Yemen.



Bin Salman and General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, who goes by the nickname Hemedti, reached the agreement as they met in the Saudi city of Jeddah on Friday.

Last month, Sudan's military announced that it had unseated Bashir and proceeded to imprison him. It then set up the Transitional Military Council (TMC) to rule the country and promised to hand over the power after elections.

But protests, the pressure of which forced Bashir out, have continued in Sudan, with people demanding that more civilians be on the council than military figures during the transition period.

According to Press TV, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have announced their support for the transitional military council. They have also expressed support for measures taken by the council following Bashir's ouster.

On Tuesday, the leading Sudanese protest group Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) called for a general strike as the ruling generals in the country refused to grant a demand for the establishment of a civilian-majority transitional body.

The SPA said that after two late-night negotiation sessions with the army generals, they failed to reach an agreement as the army was still insisting on directing the transition and keeping a military majority on the council.

Sudan, under Bashir, had forged close relations with Saudi Arabia after renouncing ties with Iran.

Yemeni forces release footage on Abu Dhabi airport strike

TEHRAN — Yemen's Joint Operations Command Center has released footage verifying a retaliatory attack on the Abu Dhabi International Airport carried out last year, which had been denied by officials of the United Arab Emirates.

The video shows a Sammad-3 (Invincible-3) unmanned aerial vehicle flying at low altitude before it fires a missile, setting two trucks parked at the airport ablaze.

The attack took place on July 26, 2018 when Yemeni army soldiers, backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees, launched an airstrike against the airport using a domestically-built long-endurance Sammad-3 (Invincible-3) unmanned aerial vehicle.

Abdullah al-Jafri, a spokesman for Yemeni air force and air defense, said at the time that the drone attack on Abu Dhabi International Airport had halted flights to and from the airport, adding that this was the first time that Yemeni forces used a drone to attack the airport.

He added that Yemeni forces will continue to target the infrastructure of countries that have taken part in the aggression against Yemen in future attacks.

Emirati aviation authorities later denied the attack, announcing that an incident involving a supply vehicle in the Terminal 1 airside area of the airport had occurred at around 4 p.m. local time (1200 GMT).

UAE officials also claimed that the development had not affected operations at Abu Dhabi International Airport, and flights continued to arrive and depart as scheduled.

According to Press TV, the UAE is Saudi Arabia's key ally in its deadly war against Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

TEHRAN — Tens of thousands of young climate activists rallied in Germany Friday in the latest mass protest demanding urgent action against global warming, ahead of the weekend's European Parliamentary elections.

At least 5,000 students boycotted classes and demonstrated at Berlin's iconic Brandenburg Gate in what was expected to be one of the largest of protests planned in more than 120 countries, AFP reported.

Large crowds also gathered in Hamburg, Frankfurt and other German cities, mirroring protests across Europe and the world.

In Berlin, they carried signs with messages such as "Climate now, homework later!" and "There is no planet B," while teenage activists chanted: "What do we want? Climate justice! When do we want it? now!"

The initiator of the "Fridays for Future" protests, 16-year-old Swedish school girl Greta Thunberg, again passionately called on youths in Europe and around the world to join the movement.

"It is time for all of us to resist on a massive scale," she wrote in a text co-authored with German activist Luisa Neubauer in the

newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

"We have the feeling that many adults have not yet fully understood that we young people cannot stop the climate crisis on our own," they wrote, calling the challenge "a task for all of humanity."

While many previous protest movements have started on university campuses, the "Fridays" rallies emerged from among school students — a generation that has grown up with predictions of ecological doom yet witnessed what they see as only glacial political change.

Serie C club official banned five years for assaulting rival

The vice-president of Italian third tier club Viterbese has been banned for five years for assaulting the president of a rival club before a Serie C match on Wednesday.

Serie C's disciplinary tribunal said that Arezzo president Giorgio La Cava needed hospital treatment after being kicked and punched by Viterbese's Luciano Camilli near the players' tunnel before kickoff in the promotion playoff match.

Camilli pushed La Cava from behind, kicked his legs and then "hit him with extreme violence with a punch to the head", Serie C said in a statement.

Cava fell to the ground, was helped by first aid officials and taken to hospital for further checks, the statement said. Arezzo won 2-0 to complete a 5-0 aggregate win in the two-leg tie. There was no immediate comment from Viterbese on the incident.

(Source: Eurosport)

IOC praises 2026 candidates, highlights higher support for Milan bid

The International Olympic Committee on Friday heaped praise on two remaining candidate cities for the 2026 Winter Olympics, with Italy's Milan/Cortina bid recording stronger local support than Sweden's Stockholm/Åre proposal.

The IOC Evaluation Commission issued its report following inspection visits to both bidders earlier this year.

