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Zarif proposes regional non-aggression pact

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that he has proposed "regional non-aggression pact" during his three-day visit to Iraq.

While in Iraq, Zarif held talks with senior Iraqi officials including President Barham Salih, Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi and political leaders such

as Ammar al-Hakim, leader of the Iraqi National Wisdom Movement.

Zarif returned to Tehran on Monday. "In #Iraq, where I've held substantive and productive meetings with the President, PM, Speaker, FM & leadership of two parliamentary coalitions. Proposed regional non-aggression pact: #Neighbors-First," Zarif tweeted on Sunday. →2

Larijani retains post as Majlis speaker, new vice speaker elected

TEHRAN — The members of the Majlis (parliament) on Sunday voted to choose their favorites each to the presiding board, which includes parliament speaker, two of his deputies and secretaries.

Based on the results, Ali Larijani succeeded to remain in his post as parliament speaker for another and last year of the incumbent parliament.

Larijani received 155 votes while his rival Mohammad Reza Aref, the leader

pro-reform Hope faction in parliament, won the votes of 105 MPs.

Massoud Pezeshkian, a senior reformist lawmaker, was also reelected as the first vice-speaker and Abdolreza Mesri, a principlist, as the second vice-speaker.

Ali Motahari, who had served as the second deputy speaker for the last three years, failed to secure a place in the presidium.

Tens of thousands of anti-Netanyahu Israelis protest in Tel Aviv

TEHRAN — Tens of thousands of Israelis gathered in the central city of Tel Aviv, protesting proposed legislation granting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu immunity from prosecution on a series of corruption charges.

The protesters outside the city's Museum of Art also called for protecting Israel's democratic identity from government

overreach, LA Times reported.

The rally was a show of force by the new opposition parties a month after Netanyahu was reelected to his fourth successive term as prime minister.

Yair Lapid of Israel's Blue and White party compared Netanyahu's efforts to consolidate his power to Turkey's authoritarian President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. →13

ARTICLE
Ebrahim Fallahi
Tehran Times journalist

China is Trump's "safety valve" in disrupted oil market

In the past few weeks the oil market has been witnessing great volatility, as the quivers of the U.S.-China trade war once again hit the fragile market.

Last week, oil prices experienced the sharpest drop this year as concerns over a global economic slowdown caused by the China-U.S. trade spat once again permeated the markets.

The sudden fall came in a weekend in which the prices were following a steady upward trend toward \$74 per barrel on escalating tensions between Iran and the U.S. and its allies in the region.

High oil prices are not in line with the policies of the Trump administration so maintaining a balance between the oil prices driving factors and the deterrent ones, has been for long, a great headache for the white house and China has played the major weighting role which has come to rescue Trump whenever his decisions push the prices in the white house's opposite direction.

Considering the great worries that is spreading across the markets all around the world, it seems wise to ask, is the trade war really as concerning as it sounds? Or maybe Trump's sudden outrageous clashes with China is all part of a conspiracy plan to keep the oil prices in a safe zone?

Trump and driving factors
Since the beginning of 2019, several factors have been constantly pointed out as big influencers in the oil market, among which the trade war between U.S. and China, the tensions in the Middle East, OPEC+ deal, supply disruptions in OPEC and non-OPEC nations like Libya, shale oil productions and most importantly the U.S. President Trump's constant interferes with the market, can be mentioned.

Some of the above mentioned factors have been supporters of the oil prices and some are pushing them down. The tensions in the Middle East, supply disruptions and OPEC+ production cut deal are three main drivers of the oil prices while the trade war and rising shale production are two major heavy weights which are keeping the prices down. →5

Scholar says Iran's independence is a challenge to U.S.

By Negar Asadi
TEHRAN — Modjtaba Sadria, a prominent scholar, says that Iran's independence is a serious challenge to unipolarism of the U.S.

"Iran is the most powerful, independent and political and military might in the region. And this independence bothers the U.S. policy makers," Sadria said in an interview with the Tehran Times on Sunday. Tension has been rising between Iran and the United States since President Donald Trump ordered U.S. pullout from the multilateral 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and ordered sanctions

against Iran. The conflict intensified as the U.S. ended waivers for buyers of the remaining importers of the Iranian oil last month.

The Trump's White House has said the purpose behind such sanctions campaign is to bring Iran to the negotiating table.

However, Sadria, a psychoanalyst, said, "You cannot order a powerful and independent country. So, you are forced to negotiate with it which is not a desire of the U.S. policy makers."

He added that the U.S. is seeking to diminish the power and independence of Iran.

However, he said, "So far, they have not succeeded."

"Maybe economically, and I emphasize maybe, they have caused some challenges for the Iranian society, but Iran's political will and military power and also independence have not been reduced," the leading scholar stated.

'U.S. seeks to revive and maintain unipolarism'

Sadria also said that the unipolar world have been seriously challenged yet the United States is working hard to revive and maintain it. →2

Trump's three-month ultimatum to two controversial cabinet members

TEHRAN — Sources in the United States have revealed that President Donald Trump, while expressing dissatisfaction over the U.S. foreign policy, has set a three-month deadline for the survival of John Bolton and Mike Pompeo.

Noornews, a news website close to the secretariat of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council, has reported that the decline in Trump's popularity in opinion polls in critical states such

as Pennsylvania and Florida coupled with an increase in domestic criticism of the White House over intensified rhetoric against Iran have led to an anger by Trump vis-a-vis his secretary of state and national security adviser.

Setting this three-month deadline, which according to Trump may even be shorter, has led to intensification of Pompeo's activities in Europe and elsewhere and his quest for indirect

negotiation with Iran for an alternative nuclear agreement.

When did the ultimatum begin?

The deadline was kicked off on May 16, just the day Trump in a Twitter message denied the existence of any differences between himself and his cabinet, saying the tensions were caused by media hallucinations such as the New York Times. →3

Washington Post dirty deal with MBS on Khashoggi

TEHRAN — The Washington Post which turned into a media critic of Al Saud after the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, the columnist of this newspaper, finally decides to reduce the extent and severity of his opposition to Riyadh in exchange for a large hush money from the Saudis.

According to Nour News (a website close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council) the Washington Post while apparently introducing himself as a critic of the Saudi regime and Mo-

hammad bin Salman (MBS), make a secret and dirty deal with Riyadh that it's result is publishing a fake news about Iran's role in destroying Saudi's oil infrastructure.

This newspaper claimed that Iran participated in last week drone attacks at Aramco Oilfield, which Yemenis claimed responsibility for it. The Washington Post which turned into a media critic of Al Saud after the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, the columnist of this newspaper, finally decides

to reduce the extent and severity of his opposition to Riyadh in exchange for a large hush money from the Saudis.

On the contrary, the Saudis have urged the Washington Post officials, in addition to reducing their attacks on Riyadh in pursuit of the murder of Khashoggi, to publish some targeted and false news aimed at increasing the power of Al Saud's psychological operations, especially in the West and Southwest Asia. →13



Night of Destiny observed in Imam Reza (AS) shrine

People congregated at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad on the Night of Destiny, seeking God's forgiveness and engaging in various acts of worship, on Sunday night.

The Night of Destiny, known famously as 'Laylat al-Qadr', is a significant night during the month of Ramadan for Muslims all over the world. For it was on this blessed night that the Quran was revealed over 1400 years ago, as a guiding light and mercy.

This night, is found during the last ten nights of Ramadan and will fall most likely on an odd night.

ARTICLE
Martin Love
Political analyst from North Carolina

There are good reasons why Iran won't fold to U.S. extremism

President Donald Trump claims the vast Military Industrial Complex, otherwise known as the MIC, which has become everything Eisenhower in 1960 warned against, is somehow "pressuring" him in to war on Iran.

One would imagine, however, that it's not so much the MIC (or the Pentagon per se), but rather malign if not psychopathic individuals in the administration like Mike Pompeo and John Bolton who have had the President's ear for the past year who began with urging Trump to can the JCPOA and reimpose economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic, along with the Zionists who have been trying to drum up a U.S.-led war on Iran for decades.

Additionally, there are figures like Patrick Shanahan, the acting "defense" secretary, who knows next to nothing about the military but quite a bit about corporations like Boeing which are part of the corporate gravy train standing to profit from military action anywhere. And even Bolton is apparently working out of the Pentagon mostly, not the White House, as National Security Advisor to Trump.

The provocations against Iran have become increasingly intense, and already there have been alleged attacks on an Aramco facility in Arabia and some damage to three ships in the Persian Gulf — attacks blamed on Iran. But even a moron knows, given history since the Vietnam War, that these are false flag ventures. The mere thought Iran, at this point, would be inviting U.S. military action has to be entirely unbelievable.

Iran is postulating some kind of non-aggression pact between countries on the Persian Gulf, and Iran's leadership has stated clearly that it does not want further hostilities with the U.S. And more importantly, on national television in the U.S., Trump has also stated he does not want to fight Iran, at least militarily. He seems largely opposed to stupid wars, including the war on Iraq in 2003 — perhaps the greatest single mistake since the Vietnam War in the 1960s. →7

Iran says no direct or indirect talks with U.S.

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi dismissed on Sunday any “direct or indirect” talks with the United States.

“There are no direct or indirect talks between Iran and the U.S.,” he said.

On Saturday, Kuwaiti media outlets, quoting the country’s Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled al-Jarallah, reported that negotiations between Iran and the U.S. have started.

Iran has already insisted that the first requirement for talks with the U.S. is that Washington must first return to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and lift all sanctions.

Kamal Kharrazi, chief of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, said on May 12 that U.S. President Donald Trump’s act in quitting the JCPOA “has left no room for trust and negotiation”.

President Hassan Rouhani said on May 20 that U.S. claims of seeking negotiations with Iran are “mere lies”.

The U.S. has the illusion to force Iran into submission by introducing the worst ever sanctions on the country, Rouhani remarked. Talking during a meeting with religious figures and clerics, Rouhani said he generally supports negotiation and diplomacy, but under the current situation there will be no negotiation with the U.S.

“During my last year’s visit to the United Nations, five well-known leaders of the world mediated to hold talks between him and the U.S. president [Donald Trump]. A year before that, the U.S. Department of State requested to hold talks for eight times. However, the current situation is not right for talks. Today, it is right to resist,” Rouhani stated.

During a meeting with authorities on May 14, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said, “Negotiating is poisonous as long as the U.S. continues with the same course of action; besides, negotiating with the current government of the United States is all the more poisonous.”

Scholar says Iran’s independence is a challenge to U.S.

Washington has faced an “independent and powerful” Iran which is an obstruction to the White House to make decisions for the Middle East.

He also said that Russia and China have also been challenging unipolarism of the U.S.



“In the last 20 years, Russia has succeeded to boost its capacity of decision-making which was weakened during tenure of Boris Yeltsin [former Russian president]. But Putin has been successful in this respect. Today, Russia is able to adopt a policy and implement it. Crimea is the biggest example. The Kremlin adopted a policy and implemented it despite all the pressure and sanctions,” he explained.

Commenting on China’s role in challenging U.S. hegemony, he said China has had the power to force Washington to recognize its capacities and possibilities which could bother the U.S. economy.

“U.S. seeks to generate revenues through sale of weapons” Sadria also said that the United States is seeking to generate money through selling weapons to certain countries in the region.

“I think the U.S. administration today is seeking to reduce weakness of its economy. As for many administrations before this one, one of the easiest and fastest ways to generate revenue is weapons industry and selling arms and weapons.”

He noted that weapons industry of the U.S. has two components: One is the weapons and military equipment and the other is the human resources or the personnel and military experts or the mercenaries.

“Sending of troops to another region requires agreement of Congress, but sending mercenaries does not need that,” he stated.

He added, “It has been announced officially that the U.S. has sent 1,500 troops to the region, but there are many more mercenaries who accompany the very sophisticated military equipment without any official permission.”

So, Trump is making money through both selling weapons and sending troops and mercenaries.

Claiming an Iranian threat, the Trump administration declared on Friday an emergency to bypass Congress and expedite billions of dollars in arms sales to various countries -- including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued a statement and put the value of the sales at \$8.1 billion.

Iran’s security plans for Persian Gulf: non-aggression pact

By Javad Heirani

TEHRAN (MNA) — Iran’s security pattern in the region relies on enforcing discipline with cooperation of regional countries and without interference of foreigners to form a “natural order”.

After a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart on May 26, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that he had suggested signing a non-aggression pact with Persian Gulf littoral states several times. As he said, the proposal is still on the table.

Underlining that Iran is a fan of having best relations with Persian Gulf countries, he added that “everyone welcomes suggestions and negotiations about removing tensions.”

As the Iranian foreign minister announced, this is not the first time that Iran puts forward such a suggestion. Zarif had made a proposal for signing a non-aggression pact with Saudi Arabia a while back. He had also suggested the holding of a ‘Regional Dialogue Forum’.

The suggested plan proves Iran to be right since security in the region would be achieved via cooperation of all regional countries and a desirable and stable regional discipline is obtainable without interference of foreigner countries.

The plan can become operational step by step in case of building confidence among regional countries.