"Both projects prioritize legacy and sustainability by capitalizing on winter sports tradition and experience, with first-rate, established World Cup venues, knowledgeable and passionate fans, volunteers and event organizers," said evaluation commission chief Octavian Morariu.

The two bids are the last remaining after Swiss city Sion, Japan's Sapporo, Austria's Graz and 1988 hosts Calgary in Canada all withdrew last year, scared off by the cost and size of the Games or strong local opposition to the Olympics.

Turkey's Erzurum was eliminated from the bidding process by the IOC, which has introduced reforms in recent years to cut bidding costs and organization budgets to make the Games attractive to potential hosts again.

Some 80% of venues in both of the 2026 bids are either existing or temporary structures in an effort to keep construction costs associated with the Games low. The IOC said this had reduced budgets by 20% compared to the 2018 and the 2022 Winter Olympics. "The two candidates have aligned their concepts with their context and local long-term goals. All of this led to massive cost savings and a more sustainable hosting model that is the new reality for the Games," Morariu said.

The evaluation commission said the City of Stockholm would not be signing the host city contract should it be awarded the Games. Åre would do it instead.

(Source: Reuters)

Gianluigi Buffon eyes up management role after retirement

He won the World Cup as a player, but could Gianluigi Buffon be ready to take on the challenge of winning football's biggest prize as a manager?

The 41-year-old Paris Saint-Germain goalkeeper is yet to make a call over whether he will continue playing after the end of the current season.

Buffon, a 2006 World Cup winner with Italy, arrived in Paris last July after making 656 appearances during a 17-year stay at Juventus. His current deal with French champion PSG runs until the end of the season and while no decision has been made on his future as of yet, Buffon says international management holds great appeal.

"I wouldn't want to be the coach for a team, but I'd love to be the coach of a national team," Buffon, Italy's most capped player, told CNN. "I'd love to meet other players, see other places in the world and I want to be known in other places, so the idea of becoming the coach of a national team, to live in another country, to learn another language, adapt to a new lifestyle and another way of thinking, would first and foremost help me improve as a person."

"I feel within me the need to take this challenge on. I feel the essence of life is to say that at the end of my life I can really be satisfied with what I've achieved, because you've lived your life to the full.

"What I mean is you've absorbed a great deal, faced up to and learned from others, and to impart your knowledge to others and take from others too. Leading an active life is the most important thing for me."

(Source: CNN)

Stuttgart booed by fans as relegation looms after play-off draw

Striker Mario Gomez criticised the Stuttgart fans after his team were held to a 2-2 draw at home to second-tier side Union Berlin in the first leg of the Bundesliga relegation play-off on Thursday.

The draw means three-time German champions Stuttgart must beat Union in the capital on Monday to avoid relegation, after finishing third from bottom in the top division.

The home fans booed their team at the final whistle after underdogs Union twice came from behind to keep their promotion dreams alive and leave Stuttgart on the brink of the drop.

"I don't like this atmosphere to be honest," said Gomez, who put Stuttgart 2-1 up in the second half, on Eurosport.

"Obviously we haven't delivered all season and the fans are letting out the emotion. Most of the crowd were behind us today, and I hope we have those fans with us in Berlin."

Having comically deflected Gomez's weak shot past his own goalkeeper earlier in the half, Union defender Marvin Friedrich headed home the away side's second equaliser 22 minutes from the end, to give the Berliners the edge with two away goals going into the second leg.

(Source: AFP)

FIFA shelves plan to expand 2022 World Cup to 48 teams

Football's global governing body FIFA has abandoned plans to expand the 2022 Qatar World Cup to 48 nations, deciding to stick with 32 countries because of the political and logistical complexities of using another Gulf nation.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino's hopes of expanding the Middle East's first World Cup in the region were stymied by the regional diplomatic crisis and the body's demands on host nations to adhere to its human and labour rights requirements.

That means the World Cup will not be expanded until 2026, with FIFA already having approved a format with 48 teams for that tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

A meeting of the FIFA Council in March authorised Infantino to work with Qatar on seeing if it was feasible to use at least one more country in the region to accommodate 16 more matches and present a proposal at meetings in June. "Following a thorough and comprehensive consultation process with the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders, it was concluded that under the current circumstances such a proposal could not be made now," FIFA said in a statement on Wednesday.

"Due to the advanced stage of preparations and the need for a detailed assessment of the potential logistical impact on the host country, more time would be required and a decision could not be taken before the deadline of June. It was, therefore, decided not to further pursue this option."

Real Madrid accuse Mauricio Pochettino of lying



Real Madrid have reacted angrily to Mauricio Pochettino suggesting they turned down a request from Tottenham to stay at their training ground next week ahead of the Champions League final against Liverpool.

Spurs will train at Valdebebas on Thursday and Friday before the game on Saturday and Pochettino, in an interview with Spanish radio station Cadena Cope, said the club had asked Madrid if they could also sleep on the site.

In a light-hearted part of the interview, Pochettino was asked if Tottenham's players would also stay at Valdebebas. Pochettino replied: "No we will stay in an hotel near there. We have asked eh? We have asked but Florentino (Perez) didn't want to allow us."

A laughing Pochettino then added: "He would say, 'the day you coach Madrid is when you can sleep there'. This is the subliminal message no?"

Real Madrid released a statement on Friday, insisting they had received no such request from Tottenham.

The statement read: "Real Madrid is surprised by the suggestions made by Tottenham Hotspur coach Mauricio Pochettino about a supposed request made to our club asking that his team could stay at the Ciudad de Real Madrid before the final of the Champions League.



A FIFA internal report had already concluded the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Saudi Arabia could not join as cohosts unless they restore the economic and travel ties with Qatar that were severed two years ago. The regional diplomatic crisis left neutral Kuwait - which acts as the mediator in the Gulf rift - and Oman as the viable options.

Oman has said it is not eager on hosting games at the FIFA showpiece. Infantino visited Kuwait last month in an attempt to persuade it to host matches in 2022.

But FIFA has now concluded it lacked to the time to prepare a country to host the extra games.

In Kuwait, Jaber Al-Ahmad International

Stadium has 60,000 seats and the capacity at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium is only 26,000. Both venues would require upgrades to be used at the World Cup, putting the spotlight on working conditions and labour rights.

FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura wrote to human rights activists last month to offer assurances that there was going to be "an assessment of human rights risks and potential opportunities associated with a possible expansion".

Qatar has an exemption that allows foreigners to drink alcohol, but Kuwait has a complete ban that would have been problematic for FIFA, which has the Budweiser brewery as a major sponsor.

Cup final means damage limitation for Barca against rejuvenated Valencia



Damage limitation, and a fifth consecutive Copa del Rey, will be the prize if Barcelona beat Valencia on Saturday as their rejuvenated opponents eye a final flourish to their remarkable comeback season.

Victory for Barca would only slightly alleviate the disappointment of failing in the Champions League but another defeat, less than three weeks after the collapse at Anfield, would plunge the club back into crisis.

For Valencia, the possibilities are more positive, given a loss in Seville is expected, while a win would turn a decent campaign into a sensational one.

The numbers favour Barcelona. Twenty-six points separate the two sides in the table, with Barca scoring more goals than Valencia have scored and let in put together.

Valencia's captain Dani Parejo finished their top scorer on nine goals, the same number Lionel Messi had hit before the middle of November. And Valencia have beaten Barcelona only once in 14 attempts, without a success in any of their last eight meetings.

But the records ignore trajectory and momentum. Barca look like a side still hurting, eager to end the season and begin recovering over the summer. Valencia are flying high, fresh from a late surge that saw them snatch fourth place on Saturday.

After beating Real Valladolid, Valen-

FIFA has already had to adapt to cope with taking its showpiece tournament to the Middle East for the first time.

While Qatar won a vote in 2010 on the basis of staging a June-July World Cup, FIFA shifted the tournament from its usual slot because of the fierce summer heat to November 21-December 18, 2022.

■ **'Pie in the sky'**

James Dorsey the author of The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer, said he was not surprised by FIFA's decision on Wednesday.

"I think this was a foregone conclusion," he told Al Jazeera from Indonesia's capital, Jakarta. "We've had weeks of basically discussing hot air and something that was, in my mind, delusional - with other words, Qatar was willing to play this out.

"It certainly became clear after Kuwait and Oman said that they would not be able to accommodate FIFA in an expanded World Cup, and the idea that Infantino was putting forward that an agreement to share the World Cup with Saudi Arabia and the UAE would put an end to the Gulf crisis was basically pie in the sky."

Dorsey said that if the boycott of Qatar continued until the World Cup in 2022, the four blockading countries - Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt - were going to have "a really difficult problem".

"It's a soccer-crazy part of the world; this is the first time that a major sporting event is being held in the Middle East, and in fact in their backyard," he said.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

FIFA Secretary General: Players should 'step out of the field' if racially abused

FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura says the clearest message players can send to fans who are racially abusing them is to walk off the field of play.

The 54-year-old's comments came amid a worrying spate of racist incidents which have tarnished the sport's reputation and put pressure on world football's governing body to do more in the fight against all forms of discrimination.

In March the England national team was subjected to racist abuse during a Euro 2020 qualifying match in Montenegro and Juventus' teenage striker Moise Kean endured monkey chants from opposition fans last month.