At the present time, the security pattern of the Persian Gulf region is faced with a ‘security puzzle’, due to the presence of foreign powers. Therefore, security activities in the region are not going on under regular circumstances. The competition among great powers has automatically reinforced the competition among regional powers, which is difficult to be changed. (see the full text on the Tehran Times website)

Zarif proposes regional non-aggression pact

During a joint press conference with Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohamed Ali Alhakim, Zarif said that Iran sought the best of relations with the Persian Gulf littoral countries and would welcome any proposals for dialogue and de-escalation toward that end.

He added that Tehran would, however, forcefully confront any attempts at waging a military or economic campaign against the country, according to Press TV.

Alhakim said Iraq is in contact with all regional countries to defuse tensions between Iran and the United States.

Zarif also met with Mohamed al-Halbousi, the speaker of the Council of Representatives of Iraq (parliament).

Halbousi warned against the potential fallout from regional tensions and stressed that his country favored the resolution of the current situation as well as the security and well-being of all its neighbors.

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.

Also, U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Friday that he would send about 1,500 troops to the Middle East.

In an interview with CNN aired on May 21, Zarif said that the U.S. is playing a “very



dangerous game” by increasing its military presence in the region.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have welcomed the United States’ exit from the 2015 nuclear deal and reimpo-

sition of sanctions against Iran. These three countries are repeating what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is claiming about Iran.

Netanyahu has been claiming that Iran is

seeking to revive the Persian Empire. Iran has been a vocal critic of the Saudi-led military coalition against the fellow Arab nation of Yemen and criticized the suppression of the Bahraini people who are seeking equal rights.

On Monday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov praised Zarif’s proposal for a nonaggression pact with the Persian Gulf states, saying it can serve as the first step to reduce tensions in the region.

“Perhaps, agreeing not to attack one another is the first step toward reducing tensions. We would consider such an agreement as a proper one,” Lavrov said at a press conference after his talks with Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parrilla.

He also said Zarif’s suggestion was in line with a “well-known and old” Russian initiative to create a “security concept” for the Persian Gulf, which would include Arab states, including the Persian Gulf Arab states, and Iran.

“I believe that anyway we should move on toward creating such a concept, such a security system, and we should start with easy steps, such as being transparent about military matters, inviting each other to take part in drills and elaborating other measures aimed at boosting trust,” Sputnik quoted Lavrov as saying.

He stated that Russia would like to see the Arab League, the European Union, the United Nations, and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council as the guarantors of such a security system.

Rouhani felicitates Lebanon on Liberation Day

POLITICAL TEHRAN — President Rouhani of Iran sent a message to Lebanese President Michel Aoun offering congratulations on the Liberation Day.

The Liberation of southern Lebanon from the Israeli occupation in 2002 is marked as Liberation Day.

“The nature of the Zionist regime, which comes from its aggressive characteristic, proved that the only way for confronting aggressors is resistance and steadfastness,” Rouhani stated.

Following is full text of his message published by the presidential website:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Your Excellency Mr Michel Aoun, President of Lebanon, Hello and may the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be with you,

I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations to Your Excellency and the noble Lebanese nation on the anniversary of liberation of Southern Lebanon from the occupation of the Zionist Regime, which was realized through self-sacrifice and devotion of the strong people of Lebanon.

The nature of the Zionist Regime, which comes from its aggressive characteristic, proved that the only way for confronting aggressors is resistance and steadfastness. I hope that under Your Excellency’s leadership, this path continues until the full liberation of Lebanese land.

The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to stand by the Lebanese government and nation like before, in line with the will of the Lebanese nation, army and resistance to defend their country and maintain unity.

I wish Your Excellency health and success and the noble people of Lebanon prosperity and felicity.

Iran rejects talks with U.S., says ready to negotiate with Persian Gulf states

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Sunday rejected any “direct or indirect” talks with the United States, however, he offered that Tehran is ready to negotiate with “each and every country” in the Persian Gulf region.



“Just visited Oman, will go to Kuwait & Qatar next: No direct/indirect talk with US, but ready to negotiate with each and every country in the Persian Gulf for a balanced & constructive relations based on mutual respect & interests,” he tweeted on Sunday.

Araghchi was in Muscat on Sunday. He met with Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah.

During the meeting, Araghchi rejected recent claims about the start of talks between Iran and the U.S. for reducing tensions between the two sides.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to establish balanced and constructive relations with all countries in the Persian Gulf region based on mutual respect and interests,” Araqchi told the Omani chief diplomat. He noted that Iran is not seeking to provoke tension in the region.

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.

Also, U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Friday that he would send about 1,500 troops to the Middle East.

Araghchi suggested that peace and stability in the region can be guaranteed if the sanctions on Iran are lifted and all regional countries enjoy benefits of economic cooperation.

He added, “Imposition of sanctions against Iran is a defeated policy which had been tested for many times.”

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, to 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.



IN THE NAME OF GOD
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 98/122-04/03

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Single-Stage Tender :
Broadcasting the TV network of AL ALAM News in DVB-S/MPEG2 format with Constant Bit Rate of 3.5 Mbps on Eutelsat 7WA @ 7.3° West, MENA Beam /KU Band for three years in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:
From 29th May 2019 (1398/03/08) by 04:00 p.m. on Monday 03th June 2019 (1398/03/13) with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of receiving the tender document:
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept. ,4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex, Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali –Assr Ave, Tehran, Iran

The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No. IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 32150 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 4/500/000/000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed packages/envelopes should be submitted in another big sealed package/envelope no later than 4 p.m. on Saturday 06th of July 2019 (1398/04/15) and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening envelopes:
The date of opening the envelopes is on Sunday 7th July , 2019 at 03:00 p.m (1398/04/16) in the office of Financial Vice President . In case of complete content in the envelope A , the envelope B including contract draft ,Technical specifications and qualitative assessment analysis will be considered and opened. The Envelope C will be opened of only those eligible participants who meets the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee at the same time and place.
Fore more information please see :
www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and <http://iets.mporg.ir/> Tel: 00982122167053

Purchasing (Kala) Dept. of IRIB

Trump says not pursuing regime change in Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump has explicitly stated that his administration is not seeking a regime change in Iran and does not want to see any terrible thing happen in the region.

During a joint press conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on Monday, Trump said that his main goal is to ensure that Tehran will not be developing what he called nuclear weapons, Al Jazeera reported.

That is while Iran has repeatedly said that Tehran is not seeking to produce nuclear weapons and that its nuclear activities are being closely watched by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Moreover, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has stressed that production, stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons is forbidden and the Islamic Republic considers the pursuit and possession of nuclear weapons as a grave sin.

During his presser with Abe, the U.S.

president went on to say that Iran "has a chance to be a great country with the same leadership."

"We are not looking for regime change" in Iran, Bloomberg quoted Trump as saying. Trump also told reporters that he and the Japanese leader had talked about Iran, noting, "Nobody wants to see terrible things happen, especially me."

"I do believe Iran would like to talk and if they'd like to talk, we'll talk also," Trump stated, adding that Abe has a "very good relationship with Iran."

For his part, Abe said Japan "would like to do whatever it can. Japan and the U.S. should collaborate closely so that tensions surrounding Iran are lessened and do not result in armed conflict."

Having hosted Trump, Japan's Abe is considering a visit to Iran next month, Japanese media recently reported. The reports said that Abe's visit would be likely in mid-June. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif visited Tokyo earlier this month.



Setting dollar on fire would be attack on enemy's weak point: civil defense chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The commander of Iran's Civil Defense Organization has said if Iranians set to fire dollar bills it would be a direct attack on the enemy's weak point.

"If the will is created in the country where the American dollar is set on fire by people in the streets and convergence is created to boost the national currency's value, it will be a full-blown attack to the enemy's weak point," Brigadier-General Qolamreza Jalali told a meeting of the organization's personnel on Sunday.

After Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal back in 2017, the Iranian currency, rial, started a downfall in value, going from 42,000 to now 14,000 against the greenback.

The U.S. withdrew from the joint comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018, vowing to drive Iran's oil exports down to zero.

In the months that followed, the U.S. also imposed sanctions on Iranian steel, auto, and some other industries, contrary to what had been stipulated in the nuclear deal.

In periodic reports since the deal's implementation in

early 2016, the International Atomic Energy Agency has confirmed Iran's commitment to it.

Also in his speech, Jalali said that Iran would block its citizens' access to social media if war were to break out with the U.S.

"America uses social media for psychological operations to influence Iranians' minds."

He added that Washington has the opportunity to exercise soft power in exploiting both Iran's lack of a defensive national intranet and its economy.

The U.S. will use social media for placing its forces on a war footing against the Islamic Republic, he noted.

However, Jalali said the possibility of a war between the two countries was minimal.

Social media and the effect of sanctions, he said, provided a two-pronged weapon for the U.S. which Iran would counter, he added.

"We will close social media and stop the U.S. directing Iranian public opinion through it," said Jalali. He added, "The U.S. will also lose its leverage of economic sanctions if war breaks out."

On a visit last month to Bushehr, the site of Iran's sole nuclear reactor, Jalali said that controlling social networks at the time of crises is a "must" that should "be seriously considered".

The Islamic Republic has been talking about replacing the internet by a national network since 2010 – it was then expected to be fully operational within five years.

Iran's national information network (NIN) is 80 percent complete, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution announced recently.

With the NIN, Tehran hopes to cut the country's dependency on international cyberspace.

Speaking further during his Sunday meeting, Jalali said Iraq's war against Iran in the 1980s carried lessons on how the U.S. might seek to control public opinion in the country.

Saying that the U.S. had launched a "council" to rally Iranian opposition groups abroad, Jalali pointed to Iran's influence in Middle East, threatening to retaliate against "Washington's actions by employing the capacity of pro-Iran people in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, and many other countries."

Russia welcomes Iran's proposal for regional nonaggression pact

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Russian on Monday praised Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's recent suggestion to Persian Gulf states to sign a nonaggression pact as the first step to reduce regional tensions.

"Perhaps, agreeing not to attack one another is the first step toward reducing tensions. We would consider such an agreement as a proper one," Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at joint a press conference with his Cuban counterpart Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parrilla, Urdupoint reported.

He also said that Zarif's suggestion was in line with a "well-known and old" Russian initiative to create a "security concept" for the Persian Gulf, which would include Arab



states, including Persian Gulf Arab states, and Iran.

The Russian foreign minister added that no common stand had been formulated during discussions of this initiative.

"I believe that anyway we should move on toward creating such a concept, such a security system, and we should start with easy steps, such as being transparent about military matters, inviting each other to take part in drills and elaborating other measures aimed at boosting trust," Lavrov said.

He stated that Russia would like to see the League of Arab States, the European Union, the United Nations as a whole and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council as the guarantors of this security system.

Trump's three-month ultimatum to two controversial cabinet members

Bolton, Pompeo may be going Tillerson's way over Iran



Such approach toward cabinet members comes with quite ample precedence. On December 10, 2012, he categorically denied that Rex Tillerson is resigning as secretary of state. At that time, Trump wrote in a Twitter message:

"The media has speculated, I've thrown Rex Tillerson out, or he'll leave soon (fake news)! Fake news! He does not go and we work well together, and the United States is once again heavily revered."

However, three months later, Tillerson's official removal from power was announced, and Pompeo was tasked to handle the U.S. foreign policy.

This time, Trump is also aiming to manage the probable layoffs of his two cabinet members, using the same formula as Tillerson's stage-by-stage layoff. In November 2017, Der Spiegel unveiled a special Trump method to remove Tillerson. Part of the content of the report read:

"Broadcasting the rumor of Tillerson's ousting in the media is part of Donald Trump and his team. Trump wants to spread the rumor to exert more pressure on his secretary of state and force him to step down."

The Washington Post also said these rumors and strong denial by Trump would in effect mean Tillerson's end.

Trump's tight reaction to U.S. media coverage of the disagreement with his foreign policy team points to the secret interest of the president to keep this debate alive in media such as the Washington Post, the New York Times, and others.

It's worth noting that Bolton and Pompeo are aware of the seriousness of the announced deadline, given the tale of Tillerson's past and his behavior at the White House in the final months of his tenure.

Tehran wants peace for everybody: Zarif



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran's stance is based on an approach seeking peace, stability and progress for all countries, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said on Sunday.

Speaking to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) at the end of his visit to Iraq, the foreign minister said, "Our message and preference is quite clear. We are interested in peaceful prosperous life. This is the choice of Islamic Republic of Iran, but the peace and prosperity should be provided to all."

Zarif visited Baghdad on Saturday for talks with senior Iraqi officials on the latest developments in the world and the region as well as bilateral affairs.

His third visit to Iraq comes amid a series of military moves by the U.S. in the region.

The foreign minister said that Iran's message to all European countries and other economic partners is that if they do not stand against the U.S. bullying, and if Iran's interests are not secured, all parties would bear the brunt.

He also described Iraq as a friendly country which is active in the region and this is a positive development for Iran, noting that the threat caused by the U.S. "economic terrorism and war" against Iran was raised at the meetings with Iraqi officials.

He emphasized that the only solution to the current stalemate is that the U.S. stop its hostile acts against Iran.

"The rest of the world should be aware that if they want to enjoy peace, they should make sure that the Iranian people benefit from the nuclear deal," Zarif says.