"I think to step out of the field, from players, would be a very strong message," Samoura told CNN Sport's Amanda Davies. "But I'm not in their shoes, they're doing it to earn their living. But I think one day it will happen."

Born in Senegal, Samoura became the first woman, and the first non-European, to hold an executive post at FIFA. Since taking office in June 2016, the 56-year-old has embarked on strategy to help clean up world football's governing body and tackle the biggest issues facing the sport.

When it comes to racism, the former UN diplomat knows there is plenty of work to be done.

"Every single incident now is taking a bigger amplitude, which is normal," she said. "There are idiots in the life. There are people who think that they want a world where everybody is the same and I think this is totally wrong."

Governing bodies like FIFA and UEFA, which governs



European football, are also coming under greater scrutiny from high-profile players calling for tougher sanctions for racist incidents. In particular, England and Manchester City star Raheem Sterling has become an unofficial spokesperson in the fight against racism and has criticized the game for not getting to grips with the issue.

Speaking at the Wall Street Journal's Future of Everything Festival in New York Tuesday, Sterling argued that T-shirts and social media posts were no longer enough.

"If you know your team is going to get deducted nine

points, you are not going to say these racist remarks even though you shouldn't have it in your head," he said.

■ **'Zero tolerance'**

As part of its "zero tolerance" approach to racism, FIFA launched the "three-step procedure" in 2017 which gives referees permission to stop, suspend or abandon games due to racist chanting within the stadium.

However, football's governing bodies have faced questions as to whether post-match sanctions are tough enough when there have been discrimination incidents.

For example, Montenegro was fined 20,000 euros (\$22,337) by UEFA and ordered to play its next home game behind closed doors after its fans abused Sterling and his England teammates. "It's a shame on society for people to accept it," Samoura said, explaining the challenges those fighting racism face.

■ **'Evil in society'**

But combating discrimination through sanctions alone will not bring a solution to this issue, says Samoura.

"It's the whole sports world that should be fighting racism," she said. "On the pitch, through communications, through education, through demonstrations, through sanctions."

Now in her third year of the role, Samoura says she has yet to experience any direct discrimination herself but believes her own appointment would have raised eyebrows.

"I'm sure in the eyes of some people I was not supposed to be there. But they have to deal with it," she said.

(Source: CNN)

Marc Wilmots officially named Iran coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Belgium coach Marc Wilmots has been officially named as new head coach of Iran national football team.

The 50-year-old coach signed a contract in Brussels on Wednesday amid growing speculations over his future.

“The contract was signed at the residence of the (Iran) ambassador between Mr. Wilmots and Mehdi Taj (the president of the Iranian football federation),” a diplomat at the embassy told AFP by telephone.

The former Belgian striker had travelled to Tehran last week and was expected to sign a \$1.2 million (1 million euros) a year deal but returned to Belgium with no agreement.

Iranian news reports said the delay was caused by difficulties involved with “banking transfers.”

The contract runs until the end of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

The Belgian led his homeland to the 2014 World Cup and Euro 2016, but was sacked after that tournament in France.

Former Spain and Real Madrid coach Julen Lopetegui, Morocco national team coach Herve Renard and former Netherlands coach Dick Advocaat were also nominated for this position.

Wilmots, who has replaced Carlos Queiroz who left Iran to take over as Colombia coach, was without a team after leaving the Ivory Coast coaching position in November 2017.

Wilmots will start his work as Iran coach in two friendly matches against Syria and South Korea.

Iran, who are top AFC team in the FIFA rankings at No. 21, will host Syria in Tehran on June 6.

Team Melli will also face South Korea five days later at World Cup Stadium in Seoul.

Iran are preparing for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers that begin in the second half of this year.



Ahmadzadeh parts ways with Slask Wroclaw



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian midfielder Farshad Ahmadzadeh has parted company with Polish football club Slask Wroclaw, tuwroclaw.com reported.

The former Persepolis midfielder joined Slask Wroclaw in July and played a total of 27 games in which he scored one goal.

The 26-year-old player left the Polish

team since he failed to meet expectations.

Ahmadzadeh will most likely return to Iran to continue football in his homeland.

He helped Persepolis football team win Iran Professional League back-to-back titles.

Ahmadzadeh had already been linked with a summer move to Tractor Sazi football team.

Iranian athlete Keyhani tests positive for doping



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Asian Games steeplechase champion Hossein Keyhani has been provisionally suspended after testing positive for EPO.

The Athletics Integrity Unit says Keyhani was sent a “notice of allegation” about his disciplinary case. He faces a ban of up to four years for doping, AP reported.

The 29-year-old Iranian won the

men’s 3,000-meter steeplechase, setting new national and Asian Games records at last year’s Asian Games in Jakarta, Indonesia.