Asked on an offer by Iraq to mediate between Iran and the United States, the chief diplomat said there was no need for mediation of third parties, "but the measures and support by Iraqi friends are welcome and appreciated."

He scolded the United States for violating its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal and is bullying other countries to violate their commitments, adding this approach must be stopped.

Sen. Sanders vows to 'prevent' Trump, Bolton from waging war with Iran

(Press TV) — The U.S. Democratic presidential hopeful in 2020 polls, Senator Bernie Sanders, has vowed to "prevent" President Donald Trump and his National Security Adviser John Bolton from taking the country into a war with Iran, further calling the American president a "pathological liar" that's leading the nation towards authoritarian rule.

"Right now, this minute, I am doing everything that I can -- working, by the way, with some honest conservatives in the Senate -- to prevent Donald Trump and John Bolton from taking us into a war in Iran," he declared during a speech on Saturday at his first political rally in his home state of Vermont since announcing his presidential bid in February.

The veteran senator further emphasized that he regards a U.S. war with Iran "much more destructive, if you can believe it, than the war in Iraq," adding that it "could lead us, literally, to perpetual warfare in that region."

Attacking the hawkish U.S. president and his reckless political rhetoric, Sanders also said, "Sadly, we have a president who is a pathological liar and that he says whatever he wants without regard to the truth."

"You know that we have a president who has no understanding or respect for the Constitution of the United States, and the separation of powers, and is attempting to move -- every single day -- this country into an authoritarian form of government," he stressed.

Trump 'most dangerous' U.S. president in modern history

In an interview with NBC News last month Sanders had also described Trump as "the most dangerous president in the modern history of this country."

Sanders went on to underline that he was launching his campaign "with confidence, optimism and love," adding that he refused to allow for the nation to be led by "greed, hatred and lies."

"The underlying principles of our government will not be racism, will not be sexism, will not be xenophobia and will not be religious bigotry -- and all the other mean-spirited beliefs of the Trump administration," the senator emphasized,



pledging: "The principles of our government will be based on justice: economic justice, racial justice, social justice, and environmental justice."

Trump has so wantonly lied and misconstrued the facts

Another 2020 U.S. presidential hopeful, Democratic Congressman Robert "Beto" O'Rourke of Texas also denounced Trump's recent deployment of hundreds of troops to the Middle East, accusing him of lying and misconstruing facts in what Washington claims to be "Iran's threat."

In an interview on Saturday with CBS News 'Face the Nation' program that will be aired on Sunday, the lawmaker pointed to Trump's senior aides -- including Bolton, who has a reputation for a hawkish stance against Iran -- saying that the White House risked sending the U.S. to war over "misconstrued facts."

"I have a really hard time believing this administration and believing a-a president who has so wantonly lied and misconstrued the facts at every single turn to his own gain. I'm-I'm suspicious of a national security team that has so often called for war," O'Rourke emphasized.

"You have someone in-in-- Bolton, who has publicly said

that he wants regime change in Iran," he further underlined, warning that a war with the country would leave hundreds of thousands dead.

The congressman went on to stress that Trump's decision to send troops to the region to counter a supposed threat from Iran would only provoke conflict and draw the U.S. into war.

"President Trump is escalating tensions, is provoking yet another war in the Middle East where we find ourselves already engaged in war in so many countries- in Iraq in Syria in Yemen, not too far from there in Libya and in Afghanistan," O'Rourke warned. "[W]e don't need another war. We need to find a way to work with allies and partners and in some cases with our enemies."

Sen. Paul urges Trump not to listen to 'neoccons'
O'Rourke's remarks echoed those of Kentucky Republican Senator Rand Paul who called on the U.S. president to reconsider his announcement on Friday while urging Trump not to listen to "neoccons" close to him in a clear reference to Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

"This escalation doesn't get us out of our decades long, seemingly endless wars Mr. President. Trust your instincts and follow what you ran on, not the neoccons around who want to repeat past mistakes," Paul tweeted.

'We learned nothing from the experience in Iraq'

Yet another Democratic presidential hopeful Pete Buttigieg -- a former naval intelligence officer, Afghanistan war veteran and current Mayor of South Bend, Indian -- also blasted Trump during a Friday campaign event in New Hampshire.

Buttigieg further insisted that Trump "now seems to be setting us on a course that could lead to violent confrontation," according to U.S.-based Fox News.

He later told reporters that "I'm very worried because we have steps towards confrontation in Iran that almost make it seem as though we learned nothing from the experience in Iraq."

Tehran has time and again asserted that it is not seeking war, yet stands ready to defend its interests in the region amid the U.S. military buildup in the Middle East.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	217573.9
IFX	2715.81

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,063 rials
GBP	53,393 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$67.52/b
WTI	\$58.38/b
OPEC Basket	\$68.56/b
Gold	\$1,286.70/oz
Silver	\$14.62/oz
Platinum	\$806.65/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Tehran to host intl. railway exhibition in early-June

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Over 170 Iranian and foreign companies from Russia, Turkey, China, Italy, and Latvia are to take part in Iran's 7th International Exhibition of Rail Transportation, Related Industries and Equipment, dubbed RAILEXPO 2019, IRIB reported on Sunday.

According to the Iranian Railways (RAI)'s office of public relations, the exhibition will be held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds from June 9 to 12.

Showcasing the latest achievements and technologies of the rail industry in Iran and across the world and providing investment opportunities have been pointed out to be the most important goals of this year's exhibition.

Among other programs, the 6th International Conference on Recent Advances in Iranian and World Railways Engineering is also scheduled to be held on the sidelines of the exhibition.

The development of rail transport infrastructure is crucial for sustainable development and economic growth in any country, and Iran has been heavily focusing on expanding its railway infrastructure in recent years.

Uzbekistan eager for expansion of trade ties with Iran: envoy

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Uzbekistan Ambassador to Tehran Bakhodir Abdullaev said his country is eager for expansion of mutual economic ties with Iran, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

The envoy made the remarks in a meeting with ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie on Sunday.

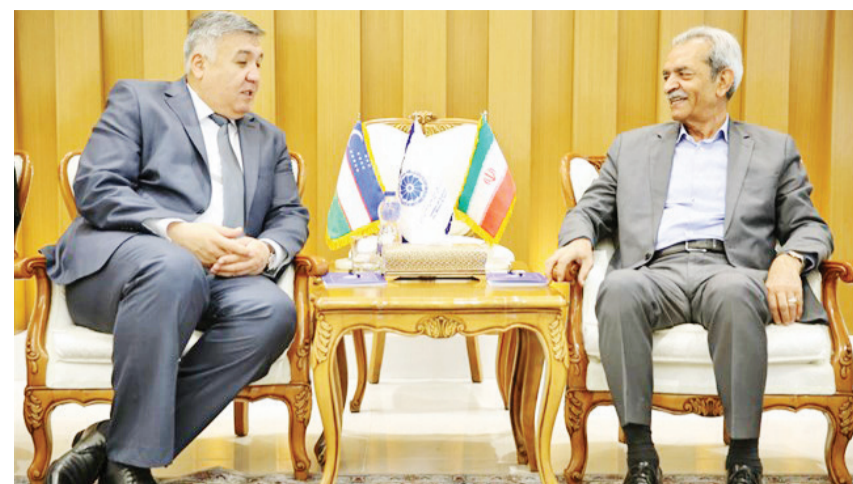
As reported, in the meeting the two sides discussed several issues including establishing a joint chamber of commerce, launching direct flight between the two countries and boosting cooperation in road transportation.

The two sides also emphasized the need for expanding the cooperation between the two countries' private sectors.

Shafeie in the meeting underlined the great potentials for trade between the two nations and noted, "There are great opportunities for bilateral trade in both countries which have been neglected so far."

The official further expressed readiness for dispatching trade delegations from Iran to Uzbekistan.

Underlining the need for establishing a joint chamber, Shafeie suggested that "in the meantime an arbitration office or center could



Uzbekistan Ambassador to Tehran Bakhodir Abdullaev (L) met ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie in Tehran on Sunday.

be established in the two countries' chambers of commerce in order to facilitate trade between the two sides."

Abdullaev for his part expressed his country's readiness for taking all necessary measures in

order to boost mutual trade with Iran.

Iran and Uzbekistan have historical and cultural commonalities and hold many common stances with regard to regional and international issues.

Iran, India launch new direct shipping route

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran and India launched their third direct shipping route to connect Iran's port city of Qeshm to the Indian port of Kandla, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported on Sunday.

An Indian vessel called "Nashat" delivered 13,000 tons of goods from India to the Iranian port to officially inaugurate the Qeshm-Kandla route.

The first shipping route between the two

countries was put into operation in 2017 between Iran's Chabahar port and Mumbai.

In January 2019, Iran and India inaugurated the second direct shipping route which passes through Mumbai, Mundra, Kandla, Chabahar and finally Bandar Abbas in southern Iran.

With this new shipping line launched, more goods and agricultural products will be shipped between the two countries.

After years of negotiations, Iran has awarded the development project of its

strategic Chabahar port to India, and the South Asian country committed \$500 million to build two new berths in this port.

In May 2016, Iran, India and Afghanistan signed a trilateral transit agreement in Tehran, a part of which is dedicated to Chabahar port's development project.

At the time, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that New Delhi would be investing \$500 million in the strategic port.

Then during the visit of the Iranian president to India in February 2018, the lease

contract for Shahid Beheshti Port-Phase 1 was signed between Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) and India's Ports Global Limited (IPGL).

India is also using the mentioned shipping routes to transit goods to Afghanistan and Persian Gulf nations as well as the countries in Central Asia.

Through Chabahar port India can bypass Pakistan and transport goods to Afghanistan and Central Asia, while Afghanistan can get linked to India via sea.

'EGFI to sign co-op MOUs with foreign partners soon'

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Head of Export Guarantee Fund of Iran (EGFI) said EGFI is due to sign memorandums of understanding (MOU) for cooperation with some foreign partners in near future, IRIB reported on Sunday.

"To facilitate economic relations between Iran and Europe, MOUs will be signed soon between the Export Guarantee Fund of Iran and some European countries," Afrouz Bahrami tweeted in Farsi.

The official noted that considering the implementation of the Europe's trade mechanism



with Iran (known as INSTEX) in the upcoming weeks, signing of these memoranda can create

new capacities for the trade between Iran and Europe within the framework of INSTEX.

"Exchanging credit information between Iranian and European companies, cooperation in collecting dues, joint venture insurance, and technical and educational cooperation are among the subjects of the mentioned MOUs," Bahrami said.

After the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear deal with Iran, the Islamic Republic announced that it will stay in the deal with its European signees.

On January 31, France, Germany and

Britain, the three European parties to the JCPOA, announced the creation of INSTEX, a special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between European economic operators and Iran.

On March 20, Iran's central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati announced that a mechanism similar to INSTEX has been registered in Iran, officially called the Special Trade and Finance Institute (STFI).

Iran has criticized Europeans for repeated delays in taking actions in line with keeping the JCPOA.


 IN THE NAME OF GOD
 ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING
INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 98/122-07/03

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Single-Stage Tender :
Broadcasting the TV network of Kurdish SAHAR in DVB-S/MPEG2 format with Constant Bit Rate of 3 Mbps on Eutelsat 7WA @ 7.3° West, MENA Beam /KU Band for three years in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:
From 29th May 2019 (1398/03/08) by 04:00 p.m. on Monday 03th June 2019 (1398/03/13) with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of receiving the tender document:
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept. ,4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex ,Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali –Assr Ave, Tehran, Iran

The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No.IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 29500 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 4/100/000/000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed packages/envelopes should be submitted in another big sealed package/envelope no later than 4 p.m. on Saturday 06th of July 2019 (1398/04/15) and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening envelopes:
The date of opening the envelopes is on Sunday 7th July , 2019 at 03:00 p.m (1398/04/16) in the office of Financial Vice President . In case of complete content in the envelope A , the envelope B including contract draft ,Technical specifications and qualitative assessment analysis will be considered and opened. The Envelope C will be opened of only those eligible participants who meets the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial Committee at the same time and place.
Fore more information please see :
www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and <http://iets.mporg.ir/> Tel: 00982122167053

Purchasing (Kala) Dept. of IRIB


 IN THE NAME OF GOD
 ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING
INTERNATIONAL TENDER No: 98/122-06/03

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Single-Stage Tender :
Broadcasting the TV networks of Hispan TV, Press TV and iFilm English in MPEG-4/SD format with Constant Bit Rate of 10.5 Mbps on Telstar 12 @ 15.0° West , Pan American Beam /KU Band for three years in accordance with the technical specification and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:
From 29th May 2019 (1398/03/08) by 04:00 p.m. on Monday 03th June 2019 (1398/03/13) with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of receiving the tender document:
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept. ,4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex, Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali –Assr Ave, Tehran, Iran

The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 1,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No.IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is USD 35000 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 4/900/000/000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:
The sealed packages/envelopes should be submitted in another big sealed package/envelope no later than 4 p.m. on Saturday 06th of July 2019 (1398/04/15) and at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

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Fore more information please see :
www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and <http://iets.mporg.ir/> Tel: 00982122167053

Purchasing (Kala) Dept. of IRIB

No blackout if people cooperate, Iran's energy minister says

E N E R G Y TEHRAN - Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said we could manage to pass through the summer peak period without any power outages if people manage their consumption, Tasnim reported on Monday.