He is currently ranked No. 24 in the world. Bahrain’s Olympic silver medallist Eunice Kirwa also received a temporary suspension after testing positive for the same substance.

Irfan Buz nominated to take charge of Tractor Sazi: report

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Turkish football coach Irfan Buz has been reportedly nominated for Tractor Sazi coach.

The Iranian football team parted ways with Belgian coach Georges Leekens after failed to book a place in 2020 AFC Champions League. Now, Tractor Sazi has reportedly offered a two-year contract to the 47-year-old coach.

After his footballing career, Buz began working as a football coach. From 1999-2008, he served a youth coach in German club Barisspor Hackenberg.

Buz was appointed as Bursaspor in 2014. He also coached Gençlerbirliği, Yeni Malatyaspor, and Osmanlispor.

Tractor Sazi have already worked with Turkish coach Ertugrul Saglam for three months in 2018.



Graham Potter could bring the best out of Alireza Jahanbakhsh

Graham Potter’s appointment as Brighton boss has brought in a wave of excitement around the Amex but one player may benefit more than most.

After parting ways with Chris Hughton after the final game of the season, Brighton announced the appointment of Swansea City’s boss Graham Potter as their new manager.

Hughton’s sacking came as a massive shock after the wonderful work he had done with the Seagulls over the last few years. However, Brighton managed to win just twice since the turn of the year,

which is unacceptable for any side in the Premier League.

Graham Potter’s appointment should come as fantastic news for Brighton fans and they can be hopeful of a completely different style of play next season.

Hughton’s philosophy of surrendering possession and hitting the opposition on the break turned out to be his downfall, but Potter is sure to make Brighton a more attack-minded side next season.

One player who will massively benefit from the change is Alireza Jahanbakhsh. A lot was expected of the Iranian after



his stellar season with AZ Alkmaar, for whom he scored and assisted a combined 36 goals in all competitions.

However, Jahanbakhsh failed to register a single goal or assist this campaign, which has largely been down to his side’s style of play rather than his own wrongdoings.

The 25-year-old will thrive when he is given the freedom to showcase his skills in the attacking areas and Potter should look to build his team around Jahanbakhsh next season.

(Source: HITC)

Italy’s Lippi returns as China coach



HONG KONG (Reuters) — World Cup-winning coach Marcello Lippi has been reappointed as head coach of China’s national football team, the Chinese Football Association announced on Friday morning.

The 71-year-old Italian, who stepped down from the post following the country’s quarter-final exit from the Asian Cup in January, has returned to guide the team through the qualifying rounds for the 2022 World Cup.

China will be looking to book a place at the World Cup for the first time since 2002, when the country made their one and so far only appearance at the finals.

Lippi, who led his native Italy to World Cup glory in 2006, was previously appointed to the post in November 2016 but, after an initial upswing in fortunes, the former

Juventus coach was unable to take China to the World Cup finals in Russia in 2018.

He stood down at the end of his contract following a 3-0 loss at the hands of Iran at the Asian Cup and was replaced on an interim basis by Fabio Cannavaro for March’s China Cup matches against Thailand and Uzbekistan.

However, back-to-back defeats in those games were followed by Cannavaro’s decision to not take up the role on a permanent basis, with the former defender choosing to remain at the helm of Guangzhou Evergrande.

Lippi’s first game back in charge will be a friendly match against the Philippines in Guangzhou on June 7 as the Chinese prepare for Asia’s second round of qualifying for Qatar 2022, which kicks off in September.

Iran assistant coaches announced

PLDC — Iran newly-appointed coach Marc Wilmots has named his two assistants.

Spanish coach Manu Ferrera, who was appointed as the youth manager of AA Gent in 2014, has been named as Wilmots’s first assistant.



Thierry Verjans, who has also worked at Standard Liège and Gent, is another assistant coach.

Herman De Landtsheer will serve as the video and match analyst for Team Melli.

Ex-Belgium coach Marc Wilmots was officially appointed as Iran national football team head coach until the 2022 World Cup on Wednesday.

Ex-Inter coach Stramaccioni shortlisted for Esteghlal job

TASNIM — Former Inter Milan coach Andrea Stramaccioni has been shortlisted to take charge of Iranian football club Esteghlal, Tuttomercatoweb.com reported.

The 43-year-old coach has most recently worked at Sparta Prague.

Stramaccioni has also coached Italian club Udinese and Greek giant Panathinaikos.

Spanish coach Jose Murcia, who is currently leading Qatari club Al Shahania, had been linked with the Iranian football club.

Esteghlal parted company with German coach Winfried Schaefer in late April following poor results in the Iran Professional League.

Assistant coach Farhad Majidi replaced Schaefer until the end of the season.