The official noted that although the recent rainfalls has put the country's hydropower generation in a better position than last year, the early jump in consumption and the early rise in the temperature indicate a higher consumption rate this year.

According to the Ministry of Energy, with the increase in temperature in different parts of the country and the increasing use of air conditioners that account for most of the summer electricity consumption, peak power consumption has recently risen to 46,000 megawatts.

In the past decade, constant temperature rising and significant decrease of rainfalls across Iran has put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods, so in the past few years power outages have been imposed in



big cities to balance the power generation and consumption in such timespans.

Last year, the volume of water behind the country's dams went so down that electricity output from hydropower plants fell

to a decade low. The situation was worsened by a jump in electricity consumption due to a heat-wave that blanketed the country during summer and consequently led to a huge gap between actual power generation

and consumption.

The energy ministry, being unable to control the situation through consumption management programs, was left with no choice but to once again order periodic blackouts in major cities in order to reduce the skyrocketing consumption. But, these frequent power outages caused a lot of damage to households, producers and manufacturers and people become querulous to the last degree.

This year, however, the situation has changed drastically and heavy precipitations in spring almost completely filled the country's dams and it is expected that hydropower plants will go on full potential and compensate last year's shortages.

However, on the verge of the new hot season, suddenly a huge jump in electricity consumption was reported by the energy ministry so that the consumption in the peak hours of Sunday April 19, exceeded 43500 MW while the figure stood at 38243 MW the same day last year, according to the ministry data.

China is Trump's "safety valve" in disrupted oil market

➔ One of the major policies that the Trump administration has been following, is to keep the oil prices down and that is in significant contrast with some other major policies of the white house. Washington has been constantly pushing to impose more and more pressure on Iran and Venezuela using oil as the main leverage.

In late April, Trump administration announced that Washington is going to sharply accelerate its efforts to drive Iran's oil exports to zero, ending sanctions waivers that were previously granted to some of the Islamic Republic's biggest customers.

Following this announcement, rumor had it that Iran is threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz and some Iranian officials actually hinted on the issue. In reaction to the news, the U.S. deployed a carrier strike group and bombers to the region over "indications and warnings" from Iran.

The escalating tensions between the two sides still continues and is a major driver of the increase in oil prices. On the other hand, defying Trump's will for leaving the

cuts deal, Saudi Arabia has been constantly stating that it will be committed to a balanced and sustainable oil market.

Saudi Arabia and some major non-OPEC producers like Russia have been following a supply cuts plan which is also complied by other members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The plan is aimed at reducing global oversupply.

Deterring factors

Contrasting OPEC+ efforts U.S. shale production has been reported to be rising significantly in the past few years so that just recently the U.S. was crowned to be the world's top oil producer. The over follow of U.S. oil into the market has been for long one of the major factors that contributed to the oversupply in the market and consequently lowered the oil prices.

Last week, the American Petroleum Institute (API) announced that the U.S. crude stockpiles increased by 2.4 million barrels, to 480.2 million barrels.

However, the U.S. shale production on its own cannot

equat the upward pressure which is imposed upon the prices by the Middle East tensions and sanctions on Venezuela.

So facing the powerful factors which are driving the prices up, Trump is, once again, left with no choice but to go for its only weapon at hand, pushing for an escalation of the trade row with the Chinese.

Many believe that considering Trump's disruptive nature, the U.S.-China trade spat is developing into a more complex strategic dispute between the world's two largest economies, however I believe the current situation is all temporary and as soon as Trump reaches its goals in the Middle East, the dispute with China will also be relieved significantly.

It is obvious that the concurrent happening of two opposite scenarios which are greatly influential in the oil market cannot be a coincident. And the U.S. president's on and off outbreaks with China is just a way of making sure to have a "safety valve" in case of overpressure in the market.

China's April LNG supply from Australia hits record high, up 61% on year

China imported a record high 2.79 million mt of LNG from Australia in April, up 61.3% year on year, latest customs data showed, amid growing domestic gas consumption, rising Australian LNG export capacity and trade tensions between China and the U.S.

According to spglobal.com, meanwhile, regional supply has increased on a year-on-year basis as global LNG export expansions have met weak consumption in Japan and South Korea, the world's biggest demand center.

The two countries imported 44.3 million mt of LNG over January-April, down 3% from 45.7 million mt a year earlier, according to S&P

Global Platts Analytics.

China's LNG imports from Australia also grew 36.5% from March, according to the latest data from China's General Administration of Customs.

The highest previous monthly import volume from Australia was 2.76 million mt recorded in November 2018.

Over January-April, China imported 8.93 million mt of LNG from Australia, up 40.2% year on year, the customs data showed.

Meanwhile, China's pipeline natural gas imports from Turkmenistan fell 13.8% year on year to 2.07 million mt in April, but the volume

was up slightly from March, the data showed.

Over the first four months of the year, Turkmenistan supplied 8.61 million mt of natural gas to China via pipeline, broadly unchanged from the same period a year earlier.

China's LNG imports from Qatar were up 6.2% on year at 594,281 mt in April. The volume also rebound 37.5% on month after seeing two consecutive monthly drops, the customs data showed.

In addition, China resumed LNG imports from the U.S. in April with a single LNG cargo of 66,000 mt.

China imported a total 7.65 million mt of

natural gas in April, up 12.7% on year, as LNG imports play an increasingly vital role in the country's energy mix.

Imports for the month comprised 4.54 million mt of LNG and 3.11 million mt of pipeline gas, with LNG volumes rising 35.1% on year and pipeline gas supplies falling 9.3% on year, the data showed.

Over January-April, China imported 31.75 million mt of natural gas, up 15.9% on year. LNG imports for the period rose 22.9% to 15.72 million mt, while pipeline gas imports increased 6.6% to 12.43 million mt, the customs data showed.

NIDC completes digging operation of 7 oil, gas wells in 2 months

E N E R G Y TEHRAN - National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) dug and completed digging operation of 7 oil and gas wells during the two-month period from March 21 to May 21, according to an official with the NIDC.

Mohammad Al-e Khamis, the deputy managing director of NIDC for drilling operation, said over 25,348 meters of digging has been conducted for the mentioned onshore and offshore wells, Shana reported.

NIDC, a subsidiary of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), undertakes most drilling operations across the country and drilled 4,489 onshore and offshore oil and gas wells in nearly 40 years.

Oil under pressure from U.S.-China trade war, but OPEC cuts provide support

Oil prices were mixed on Monday, with U.S. crude under pressure from Sino-American trade tensions, while Brent prices were supported by OPEC's supply cuts.

Reuters reported, front-month U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$58.43 per barrel at 0700 GMT, down 20 cents, or 0.3%, from their last settlement.

Spot Brent crude futures, the international benchmark for oil prices, were firmer at \$68.82 per barrel, 13 cents, or 0.2%, above their last close.

Both crude contracts last week registered their biggest price declines this year amid concerns that the U.S.-China trade dispute could accelerate an international economic slowdown.

"Sentiment remains fragile and vulnerable to any deterioration in U.S.-China trade frictions," said Jeffrey Halley, senior market analyst at futures brokerage OANDA in Singapore.

Money managers cut their net long U.S. crude futures and options positions in the week to May 21, the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) said on Friday.

"Some signs of low confidence are creeping into positioning data," Bell said.

The "impact from a trade war is a more medium- to long-term issue and December spreads weakened sharply over the last week," said Edward Bell, commodity analyst at Emirates NBD bank.

Beyond financial markets, there are also signs on the ground of a slowdown in growth in oil demand.

Amid the trade conflict between the United States and China, profits for China's industrial firms dropped in April on slowing demand and manufacturing activity, according to data published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Monday.

China's automobile sales, a key driver of global oil demand growth, will reach around 28.1 million units this year, unchanged from levels seen in 2018, when the country's auto market contracted for the first time in more than two decades, state news agency Xinhua reported on Sunday.

The outlook for flat car sales may be too optimistic still, as monthly sales have so far declined for 10 consecutive months.

A bright spot for carmakers, although not for the oil industry, is that sales of new energy vehicles are likely to grow by about 27 percent to hit 1.6 million units, from 1.26 units in 2018, the report said.

Bell at Emirates NBD said Brent crude prices were somewhat supported as the market was "pricing in... lower supplies from OPEC+."

A group of producers led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), known as OPEC+, has been withholding supply since the start of the year to tighten the market and prop up prices.

First Announcement

KSC
Khuzestan Steel Company
IN THE NAME OF GOD

INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER
No.: 398128

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE
REFRACTORY FOR STEEL-MAKING LADLE SLIDE GATE

INTERESTED BIDDERS MAY OBTAIN SET OF DOCUMENTS, CONTAINING:

- 1) THE RELEVANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS BY SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN APPLICATION;
- 2) ALL BIDS MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE BELOW ADDRESS ON OR BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE **03.jul.2019** .THE OPENING DATE OF TECHNICAL OFFER ENVELOPES WILL BE AT **11 AM ON THE 07.jul.2019** IN THE BUYER'S CONFERENCE ROOM LOCATED AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF KSC AHVAZ-IRAN AND THE BIDDERS OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES CAN ATTEND THE MEETING OF THE TENDER.
- 3) THE OFFERED PRICE SHOULD BE VALID UP TO **4 MONTH AFTER OPENING DATE** .
- 4) FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT TO BELOW CHANALE:

Tel No.: +98-61-32908116 ; +98-61-32136117,+98-61-32136120
EMAIL: j.ghorbani@ksc.ir ; z.mokhtari@ksc.ir
WEBSITE : WWW.KSC.IR .

ADDRESS : KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY (KSC)- KM10 AHVAZ & BANDAR IMAM
KHOMEINI ROAD- AHVAZ - IRAN
P.O.BOX: 1378 - POST CODE: : 61788-13111

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TEHRAN TIMES

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First Announcement

N.I.O.C
1398.1154

Call for public tender (First/Second publish)

One Stages tender

National Iranian Drilling Company

Tender descriptions: PARTS FOR ROSS HILL SILICON CONTROL RECTI FIER (SCR)

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,201,811	INDENT NO: 01-22-9746022 TenderNo.: FP/11-98/025	11,200,000,000 RLS

Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method

1- Applicants which have more than 4 in process contacts with NIDC are not allowed to participate in this tender .
2- Applicants which have more than 2 in process contacts with NIDC in similar subject (exclusively same subject) are not allowed to participate in another tender

Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof
Distribution Place	Hall No.:113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN . TEL 061-34148601
Submitting Method	Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491 (Shaba No. IR 35010000400114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by LR of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
Closing date	35Days after the last time of Purchasing.
Documents Receiving Method	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	560,000,000 RLS / 11,786 EURO
Type of guarantee	✓**Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ✓**Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 35010000400114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)
More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: www.nidc.ir <http://sapp.ir/nidc-pr>
تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۷/۳/۹۸ نوبت دوم ۸/۳/۹۸

Traditional parties did not get good results in parliamentary elections

Alarm sounded in EU

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Although the level of political participation in the 2019 parliamentary election was higher than in previous elections, this did not prevent the increase in the number of votes of nationalist and extremist parties. Of course, the Green Party's victory in the European Parliamentary elections will reduce the bitterness of the triumph of nationalist parties in Europe!

The recent parliamentary elections in Europe have signaled alarm for the euro zone and

the 28 member states of the European Union have cast their ballot in what is the second biggest democratic exercise in the world. Official projections showed parties committed to strengthening the European Union held on to two-thirds of seats in the EU parliament, though far-right and nationalist opponents saw strong gains.

■ Austria

The ruling People's Party, led by Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, comes in first with 34.9%, according to provisional results. It is followed by the Social Democrats with 23.4% and the far-right Freedom

Party (FPÖ) with 17.2%. The latter's score is believed to have been hit by the so-called Ibiza scandal which resulted in party leader Heinz-Christian Strache resigning as vice-chancellor last week after a secret video appeared to show him trying to trade public contracts for party donations from a woman he thought was the niece of a Russian oligarch.

Of course, the recent political developments in Austria have had a direct impact on the outcome of the election. What has been happening today in Austria has led to concerns among EU leaders. Vice Chancellor of Austria, Heinz-Christian Strache, head of the far-right, anti-immigrant Freedom Party which was in Kurz's ruling coalition, had resigned earlier Saturday, a day after the video was published.

The video hit a nerve amid broader concerns about ties between Russia and right-wing populist parties critical of the European Union.

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz has called for an early election after his vice chancellor resigned over a covertly shot video that showed him apparently promising government contracts to a prospective Russian investor. Kurz said he would ask President Alexander Van der Bellen to set a date for a new election "as soon as possible."

■ **Belgium**
Belgium wasn't holding just one election on Sunday, but three: federal, regional and European. For the latter, partial results showed the moderate separatist Flemish N-VA party had the largest score nationwide, with 13.5% of the votes. The anti-immigrant Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest) came in second with 11.4%. While the more prosperous Dutch-speaking Flanders shifted to the right, French-speaking Wallonia moved to the left. The Socialist Party, at 10.5%, came in third nationwide. The Liberal Party MP of Prime Minister Michel came only in the seventh position.

■ **Bulgaria**
Even though voting is compulsory in Bulgaria, voter turnout was only 30.83%. As pollsters expected, Bulgaria's vote was split between the centre-right GERB party (30.6%) and the country's socialist coalition party (26.42%), according to official estimates. The youngest current European parliament member is Bulgarian Andrey Novakov, who is 30.

■ **Croatia**
Provisional results placed the conservative Democratic Union (HDZ), which rules the country in a coalition, and the Social Democratic Party in the lead with 22.71% and 18.69% of the vote respectively. The right-wing Croatian Conservative Party is third with 8.49%.

■ **Cyprus**
Final results showed the ruling DISY party — an EPP member — came in first with 29% of the vote, broadly on par with 2014 results. Niyazi Kizilyurek, from the communist AKEL party — which came in second place (27.5%) — has become the first Turkish Cypriot to be elected as an MEP. The country is divided between Greek Cypriots and minority Turkish Cypriots, but over 80,000 Turkish Cypriots are reportedly eligible to vote in EU elections.

■ **Czech Republic**
The ruling centrist ANO party increased its number of MEPs from 4 to 6, official results showed. The second biggest delegation from the country is a right-wing formation, the Civic Democratic Party, which doubles its MEPs to 4. The anti-establishment, anti-corruption Czech Pirate party came in third with three MEPs, tied with the conservative STAN TOP coalition.

■ **Denmark**
Provisional results put the Social Democrats in the lead with 23.5%, ahead of the centre-right Venstre party — ruling the country in a coalition — which scored 21.5% of the vote. The Socialist party was third (13.2%) while the Red-Green Alliance looked set to win its first ever seat at the European Parliament with 11%. The People's Movement Against the EU got 3.9%. Danes are scheduled to return to the poll on June 5 for the country's general election.

■ **Estonia**
The liberal Reform party retained its first place with 26.2% of the vote, official results showed. The Social Democratic party claimed the second place with 23.3% of the vote, while the Centre party was in third with 14.4%. The far-right Conservative People's Party tripled its score to come in fourth with 12.7% and will be represented in the European Parliament with one MEP.

■ **Finland**
The Scandinavian country was the first to officially release its results which saw the centre-right National Coalition Party claiming the top spot, with 20.8% of the vote, slightly below its 23.2% from 2014. The Green League secured the second place with 16.0%, ahead of the Social Democrats (14.6%) and the populist Finns Party, which makes it in the fourth position with 13.8%.

■ **France**
With 91% of the votes counted, Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally

party is leading with 24.08%, while the La République En Marche movement of President Emmanuel Macron is second with 21.89%. The National Rally, then-known as the Front National, also won the EU election in 2014 while Macron's movement did not exist then. The Green party surprised to clinch the third place with 13.14% of the vote.

■ **Germany**
An exit poll confirmed projections made ahead of the elections that predicted a surge of support for the Green Party, which clinched the second place with 21.8% of the vote — double its 2014 result. The ruling CDU/CSU alliance has come in first with a reported 28% of the

vote while the anti-migrant and anti-euro Alternative for Germany (AfD) is fourth with 10.5%.

■ **Greece**
The main opposition party, the conservative New Democracy movement, beat the ruling left-wing Syriza formation with 33.3% and 23.8% of the vote respectively, provisional results showed. This outcome prompted Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to call for a snap general election in June. The country's economic situation and the name change agreement with North Macedonia have taken precedence over European issues.

■ **Hungary**
The National Election Office has announced that the ruling right-wing Fidesz party has won with 52.14% of the vote. The Democratic Coalition came in second with 16.26% with the liberal Momentum movement in third with 9.92%.

Fidesz's victory came despite repeated clashes with Brussels over rule of law and migration. The party has also been suspended from the centre-right European People's Party grouping in the parliament.

■ **Ireland**
Both the GUE/NGL and EPP parties are estimated to win four seats respectively out of Ireland's 11 seats in the EU Parliament, according to an exit poll. The Greens had a strong showing and became the third party in Ireland with an estimated two seats. The campaign was dominated by Brexit fears as the UK, Ireland's largest trading partner, is due to leave the bloc.

■ **Italy**
Matteo Salvini's far-right League overtook the Five-Star Movement as Italy's largest party after



winning 33.6% of the vote, according to provisional results. The Five Star Movement is now reported to score the third place (16.6%), behind the centre-left Democratic Party (23.5%).

■ **Latvia**
The liberal-conservative New Unity party — aligned with the EPP — retained the first place, although its share of the vote dropped from more than 46% in 2014 to 26%, provisional results show. It is followed by the Social Democratic Party (17.5%) and the right-wing populist National Alliance with 16.4%, the latter of which finished second in 2014 with 14.3%.

■ **Lithuania**
Initial results, with about 90% of votes counted, showed the centre-right Homeland Union had won with 17.41% of the vote, followed by the Social Democratic Party with 16.90%. The Farmers and Greens Union clinched the third place with 13.93%. Lithuania also held the second round of its presidential election which was won by econo-



stomist Gitanas Nausėda, who is not affiliated to any political party.

■ **Luxembourg**
The liberal Democratic Party and the conservative Christian Social People's Party will both send two MEPs to the European Parliament having scored 21.44 and 21.1% respectively. The Green Party came in third with 18.91% of the vote, official results show.

■ **Malta**
Prime Minister Muscat's Labour party won by a landslide with 55.9% of the vote, while the rival Nationalist party trailed far behind (36.2%). Government corruption was an important topic in Malta during the EU elections as the two major parties have both accused each other of wrongdoing.

■ **Poland**
The ruling Law and Justice party (PiS) came

first with 43.1% of the vote, provisional results showed.

The European Coalition, led by European Council President Donald Tusk and comprised of his Civic Platform and a group of leftist and rural politicians, came in second with 38.41%. But turnout, although at a record high for EU elections in the country, still only stood at 43%. The EU elections kicked off a series of polls in the country: a parliamentary one follows in the autumn before a presidential vote next year.

■ **Portugal**
Preliminary results — with 97.5% of the votes counted — show that the Socialist Party has won with 33.8%. The Social Democratic Party has placed — a distant — second with 22.6% with the Left Bloc trailing in third position with 9.6% of the vote. The Green party, Pan is on 4.8% and might have its first seat in the European parliament.

■ **Romania**
Provisional results showed a sharp decline in support for the ruling Social Democrats (PSD) which has clashed with Brussels over anti-corruption and rule of law reforms. The PSD trailed the pro-EU National Liberal Party (PNL) with respectively 24.8% and 27.8% of the vote. In the last national ballot in 2016, PSD won 45% of the vote. The A 2020 USR PLUS alliance, which campaigned on anti-corruption and green issues, came in third with 18.1% of the vote.

PNL and other pro-EU parties may have benefited from the fact that there was a referendum being held at the same time on PSD's controversial reforms. Meanwhile, thousands of Romanian diaspora protested outside embassies and polling

stations across Europe Sunday after long queues left many unable to vote.

the European Union. Of course, French protests and public discontent in Europe were the basis for the failure of traditional parties in the recent parliamentary elections in Europe. Meanwhile, the silence of European leaders such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel in the face of recent unrests, indicate that they're seriously worried about the future of the European Union and the Eurozone. At any rate, determining the relevance between recent protests in France and current and future changes in the united Europe has become one of the main concerns of analysts of the European and international affairs. Meanwhile, some European politicians are trying to analyze the France protests as an infrastructural and skin-deep objection. However, the kind of slogans that the yellow vests are using against the capitalist system, and the generalization of protests to other parts of Europe, suggest that this phenomenon can't be regarded as a transitory, infrastructural and shallow crisis. On the contrary, it's obvious that the ongoing protests in France have a fundamental and basilar nature.

A review of the results of the European Parliamentary elections

The results of the European parliamentary election show that the green continent is in an emergency. As Euronews reported, Voters from

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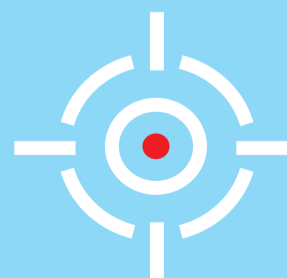


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First satellites for Musk's Starlink Internet venture launched into orbit

SpaceX, the private rocket company of high-tech entrepreneur Elon Musk, launched the first batch of 60 small satellites into low-Earth orbit on Thursday for Musk's new Starlink Internet service.

A Falcon 9 rocket carrying the satellites blasted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station at about 10:30 p.m. local time (0230 GMT Friday), clearing a key hurdle for a business venture that Musk hopes will generate much-needed cash for his larger ambitions in space.

The launch came a week after two back-to-back countdowns for the mission were scrubbed - once due to high winds over the Cape and the next night in order to update satellite software and "triple-check" all systems.

The 60 satellites flown into space were released into orbit as planned about an hour after Thursday's launch, and the Falcon 9's main-stage reusable booster rocket flew back to Earth for a successful landing on a barge floating in the Atlantic.

SpaceX said it would probably take another day to learn whether all the satellites deployed were functioning properly. Each weighs about 500 pounds (227 kg), making them the heaviest payload carried aloft by SpaceX to date.

They represent the initial phase of a planned constellation capable of beaming signals for high-speed Internet service



SpaceX, the private rocket company of high-tech entrepreneur Elon Musk, launched the first batch of 60 small satellites.

from space to paying customers around the globe.

Musk has said he sees the new Starlink

venture as an important new revenue stream for his California-based Space Exploration Technologies, or SpaceX, whose launch service

income he expects to top out at around \$3 billion a year.

He told reporters last week that makes Starlink pivotal in helping pay for his larger goals of developing a new spacecraft to fly paying customers to the moon and for eventually trying to colonize Mars.

"We think this is a key stepping stone on the way toward establishing a self-sustaining city on Mars and a base on the moon," said billionaire Musk, who is also chief executive officer of automaker Tesla Inc.

At least 12 launches carrying similar payloads are needed to achieve constant Internet coverage of most of the world, Musk said. For now, Starlink is only authorized for U.S. operations.

Musk faces stiff competition. Airbus SE-backed OneWeb launched its own clutch of satellites in February, while LeoSat Enterprises and Canada's Telesat are also working to build data networks.

In each network, the tiny satellites orbit closer to Earth than traditional communications satellites, a technological shift made possible by advances in laser technology and computer chips.

Musk said SpaceX would begin approaching customers later this year or next year. As many as 2,000 satellites will be launched per year, with the ultimate objective of placing up to 12,000 into orbit.

(Source: Reuters)

Rats and gerbils to thrive while larger animals like rhinos and eagles will die out in the next 100 years, study says

As humans continue to destroy the habitat of larger creatures, the average animal size is set to "shrink" by 25 per cent over the next century, according to a new study.

Larger, less adaptable, slow-lived species like tawny eagles and rhinos will become extinct, while smaller and adaptable creatures like rodents, dwarf gerbils and songbirds are likely to predominate, researchers at the University of Southampton said.

Unless radical action is taken to protect wildlife and restore habitats, whole ecosystems could collapse.

"By far the biggest threat to birds and mammals is humankind - with habitats being destroyed due to our impact on the planet, such as deforestation, hunting, intensive farming, urbanization and the effects of global warming," said Rob Cooke, lead author of the study published in the journal Nature Communications.

"The substantial 'downsizing' of species which we forecast could incur further negative impacts for the long-term sustainability of ecology and evolution. This downsizing may be happening due to the effects of ecological change but, ironically, with the loss of species which perform unique functions within our global ecosystem, it could also end up as a driver of change, too."



The predicted declines are particularly large when compared to the 14 per cent body size reduction observed in species since the last interglacial period 130,000 years ago.

The research team focused on 15,484 living land mammals

and birds and considered how body mass, litter/clutch size, breadth of habitat, diet and length of time between generations affect their role in nature.

They also used the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species to determine which animals are most likely to become extinct in the next century.

Small, highly-fertile insect-eating animals that can thrive in a variety of habitats will be the most resilient, they found.

"We have demonstrated that the projected loss of mammals and birds will not be ecologically random - rather a selective process where certain creatures will be filtered out, depending on their traits and vulnerability to ecological change," said Felix Eigenbrod, a professor at the University of Southampton.

Amanda Bates, research chair at Memorial University in Canada, added: "Extinctions were previously viewed as tragic, deterministic inevitabilities, but they can also be seen as opportunities for targeted conservation actions. As long as a species that is projected to become extinct persists, there is time for conservation action and we hope research such as ours can help guide this."

(Source: The Independent)

Earth's oldest meteorite collection just found in the driest place on the planet

Meteorites crash into Earth pretty much constantly, and you can find their ancient remains everywhere from King Tut's tomb to some guy's farm in Edmore, Michigan. But to best understand where these space rocks came from and how long they've been living as earthly expats, it helps to visit the densest collection of meteorites on the planet - and that's in Chile's Atacama Desert.