Sayyadmanesh joins Turkish giant Fenerbahce

Fenerbahce have signed a five-year deal with Iranian wonderkid Allahyar Sayyadmanesh from Esteghlal.

Club official Ismail Khalilzadeh made the following statement: “Fenerbahce paid \$850,000 for Allahyar Sayyadmanesh. He will part ways with us at the end of the season.”

Fenerbahce have had a major shift in transfer policy since Ali Koc replaced Aziz Yildirim as club president.

The Yellow Canaries are targeting young players and focusing on developing talent as opposed to signing experienced players on high wages approaching the end of their careers.

Sporting director Damien Comolli brought in Beri Pardo — formerly of Crystal Palace — as Head of Performance Analysis.

Meanwhile, Serhat Pekmezci — who discovered Cengiz Under and Caglar Soyuncu — was brought in from Altinordu as Head Of Academy Recruitment.

Additionally, David Badia from Barcelona as Football Academy Coordinator Fenerbahçe plan to bring in 30-40 players to the academy

Sayyadmanesh was named in the Guardian Next Generation 2018: 60 of the best young talents in world football list.

(Source: Turkish-Football)

Mehdi Torabi winner of Goal of the Week

The-AFC.com has announced that Persepolis FC’s Mahdi Torabi is the winner of this week’s Goal of the Week presented by Allianz for Matchday Six of the 2019 AFC Champions League.

Torabi is the kind of player that can win a game on his own and did just that against Al Sadd, opening the scoring from all of 35 yards before laying on a second for Ali Alipour with an enterprising run and through-pass.

Shanghai SIPG striker Oscar, Sanfrece Hiroshima forward Yusuke Minagawa and Al Ittihad striker Romarinho were vying with Torabi for the award.

The winner was decided by public vote amongst the fans on the AFC’s social media networks.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran fail to book place at FIBA 3x3 World Cup

Iran lost to Qatar and the Philippines in the second day of the FIBA 3x3 Asia Cup on Thursday.

Team Melli had started the competition on high note on Wednesday in Changsha, China.

The Persians started the competition with two wins over Samoa (21-9) and Thailand (21-6).

Iran suffered a narrow 17-16 defeat to Qatar and lost to the Philippines 21-19 in Pool A.

Qatar booked the group’s lone ticket to the tournament’s main draw as the first team.

The Philippines and Iran came second and third respectively.

Samoa and Thailand came fourth and fifth.

(Source: Fiba.basketball)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who engages in various tasks, cannot do any of them properly, and brings himself into troubles.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



Painting
■ An exhibition of paintings by Shaqayeq Suzankar is underway at Saless Gallery. The exhibit named "Monodrama" will run until June 5 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan Ave.



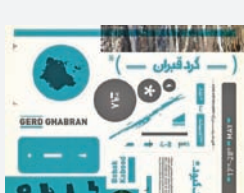
■ Paintings by Qasem Hajizadeh are currently on view in an exhibition at Moon Gallery. The exhibition will be running until June 11 at the gallery that can be found at 26 Golestan Blvd., Africa Ave.



■ Saeideh Hatami, Behzad Khodai, Gilda Hashemzadeh, Nilufar Sasani and three other artists are displaying their latest paintings in an exhibition at Haft Samar Gallery. The exhibit runs until June 3 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motehari Ave.



■ A collection of paintings by Saeid Emdadian is on display in an exhibition at Shervah Gallery. The exhibit titled "Nature" runs until June 3 at the gallery located at 9 Khojasteh Alley, Daemi St. off Fatemi St.



■ Babak Kabud is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery. The exhibit named "Gerd Qabran" will run until May 28 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.



Installation
■ Sets of installation by Mona Aqababai are currently on display in an exhibit at O Gallery. The exhibition titled "Reading on Surface" runs until June 10 at the gallery located at 18 Shahin St., Sanai St.



Multimedia
■ Paintings and drawings by a group of artists, including Sudeh Sheida, Farideh Mohammadi, Asal Hemmatian, Fatemeh Rasa, Ali Fallah and Zahra Derogar, are on view in an exhibition at Shalman Gallery.



The exhibit named "In Praise of Nature" will run until May 29 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.



■ Yasamin gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by a large number of artists, including Omid Ebrahimi, Hashem Jafari, Sahar Gudarzi and Amir Mobasher.

The exhibit entitled "Variety" will be running until May 29 at the gallery located at 70 South Kheradmand St. off Karim Khan St.



■ An exhibition of drawings and videos by Nogol Mazlumi is underway at Aran Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Heroes, Gallants, the Famous" runs until June 7 at the gallery located at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.