What's so special about Atacama? For starters, it's old - more than 15 million years old - and that means the meteorites that have crash-landed on its 50,000-square-mile (130,000 square kilometer) surface have the possibility of being really old, too. This poses a geological advantage over other deserts, including Antarctica, which boast vast supplies of meteorites, but are generally too young to house any space rocks older than about half a million years, according to

Alexis Drouard, a researcher at Aix-Marseille Université in France and lead author of a new study in the journal Geology.

Drouard and his colleagues recently went on a meteorite-hunting trip to the Atacama Desert in hopes of finding an array of rocks that spanned millions of years. "Our purpose in this work was to see how the meteorite flux to Earth changed over large timescales," Drouard said in a statement. In other words, could the space rocks of Atacama reveal when Earth was bombarded by meteorites more or less frequently?

For the new study (published May 22), the researchers collected nearly 400 meteorites and closely studied 54 of them, analyzing both the ages and chemical compositions of the alien stones. Consistent with the desert's advanced age, about 30% of the meteorites were more than 1 million years old, while two of them had

been gathering dust for more than 2 million years. According to Drouard, this represents the oldest meteorite collection on Earth's surface.

And as for the meteorite flux? The team extrapolated the results of their small sample to determine that impact activity has remained relatively constant over the past 2 million years, amounting to about 222 meteor impacts in every square kilometer of desert every 1 million years.

Surprisingly, the composition of the meteorites changed more drastically. According to the researchers, the meteorites that bombarded Atacama between 1 million and half a million years ago were significantly more iron-rich than the rocks that fell before or after. It's possible they all came from a single swarm of stones that got knocked loose from the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter, the team wrote.

(Source: Live Science)

Murray Gell-Mann, Nobel Prize-winning physicist who named quarks, dies at 89

Murray Gell-Mann, the Nobel-winning physicist who brought order to the universe by helping discover and classify subatomic particles, has died. He was 89.

Gell-Mann died on Friday at his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico. His death was confirmed by the Santa Fe Institute, where he held the title of distinguished fellow, and the California Institute of Technology, where he taught for decades. The cause was not disclosed.

Gell-Mann transformed physics by devising a method for sorting subatomic particles into simple groups of eight, based on electric charge, spin and other characteristics. He called his method the "eightfold way" after the Buddhist Eightfold Path to enlightenment.

Gell-Mann also developed the theory that identified "quarks", indivisible components of Earth's matter that make up protons, neutrons and other particles. Experiments confirmed the existence of quarks, and these objects now form the basis for our physical understanding of the universe, Caltech said in a statement.

In a quirk typical of Gell-Mann's approach to science, he chose the name "quark" for a line from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*: "Three quarks for Muster Mark."

"It would be hard to overestimate the degree to which Murray

dominated theoretical particle physics during his heyday in the 1950s and 1960s," said John Preskill, Richard P Feynman professor of theoretical physics at Caltech.

"He contributed so many deep ideas that drove the field forward, many of which are just as relevant today."

In 1969, Gell-Mann was honored with the Nobel prize in physics "for his contributions and discoveries concerning the classification of elementary particles and their interactions".

Born and raised in New York City, Gell-Mann received his bachelor's degree in physics from Yale in 1948 and his PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1951.

In later years, Gell-Mann became interested in the issues of complexity at the heart of biology, ecology, sociology and computer science. He co-founded the Santa Fe Institute to study complex systems and authored the 1994 book *The Quark and the Jaguar* to present his ideas to a general audience.

He is survived by his children, Nicholas Gell-Mann and Elizabeth Gell-Mann, and stepson Nicholas Southwick Levis, according to the Caltech statement.

(Source: The Guardian)

"Swarms" of wolf-dog hybrids sweeping Europe, study reveals

"Swarms" of wolf-dog hybrid animals could drive European wolf populations out of existence, a study has warned.

A rise in crossbreeding, driven by habitat destruction and human growth into wolves' territories, is bringing them into greater contact with domestic free-roaming dogs.

The result is greater incidences of interbreeding, which scientists say "threaten the genetic identity" of wolves.

The study compared the views of more than 40 scientists and warned a lack of engagement and agreement among those best placed to tackle the problem could hamper efforts to prevent wolf-dog hybridization.

The findings suggest most scientists agree on the nature of the problem, but are divided on how to deal with it.

"We need to address this issue before wolf-dog hybrids backcross with wolves to the extent that wolf populations will be lost to hybrid swarms, and the conservation of wild populations will become unfeasible," said lead author Valerio Donfrancesco, from the Centre for Ecology and Conservation at the University of Exeter.

"In this paper, we argue that scientific agreement is crucial to encourage decision-makers to act, and to raise awareness about this conservation issue in society at large," he said.

Further complications include the lack of research existing on wolf-dog hybrids. "The fact that we know so little about the ecology, behavior and social acceptance of the wolf-dog hybrids adds a layer of concern to the issue," Mr Donfrancesco said.

Hybridization can "deeply affect the genetic make-up, long-term survival and evolution of the species," the paper says. The hybrids created between wolves and dogs are usually fertile, which threatens wolf populations in two ways. Firstly because dogs are so numerous the rate of genetic change could be fast, and secondly, the domestication process "has been associated with intensive selection for traits that may be disadvantageous in the wild", the researchers said.

The study allowed scientists to share their views anonymously, and revealed agreement that people should be educated about the impact of free-roaming dogs, and that governments should remove wolf-dog hybrids from small and recovering wild wolf populations. But scientists remained divided on issues such as how to remove hybrids and free-roaming dogs, and whether they should be kept captive, sterilized and released or killed.

Mr Donfrancesco said: "The disagreements emerged from diverging ethical values between scientists of different backgrounds, such as ecologists and geneticists, from the lack of data on the effectiveness of different interventions, and from the worry of some scientists that on practical grounds allowing the removal of hybrids would open a legal loophole for the killing of wolves."

Co-author Paolo Ciucci, of the Sapienza University of Rome, said: "The management of hybrids and wolf-dog hybridization should not be a taboo topic, especially within the scientific community. There are margins to develop further consensus among scientists if further research addresses topical issues such as the effectiveness and the feasibility of control measures and their social acceptability."

Co-author Dr Nibedita Mukherjee, from the University of Exeter, added: "We hope that by highlighting areas of disagreement and why they occur, we will be able to build a more unified scientific opinion, and aid an effective management of this urgent issue."

An estimated 17,000 wolves live in Europe, in populations of varying sizes in countries as distant from one another as Spain, Greece, Poland, Finland, France and Slovenia.

The paper is published in the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*.

(Source: The Independent)

First Announcement



Khouzestan Steel Company

IN THE NAME OF GOD

INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER

No.: 398127

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE

REFRACTORY PURGING PLUG SET AND INSERT FOR STEEL-MAKING LADLE

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THE OFFERED PRICE SHOULD BE VALID UP TO 4 MONTH AFTER OPPENING DATE .

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT TO BELOW CHANALE:

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MAIL: j.ghorbani@ksc.ir ; z.mokhtari@ksc.ir

EBSITE : WWW.KSC.IR .

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O.BOX: 1378 - POST CODE : 61788-13111

Public Relations of Khouzestan Steel Co

Iranian woodcarver honored at Australia's Garland

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iranian woodcarver Saeed d e s k Arzegan has been honored at Australia's Garland for his work named "Love Whisper", which took 320 hours to be completed using 590 pieces of wood.

"Our May laurel goes to an Iranian artist [Saeed Arzegan] who reflects his culture's mastery of wood inlay and crafts a story about standing up for the victimized," Garland wrote on its website on May 2.



Woodcarver Saeed Arzegan in an undated photo.

According to Garland, Arzegan traveled around Iran to find colorful woods including ebony wood, barberry, rosewood, oak, boxwood, acacia, sumac, orange, pistachio, Persian olive or Senjed, maple, Caucasian elm, apricot, yew, walnut, Persian silk tree, mangroves, grey mangrove, medlar, jujube, alder, carob tree, mesquite and Alborz oak.

The pieces of wood have been collected from the regions of Bandar Abbas, Minab, Qeshm, Jask and Chabahar in the south, Hyrcanian Forests of north and northwest of the country and also from Birjand, Ferdows, Nayband, Kerman in the east as well as Saqez, Marivan and Avramanat in the west.

At the age of 17, Arzegan visited a wood carving (monabat) exhibition of the master Abdolhamid Edalat-e Shiraz and was so inspired that he asked to become an apprentice. While learning the traditional skills, Arzegan was eager to experiment with new techniques. The particular technique of moarragh involves creating paintings from wood inlay.

Garland is a platform for thoughtful writing about beautiful objects made today across the Indo-Pacific. Launched in 2015, Garland is established by the World Crafts Council - Australia, a national entity of the World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific.

Filipinos warned on illegal travel agencies

Filipino migrant workers have been warned against using illegal travel agencies or tour operators that send undocumented workers abroad.

Jaime Morente, Commissioner of the Bureau of Immigration, said the warning comes after two women were stopped at Ninoy Aquino International Airport. The two Filipinas were allegedly recruited by a travel agency to work in Qatar, Manila Standard reported.

Morente said the Filipinas were instructed by their recruiters to fly to Bangkok before heading to the Middle East to work.

"They were told that upon arrival in Bangkok, they would be given their working visas within 24 hours, after which they could fly to Qatar to work as a waitress and a cashier," Morente said.

(Source: Asia Times)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Bialowieza Forest

Situated on the border between Poland and Belarus, Bialowieza Forest is one of the last and largest remaining parts of the immense primeval forest that once stretched across the European Plain. Thanks to several ages of protection the Forest had survived in its natural state to this day.

The Bialowieza National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 and extended to include Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Belarus, in 1992. A large extension of the property in 2014 results in a property of 141,885 ha with a buffer zone of 166,708 ha.



This property includes a complex of lowland forests that are characteristics of the Central European mixed forests terrestrial ecoregion.

The area has exceptionally conservation significance due to the scale of its old growth forests, which include extensive undisturbed areas where natural processes are on-going.

A consequence is the richness in dead wood, standing and on the ground, and consequently a high diversity of fungi and saproxylic invertebrates. The property protects a diverse and rich wildlife of which 59 mammal species, over 250 bird, 13 amphibian, 7 reptile and over 12,000 invertebrate species.

The iconic symbol of the property is the European Bison: approximately 900 individuals in the whole property which make almost 25% of the total world's population and over 30% of free-living animals.

(Source: UNESCO)

Abyaneh: Stunning red adobe village

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Picturesquely situated at the foot of Mt Karkas (3899m), the ancient village of Abyaneh is one of top tourism destinations in central Iran. It features crumbling red mud-brick houses with lattice windows and fragile wooden balconies, twisting lanes and hospitable people that still dress in the traditional outfits.

Abyaneh is testament to both the age and semi-isolation from other parts of the country as the elderly residents speak Middle Persian, an earlier incarnation of Farsi that largely disappeared some centuries ago.

Located some 40 kilometers from Natanz, Isfahan province, Abyaneh is like a living architectural and anthropological museum. It presents an impressive model of the man adaptation to the environment.

Given the evidence found in Abyaneh, the village dates back to great antiquity, but its golden age was during the Safavid era. The word 'Abyaneh' has been derived from the word 'viona' meaning 'Willow Grove' (in the local dialect 'vey' means willow), Mehr reported on Saturday.

The village extends along a river. Although the village itself is situated on high grounds, in the past three castles were

built to protect the people from enemy attacks. Furthermore, the configuration of Abyaneh protects it from strong wind and flood.

Abyaneh has a compact texture with narrow and steep alleys. Located on the slopes of the mountain, the houses are arranged in a stair-step shape, so that the roofs of some houses are the yards of others. Timbers, straw and clay have been used for building the roofs. The walls, built from red mud bricks are impressive. The mud bricks harden when they are exposed to rain. The houses have been built facing the east to get the maximum sunshine.

An impressive aspect of Abyaneh's architecture is that the houses are uniform in appearance. The doors, most of which have two knockers, are wooden and built in traditional styles. There are beautiful patterns, poems and the names of the owners and mason carved on some doors. The poems demonstrate a good picture of the old Iranian culture. Many facades date back to the Safavid era. Beside the doors of many houses, there are small platforms providing places for passers-by or local residents to rest for a while.

The simplicity of Abyaneh houses pre-



A native of Abyaneh walks in the historical mountainous village, which is located in Isfahan province, central Iran.

sents a picture of the life in rural Iran. Each room is used for various purposes. For example, a single room may be used as a dining-room, a sitting-room, a bedroom and a guest-room. To make efficient use of fuel, the rooms used in winter are

architecturally different from those used in summer. To provide equal lighting for all parts of the rooms, there are several small opening in the roofs. The size of the rooms, windows and doors all indicate the simplicity of life in this old village.



A view of Karaftu Caves in Iran's Kordestan province.

Karaftu Caves visited by JICA experts

HERITAGE TEHRAN — On Sunday, a delegation of experts from Japan International Co-operation Agency paid a visit to Karaftu Caves, which is a mixture of natural and human-made caverns, CHTN reported.

The visit was in line with a comprehensive tourism project that JICA follows to develop over a vast area of lands in northwest of the country.

"In the same vein, all parts of Karaftu Caves were visited by the delegation. Besides, the history and capabilities of the region for [encouraging] investment were described," a local official Saber Vafaei said.

The project goes through three phases of primary studies,

field visits and the development of a comprehensive tourism plan for six provinces including West and East Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Kordestan, Zanjan and Qazvin.

Set in the side of a large cliff, 42km from Takab, the Caves ensemble was used for habitation from early Sassanid times (224-651). The caves were formed naturally, but were modified by inhabitants over the centuries. In ancient times, these caves were important from an economic point of view, as they were situated on the Silk Roads. Today, the caves are also significant for a Greek inscription found in them, as this is one of the few examples of such a script preserved in situ in Iran.

UNESCO warning jolts north Macedonia tourism hotspot

After UNESCO threatened to put the lakeside town of Ohrid and the surrounding area on its list of endangered sites, mainly citing its persistent problem with illegal construction, the local authorities promised swift action.

The town started removing palm trees from the Ohrid coastline on Thursday, the same day the report was made public. UNESCO recommended removing them due to the fact that they are not indigenous and are

harming the authenticity of the area.

"Their removal did not require some extensive preparations so we started from this," Ohrid's newly-elected mayor Konstantin Goergevski told media on Thursday.

In its latest draft report, due to be debated at its conference in July in Baku, UNESCO proposes putting the Ohrid region at the list of endangered heritage sites.

The report notes that although some large

construction projects that threatened to ruin its authenticity were recently halted, the problem with many smaller illegal builds persists.

The mayor said that within 30 days, the local authorities will compile a register of illegal builds, and as soon as the national parliament passes a long-overdue law designed to curb this problem in and around Ohrid, they will introduce a moratorium on such constructions. Lake Ohrid, the deepest and oldest lake

in the Balkan semi-peninsula, is one of only 28 sites across the world that UNESCO has named a world heritage site in both the culture and nature categories.

Along with its natural beauty - it is home to many endemic species such as Ohrid trout - what makes the area special is its rich cultural heritage. Ohrid's old town is full of old churches, picturesque houses and centuries-old monuments. (Source: Balkan Insight)

The world's first guitar-shaped hotel will have swim-up suites and a 7,000-seat concert venue

Sure, your hotel might be nice, but does it rock?

The Hard Rock chain of hotels and casinos are pretty much dedicated to making guests feel like rock stars, and the latest addition to the Hard Rock brand is taking the rock 'n' roll lifestyle to a whole new level.

The brand is opening the world's first guitar-shaped hotel in Hollywood, Florida. The new, \$1.5-billion hotel is part of a \$2.2-billion expansion of the current Seminole Hard Rock Hotel location in Tampa and Hollywood, Florida.

The 400-foot hotel is built like the body of a guitar, making it the most over-the-top Hard Rock Hotel in history, as well as a new addition to the ever-growing list of peculiar hotels around the world. Staying there seems a little like if you shrunk down The Beatles, or the Rolling Stones, or hey, even Aerosmith, and they all went to live inside a Fender. And that might not be a bad thing.

The oddly shaped space will include palatial rooms starting at 515 square feet, according to CNN. Some rooms will even be swim-up suites and villas partially submerged in water, which include butler service and a private pool.

In addition, guests will be able to enjoy a 10-acre lagoon-style pool, a lazy river, a 12,000-square-foot rooftop bar, lots of shopping, a 41,000-square-foot spa, a comedy theater, 14 restaurants to choose from, and, of course, 3,000 slot machines and 228 game tables, the Miami Herald reported.

But the real crowning glory of the new hotel is the rebuilt, 7,000-seat concert venue, Hard Rock Live, according to the Miami Herald. The venue will host more than 100 shows per year, including concerts, boxing matches, theater shows, and more. The hotel's grand opening is set to have a concert with Maroon 5 as the headliner.

While not everyone is excited about the uniquely shaped hotel in South Florida - the Miami Herald panned its design back in 2018 - Allen told CNN that Hard Rock "represents more than food, beverage and a place to stay." Think of it as a destination: full of kitsch, novelty, and frankly, lots of amazing perks.

The new Hard Rock Hollywood is scheduled to open on Oct. 24, though room reservations can be made as soon as July 24. (Source: CNN)



First Announcement



Khuzestan Steel Company

IN THE NAME OF GOD

INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER

No.: 403753

KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE

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- 3) THE OFFERED PRICE SHOULD BE VALID UP TO 4 MONTH AFTER OPPENING DATE .
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Public Relations of Khuzestan Steel Co

Iran to establish 5G telecom network despite sanctions: minister

TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — “Despite sanctions, we plan to establish the 5th Generation (5G) of telecom network,” the information and communication technology (ICT) minister wrote on his twitter account, Mehr reported on Sunday.

“We have held good meetings on launching of 5G network. It would be a great step forward for the country,” he said.

“Although U.S. sanctions reduce our speed, we will establish 5G as we completed 80 percent of the National Information Network and provided 20 villages with internet coverage per day,” he explained.

According to research by GSMA, which represents mobile operators worldwide, 5G is forecast to account for as many as 1.2 billion connections by 2025, likely to cover one-third of the world's population.

The first phase of e-government service



project in Iran officially came on stream under the title of ‘Mobile Government’ in

mid-May 2018.

The project aims to facilitate some govern-

ment services, reduce unnecessary expenses and ease traffic jam, which is the main cause of air pollution in big cities.

It is based on the National Information Network, an ongoing project to develop a secure and stable infrastructure network in the country.

According to the UN report released in June 2018, Iran moved 20 notches up to rank 86 among 193 countries in the United Nations E-Government Development Index (EGDI 2018) in comparison with EGDI 2017.

Iran's EGDI value was 0.6083 this year. Regarding the sub-items, the country got 0.6319 score in the online service index (OSI), 0.4566 in the telecommunication infrastructure index (TII), and 0.7364 in the human capital index (HCI) this year.

Iran was amongst 17 countries that transitioned from Middle- to High-EGDI level group.

Iran presents ‘From Silk Road to Innovation Network’ at China forum

TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — The Iran National Innovation Fund has introduced the idea of ‘From Silk Road to Innovation Network’ which was held on May 26 at China's Pujiang Innovation Forum.

“Undoubtedly, technology and innovation cooperation, as an international platform, is one of the main economic cooperation,” said the chairman of the board of directors of the Iran National Innovation Fund, Ali Vahdat, during a speech at the forum.

The forum, which is held on the theme of ‘Belt and Road’, can facilitate economic cooperation, he said.

He called innovation and technology cooperation as the development key in national level and as a good ground for competition between organizations.

“Iran has a great capacity in the field of innovation ecosystem, which can be used for establishment of Silk Road,” he said.

Iran has over 4000 knowledge-based companies in different fields of nanotechnology, biotechnology and sciences, he said. Vahdat talked about Iran's support for hi-tech and research and development companies during past years.

During his speech, he proposed establishment of a network for technology solution exchange between Silk Road countries through which, the member countries can meet their demands of technological solutions.

A joint fund also can develop important technologies and reduce the technological development risks, he said.

Through the networks, the members can share their experiences about innovation cooperating as well as their different finan-



cial tools and in this way create a common knowledge, he said.

With innovation as the theme, by sticking to international vision and national demands, the forum is dedicated to establish a platform for exchange of innovative development, dissemination of advanced concepts, com-

munication of academic ideas, interaction among government, industry, universities and institutions, publication of latest policies, and international cooperation in science and technology, to serve the innovation-driven development strategy and the construction of an innovation-oriented country.

Why and how is a ‘startupist’ required to budget his/her time

When it comes to the word ‘startup’, it seems like only a single word; however a load of tasks must be done and a lot of work hours must be filled. If you see your startupist friend making a lot of money, it is not because he was lucky, but because he has transcended beyond his own limitations in terms of time and energy. When other people have a 9 to 5 working day (8 to 4 in some other cultural contexts) and wait for their monthly salary, a startupist lives on the margins, and works hard from 5-5, (whether both AM or both PM; it makes no difference.)

The way they work always reminds me of the following quote by Confucius:

“Men's natures are alike; it is their habits that separate them.”

For a startupist, being alone and helpless in the beginning of his/her venture is something natural. So, as a startupist, just be patient and strive to use your time and energy efficiently. Forget about inviting people to help you because most of your friends or colleagues are accustomed to their typical jobs and the wages they make on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Be sure that you are alone and have no choice other than to trust your own energy, confidence, capability, and the limited options around you. Don't expect any extra hands from even your closest friends.

■ A startupist's tasks, sub-tasks, or maybe sub-sub-tasks

Normally a fresh startupist's daily tasks are divided into two or three parts, depending on the digital market in which they are going to be active, as follows:

■ Studying and learning

His/her daily work as a mechanic, teacher or whatever. Of course, those who have no sponsors need to stand on their own feet to win some bread.

So, let's take a look at tasks related to the website itself:

- Producing textual content
- Producing videos (in the next steps if needed)
- Re-planning and redesigning as the website improves

As a startupist, you may need to learn Photoshop, Premier, or Camtasia or even other software depending on the type of activity your website does. For example, a website which is about English learning requires different content compared to a website which is about furniture or dairy products. In other words, the nature of the content depends on the nature of the website itself.

■ It is true that Rome was not built overnight

So far, we and other startupists have learnt that when



one wants to launch a digital market, a great deal of time and energy is needed. It is a good idea to take a look at the table below, which demonstrates the starting and flourishing times of some startups.

■ A possible good technique to save your time

Let's start with a question. How many minutes or hours do you waste during one year, one month, one day, 30 minutes, or one minute? As you can figure out, there is a correlation between the time span and the possibility of wasting time. The bigger span, the greater possibility there is to waste time. If you have only a glass of 30 minutes to write (not to drink) a composition in an exam, for example, you will drink every single drop of that time effectively.

To do a task, choose a block of time within which you actually cannot do anything else. For example, 30 minutes or 45 minutes would suffice. It is up to you. What should you do within this time frame? You should choose one task and focus on finishing that specific task. No tea, coffee or chatting with a friend, not even answering a phone call. Seems a bit tough, but it will help you do your tasks smoothly and above all, be satisfied at the end of the day. In fact, time is not money; it is a tool for making money but only if used efficiently. Time can make money and bring prosperity for you as long as you keep it alive.

■ What you should know before joining a startup

Tabulate your tasks and spice it with times you have to study and learn about your new venture and the tools you require.

■ How is our time killed and saved?

It is always difficult to break old habits or replace them with new ones, but it is essential. If you want to reach your desired goals, you need to develop and also get rid of some habits. As Brian Tracy says, “Successful people are simply those with success habits.” I would say that killing seconds is the worst habit that someone can grow in oneself but saving them is a success habit. The difference will be seen in the long term. In fact, we kill time second by second, so it will survive only if you feed it. How? By using it in an appropriate way.

■ Murdering time

The time is murdered when two, three, or four hours is spent on doing one task. In this case:

- Your telephone may ring several times and you have to answer
- You may get distracted by other things
- You may get tired of doing one thing for hours

■ Saving time

What if you spend as short as thirty minutes on only one task?

You won't be distracted because the specified time is too short for distractions, but long enough to do/finish something useful or at least complete part of it.

You won't get frustrated with doing only one task for hours.

■ Unplanned tasks

There are always some tasks for which we can never plan, but have to do them as soon as they arise. For example, when your son/daughter gets sick, the time one of your pipes starts leaking, or when some guests arrive out of the blue. You must get back to work as soon as they have been sorted out. Note that you are not living in an isolated environment, so unplanned tasks are part of your life; not external disturbances which will derail your life or your fledgling business. Therefore, accept them willingly. To manage these tasks better, use stickers and stick them on the wall in front of you. Do them as soon as they emerge and don't postpone them until sometime later.

It is possible to save a lot of time and use it effectively, only if a startupist learns to cut 24 hours within small fragments and consume them wisely. Listing your tasks only is not enough and does not help, unless you specify a short (shorter than one single hour) to them. If more time needed, again it must be planned within the time frame mentioned above. Never kill your time, if you want your business to survive. (Source: startupik.com)

Data bank on Iranian knowledge-based health firms established

TECHNOLOGY TEHRAN — An electronic health accelerator **d e s k** has established a data bank on the information of knowledge-based firms active in the field of health, ISNA reported on Monday.

The accelerator has held several exhibitions, tech markets, startups, entrepreneurship events at the Mashhad University of Medical Sciences since 2016.

The data bank supports Iranian production and services, the director of the accelerator Daniah A'lamidoust announced.



The data bank also facilitates the promotion, introduction and marketing of Iranian products, he explained.

It provides a free of charge space for production companies, knowledge-based firms and other companies active in incubator center to introduce their products and services independently, he added.

The bank is not an online shopping but a complete reference without time limit in which national products are introduced and the customers can obtain their needs directly from the companies, he said.

The data bank provides an opportunity for students, workshops and entrepreneurs to introduce their products and services in national and international markets, he said.

He explained that the data bank will be available in other languages in the near future in order to expand markets in neighboring countries.

In May 2018, the health ministry announced that Iranian knowledge-based companies operating in the field of health have supplied over 2,500 products to the domestic market.