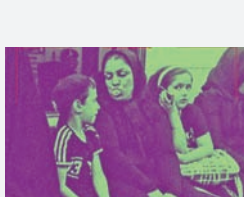


Photo
■ Photos by Mohammad Ashiani, Hannaneh Heidari and Morteza Sediqifard are on display in an exhibition at the gallery of the Tehran Art University. The exhibit titled "B" will run until May 30 at the gallery located at Balavar Alley, Englelab Ave.

Journeyman takes intl. distribution on “Women with Gunpowder Earrings”

A R T **TEHRAN** — The ArtHouse Cinematheque, an international sales agent, announced on Thursday that Journeyman Pictures, one of the world's leading distributors of captivating and original documentary films, has acquired international rights to Iranian filmmaker Reza Farahmand's acclaimed "Women with Gunpowder Earrings".

The deal between the two sides has been signed at the Cannes Film Market, the business counterpart of the Cannes Film Festival, which is currently underway on the French Riviera.

The film produced at Iran's Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), is about Noor, a young Iraqi female journalist, who finds herself and her camera on the frontline of the Iraqi army's move into Daesh territory. She evocatively reveals the painful stories of women and children from Daesh families. But when she begins to question the treatment of them by the Iraqi army Noor soon becomes part of the story.

According to a Guardian report, in April 2018, some of the women who shared similar lives with this movie's subjects were sentenced to death or life imprisonment in Iraq.

"Women with Gunpowder Earrings" has been screened in over 20 international events, including the 71st Locarno International Film Festival, and has won several awards.

In December 2017, the film won the best feature-length documentary award at the 11th Cinema Verite festival, Iran's major international festival of documentary cinema that is organized by the DEFC every year.

The Iranian Film Festival in the Czech capital of Prague named the film best documentary in January.

Earlier in December 2018, the film was picked as best documentary at the 15th International Resistance Film Festival in Tehran.



Iraqi journalist Noor in a scene from "Women with Gunpowder Earrings".

Art exhibit on Khorramshahr underway at Tehran gallery



An art enthusiast visits "Khorramshahr + 30" at Tehran's Farmanfarma Gallery on May 17, 2019. (Honaronline)

1 → The liberation of Khorramshahr and daily life after the liberation of the city have also been regarded in the showcase.

Works by the photographers Jasem Ghazbanpu, Mohammad Farnud and Mohsen Tastani who covered the military operation during which Khorramshahr was liberated, have been selected for the exhibition.

Over 40 other artists, including Peyman

Abdali, Saeideh Afrukhteh, Omid Shalmani, Mehdi Moqimnejad and Behruz Badruz, are collaborating in organizing the event, which will run until May 31.

The gallery can be found at 2nd Araabi St., North Kheradmand St. in the Karim Khan neighborhood.

The exhibition has been organized to celebrate the 38th liberation anniversary of Khorramshahr. The city was liberated on May 24, 1982.

Zlin festival picks Iranian films



A scene from short animated movie "Didi and Boodi - a Little Cheat" by Iranian director Mona Abdollah Shahi.

A R T **TEHRAN** — A lineup of eight Iranian films are competing in various sections of the 59th Zlin Film Festival, which opened in the Czech city on Friday.

The lineup includes feature films "Doch" by Amir Mashhadiabbas, "Knockout" by Gholamreza Ramezani and "Here My Village" by Abbas Aram.

"Didi and Boodi - a Little Cheat" by

Mona Abdollahshahi, "Am I a Wolf?" by Amir-Houshang Moein and "The Scary Night of Lomo" by Sareh Shafipur are competing in the animation section of the festival.

Short animations "The Fisherman and Spring" by Seyyed Hassan Soltani and "I Count the Rabbits" by Reyhaneh Kavosh are also competing in the international festival of children's films, which will run until June 1.

Anthology of Arabic poetry published in Persian

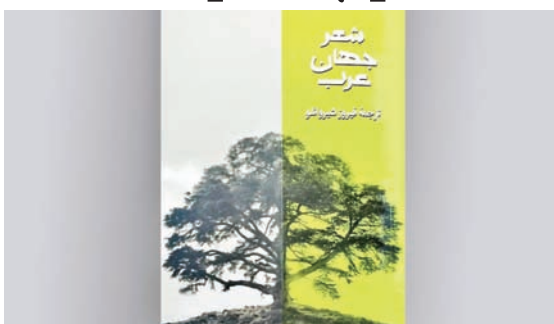
CULTURE **TEHRAN** — A selection of Arabic poetry by writers from Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Tunisia, Algeria and Syria has been published in Persian in a single book named "Arab World's Poetry".

The poems have been selected and translated by Firuz Shirvanlu for the collection published by the Ruzbehan publishing company in Tehran.

The book carries poems by Ali Ahmad Said Esber, a Syrian writer who is also known by the pen name Adonis or Adunis.

Poems by his fellow writers Nizar Tawfiq Qabbani, Muhammad al-Maghout and Walid Ikhlas are also seen in the collection.

Work by Badr Shakir al Sayyab, Abd al-Wahhab al-



Front cover of "Arab World's Poetry".

Bayati and several other Iraqi poets has also been selected for the book.

The anthology also contains poems from Palestinian writers, including Mahmoud Darwish and Samih al-Qasim al Kaissy.

Several Lebanese poets, including Khalil Gibran and Yusuf al-Khal, also have works in this book.

The book has also been enriched with poems from Egyptian writers such as Salah Abdel Sabour and Ahmed Abdel Moaty Hegazy, and Tunisian poet Aboul-Qacem Echebbi, and Algerian writer Anna Grégoire.

Persian writers such as Gholamreza Emami, Mohammadreza Aslani, Ahmadrza Ahmadi have penned prefaces to "Arab World's Poetry".

“Big Bang Theory” finale gets galactic ratings to win week

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In its last blast, "The Big Bang Theory" topped the TV ratings by a light-year.

The back-to-back, two-episode finale of the nerdy CBS comedy's 12-season run drew 18.5 million live viewers Thursday night to easily win the week, the Nielsen company said Tuesday.

Sunday night's much-ballyhooed finale of HBO's "Game of Thrones" was a distant second with 13.61 million live viewers.

"Game of Thrones," however, had a comparable 18.4 million viewers when HBO's same-night reruns and streaming services are included, making it the most-watched episode of any kind in the history of the cable channel.

Despite mixed fan reaction to the eighth and final "Thrones" season, it was a ratings winner throughout, competing with and usually beating shows that appear in three times more homes. The viewer numbers also grew as the season progressed, with the season premiere setting a record that was topped by three subsequent episodes.

"Big Bang" was a colossal ratings winner that helped keep CBS the top network for

much of its record run of 279 episodes, the most ever for a multi-camera series.

Thursday night's hour-long finale saw the show's group of geeky misfits take one last trip together to support married couple Sheldon (Jim Parsons) and Amy (Mayim Bialik) after they won the Nobel Prize in physics.

A prequel spinoff, "Young Sheldon," is pulling similar numbers in its second season and will extend the life of the franchise. It finished third in last week's ratings in a timeslot just after the finale.

"Unraveling the Mystery: A Big Bang Farewell," a special that aired later the same night, was fourth.

That two-hour "Big Bang" block helped give CBS six of the top 10 shows and an easy win of the week in primetime with an average of 6.5 million viewers. NBC averaged 4.5 million, ABC 3.8 million, Fox 1.9 million, Univision with 1.25 million, ION Television with 1.2 million, Telemundo 1.1 million and the CW 790,000.

ESPN and TNT rode the NBA playoffs to the top two spots among cable networks. ESPN averaged 2.7 million nightly viewers, TNT 2.6 million.

Theme park to star “Hunger Games,” “Twilight”

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Some of Lionsgate's most popular film franchises from "Hunger Games" to "Twilight" will be brought to life when the studio opens what it calls the world's first vertical theme park in China this summer.

Lionsgate Entertainment World will offer several adventures including a virtual reality motorcycle ride based on "Twilight", a maximum-security prison breakout like in "Escape Plan" and a replica of The Capitol lobby from "Hunger Games", complete with shops where guests can fashion themselves in the film's distinctive couture.

More than 25 rides and virtual reality experiences will pack a sleek, futuristic looking bean-shaped building that stands 10 stories high. The theme park, which will also include attractions based on films such as "Divergent", "Now You See Me" and "Gods of Egypt", is scheduled to open in July on Hengqin Island located in Zhuhai, China.

"We found a way to create this theme park experience inside of one box over multiple floors," said Jenefer Brown, senior vice president of Global Live and Location Based Entertainment at Lionsgate.

"We created experiences that are immersive, that tell stories and are organic to the brands," she said. "It's a mix of all the cutting-edge attractions that you'll find in entertainment right now."

Brown said Lionsgate decided to create its first theme park to expand their international brand into China where films like "Twilight" and "Gods of Egypt" are popular. She said the studio hopes to capitalize off Zhuhai's emerging status as a tourist destination and its proximity to Macau, which is considered the "Las Vegas of China." She said the Chimelong Ocean Kingdom theme park in Zhuhai has already drawn tens of millions of people. The Santa Monica, California-based company expects to have around 1.5 million park goers this year.

"We would complement Macau," Brown said. "The idea is to have Vegas and Orlando right next to each other and create this super tourist destination. ... People are already coming here. But we're on the early side in terms of development on the island. It's growing into this dedicated kind of entertainment tourist place and virtual containment vessel."