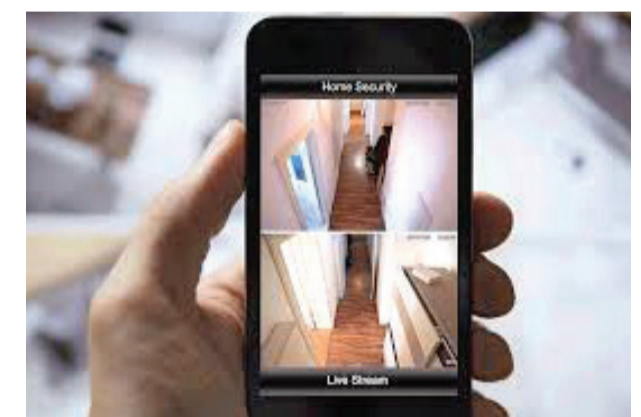
According to the report, About 450 knowledge enterprises are now active in the field of healthcare products in the country up to that date and they offer products like medical equipment, medicine and biological products, herbal medicine, diagnostic testing kits and gene therapy products.

Technology, lifestyles are changing how we define where we live

What makes a house or an apartment a home?

For some of us, home is a walk-up apartment that we share with a roommate or two. For others, it might be a center-hall house on a leafy suburban street, or a modern glass box overlooking the sea. The variations are endless. The only real universal feature is a roof over your head; everything else that distinguishes a home from mere shelter is different for each of us.

And evolving technology and lifestyles are changing what we want our homes to be.



“With so many entertainment and smart technology options at our fingertips, we find homeowners are spending more time at home. People are focusing on how they truly use a space to reflect how they live, versus what the room is ‘supposed to be,’” says Kerrie Kelly, an interior design expert for the online real-estate marketplace Zillow.

For instance, she notes, dining rooms are no longer just a place to eat. “Adults work from this space and kids do homework here, making a single-use room more multipurpose,” Kelly says. “We also see ‘library rooms’ in lieu of formal dining rooms, with more attention to comfortable seating for taking in a variety of media. And lastly, the laundry room isn't just for washing clothes any more. Pet-washing stations are popping up more frequently instead of laundry tubs.”

For city dwellers, she's noticed an increase in conversions of loft-like work spaces into living spaces.

The retailer Ikea surveyed people across the globe for its 2018 “Life at Home” report, and found that 1 in 4 respondents said they work more from home than ever before. Nearly 2 in 3 said they'd rather live in a small home in a great location than in a big home in a less ideal spot.

Jeffrey Dungan, an international architect based in Mountain Brook, Ala., reports that more clients want to use their homes for creative pursuits.

“There's this idea that with the increasing popularity of the Maker movement, and people turning hobbies into successful businesses — whether it's a side hustle or primary income — the home is more and more becoming a place of business,” he says. “Home is the place where you can do what you love unapologetically, and as more people turn what they love to do into a business, then in a way their business becomes home.”

A survey by the home-furnishings retailer Article in 2018 asked people what it took for them to finally call a dwelling a home. Many responders said it takes a couple of holidays, barbecues, family visits, big sporting events and game nights before they really feel “at home.” So feather the proverbial nest however you like, and have fun while you do it. Then invite somebody over.

(Source: Associated Press)

Japan to limit foreign ownership of firms in its IT, telecom sectors

Japan's government said on Monday that high-tech industries will be added to a list of businesses for which foreign ownership of Japanese firms is restricted.

The new rule, effective August 1, comes amid heightening pressure from the United States in dealing with cyber-security risks and technological transfers involving China.

The Japanese government made no mention of specific countries or companies that will be impacted by applying existing foreign ownership restrictions to the IT and telecoms industries.

The announcement came on the same day visiting U.S. President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe are holding talks in Tokyo on trade and other issues.

The United States has warned countries against using Chinese technology, saying Huawei Technologies could be used by Beijing to spy on the West. China and Huawei have strongly rejected the allegations.

“Based on increasing importance of ensuring cyber security in recent years, we decided to take necessary steps,



including addition of integrated circuit manufacturing, from the standpoint of preventing as appropriate a situation that will severely affect Japan's national security,” Japanese min-

istries said in a statement.

Japan wants to prevent a leakage of technology deemed important for national security or damage to defense output and technological foundation, they added.

The new rule will be applied to 20 sectors in information and communications industries, according to the joint statement by the finance ministry, trade ministry and communications ministry.

Under the foreign exchange and foreign trade control law, Japan brings certain industries such as airplanes, nuclear-related sectors and arms manufacturing under foreign capital controls.

The law requires foreign investors to report to the Japanese government and undergo inspection in case they buy 10% or more of stocks in listed Japanese companies or acquire shares of unlisted firms.

If the government finds any shortcomings, it can order foreign investors to change or cancel their investment plans.

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. economic terrorism against Iran seriously hurting EB patients

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Unfair U.S.-led sanctions on Iran and economic terrorism against the country have hindered the importation of wound dressing, threatening the lives of patients suffering from Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB). EB is a group of rare diseases that cause fragile, blistering skin. The blisters may appear in response to minor injury, even from heat, rubbing, scratching or adhesive tape. In severe cases, the blisters may occur inside the body, such as the lining of the mouth or the stomach.



There's currently no cure for EB, but treatment can help ease and control symptoms. With so many wounds at different stages of healing, the management of EB is complex. Protecting the peri-wound skin, avoiding skin stripping, addressing the bio-burden and exudate management are all key factors to consider.

In patients with EB the skin is so fragile and dressing changes so frequent that atraumatic dressings are recommended to prevent further damage, pain or bleeding. Silicone-based dressings are easier to apply and remove than traditional dressings. They also protect the wound and peri-wound skin and create a favorable environment for wound healing.

Iran used to purchase wound dressing with trade name of mepilex from Mölnlycke, a Swedish pharmaceutical company. The dressing plays a significant role in healing the patients' wounds. For the past few years Iran's Ministry of Health have purchased the dressing and provided the patients with free of charge dressings.

However, since last year and with the newly imposed sanctions on Iran Mölnlycke has refused to sell its products to Iran and now with no suitable replacement patients are facing challenges without proper skin care services.

So far, due to brutal sanction and the embargo on the importation of the products some 300 EB patients conditions have deteriorated and 7 are sadly dead.

The U.S. claims that tightening the sanctions has not affected import of medicine and European governments have so far failed to persuade the Trump administration to guarantee Iranian imports of medicine after the imposition of sanctions.

However, the lives of EB patients are seriously in danger due to the sanctions while humanitarian supplies are officially exempted from sanctions.

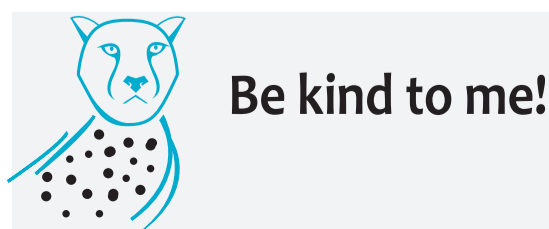
WORDS IN THE NEWS

Combating piracy in the south Pacific

(March 9, 2000)
Singapore hosted a conference aiming to reduce piracy after armed attacks against international shipping increased. The BBC's Jonathan Head reported. The seas around Indonesia and Singapore are some of the busiest in the world and some of the most dangerous. Last year more than a hundred ships were hijacked by pirates in Indonesian waters, a reflection of the growing lawlessness in the rest of the country. Using small fast-moving boats, the pirates creep up on large cargo ships, often at night, and can usually overpower the crew quickly. The crew is then either set adrift or killed. The ships are re-named and re-painted. Many have later been discovered operating along the southern coast of China. The offer by Japan to send its own patrol boats down to Southeast Asia is the first sign of a coordinated international campaign against the pirates. The conference in Singapore is likely to be the first in a series of meetings this year, aimed at reducing the number of attacks in these vital shipping lanes. A British company has even proposed putting retired Gurkha officers on board ships in East Asian waters to protect them, although so far no-one has taken them up on their offer.

Words
hijacked: if someone hijacks a vehicle, in this case a ship, they illegally take control of it by force while it is travelling from one place to another
pirates: sailors who attack and rob other ships
reflection: if something is a reflection of a situation, it indicates that the situation exists
lawlessness: actions which break the law
creep: to move quietly and slowly, often with the aim of being unnoticed
cargo ships: ships which are carrying goods
overpower: here, seize control of the crew despite any struggle they may put up
crew: the people who work on and operate a ship
set adrift: cast out to sea in a boat without any controls
patrol boats: small boats used by the navy to monitor shipping
series: a number of events or things which will come one after another
shipping lanes: trade routes taken by ships as they carry cargo from one destination to another
retired: a retired person is someone who has left their job and stopped working, usually because of age
Gurkha: a member of a regiment in the British or Indian army made up of soldiers from Nepal

(Source: BBC)



Biotechnology holds promise for improving oak forest health in Iran: official

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Biotechnology has the potential to be a part of the solution in protecting oak forest trees against destructive pest and disease outbreaks, Mostafa Qanei, secretary of biotech development center (BioDC) at science and technology vice-presidency, has said.

Zagros forests begin in northwestern West Azarbaijan province, along the Zagros mountain range, and extend to southern Fars province. The forests pass 11 provinces and cover an area of some 6 million hectares which is 40 percent of the country's forest area.

Different species of oak are the most important and dominant trees in this vast forest (comprising some 70 percent of all trees) and this has led to naming it as 'Zagros Oak Forests'. Zagros Oak Forests are of Iran's ancient heritage in western and southwestern areas.

The natural attraction of the oak forests have ornamented provinces of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Kermanshah, Ilam, Khuzestan, Lorestan, Fars and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, and is facing serious challenges.

Almost half of the oak trees in the forest areas of western Ilam and Kohgiluyeh-Boyer-Ahmad provinces are suffering from charcoal disease which can ultimately destroy the whole forest. Omid Sajjadian, a board member of 'Zagros green movement' environmental group, said in April 2018.

The disease is caused by *biscogniauxia mediteranea*. The leaves of infected trees turn brown and gradually, dark viscous exudation appears on the trunk. And in the winter of the next year fungal growth induces a typical charcoal-black surface on diseased branches and trunks which ultimately leads to the death of the tree. Although it's a fungal disease, the main culprit for this outbreak seems to be



Research teams are working on discovering other factors contributing to the oak forests loss and finding ways to reverse the deforestation.

drought and sand and dust storms.

Restoration of oak forests by employing molecular techniques and biotechnology has become a priority for the biotech development center, IRNA news agency quoted Qanei as saying on Sunday.

Creating a gene bank for oak trees in an attempt for management and conservation of forest genetic resources, and finding methods for pest control, are of the plans drawn up to

protect the forests, he highlighted.

He went on to say that "we are planning on producing medicines by means of biotechnology techniques using secondary metabolites in oak trees."

Secondary metabolites have shown to possess various biological effects, which provide the scientific base for the use of herbs in the traditional medicine in many ancient communities. They have been described as anti-

biotic, antifungal and antiviral and therefore are able to protect plants from pathogens.

Some of the plans are already implemented and some are still being studied, however, implementation of all the plans can help safeguarding the forest, he noted.

Moreover, Qanei said, research teams are working on discovering other factors contributing to the oak forests loss and finding ways to reverse the deforestation.

Meanwhile, local communities and non-governmental groups are also striving to either stop or slow the loss of precious oak forests, he concluded.

-----Biotechnology in protecting forests

According to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, biotechnology has the potential to help mitigate threats to forests by introducing pest-resistant traits, but research is needed to help meet challenges presented by this approach.

The necessary genetic changes to achieve resistance are often not easy to identify and are challenging to implement. Furthermore, the effectiveness of biotechnology at mitigating forest threats needs to be assessed on many fronts. In addition to evaluating how effectively the resistance trait protects a tree species, the modified tree needs to be tested for viability in the diversity of environments in which it will live and for its effects on other species in the environment.

Biotechnology is one of many approaches to addressing forest health, the report cautions, and it should not be pursued to the exclusion of other practices for managing forest health, including prevention of the arrival of invasive species and site management practices.

DOE, University of Environment teach students about water conservation

SOCIETY TEHRAN — In a collaborative attempt, Iran's Department of Environment (DOE) and University of Environment teach students about water conservation. ISNA news agency reported on Monday.

DOE and University of Environment have devised a scheme with a purpose of teaching students about the importance of water conservation which is underway at some schools, deputy environment chief for teaching and public participation said.

The bilateral cooperation between University of Environment and teaching and public participation office of DOE has started since last year (March 2018-March 2019), Eskandar Omidinia said, adding that university students are tasked with teaching environmental issues, centering around water conservation, to elementary and high school students as well as university students.

The scheme was piloted in Alborz province and after analyzing the advantages and set backs of the plan it will be implemented on a larger scale in the summer, Omidinia explained.

The purpose of the scheme is to develop a connection



between students at schools and university students and mobilizing the potential of the students in safeguarding the environment, he added.

Being young, students' attitudes towards the environment can be easily shaped and sustainable development goals can be improved this way, he suggested.

He also highlighted that reducing water footprint in de-

velopment is the main theme of the scheme aiming at crating green jobs and decreasing detriment environmental impacts.

Young people constitute a large part of the world's population and young people will have to live longer with the consequences of current environmental decisions than will their elders. Future generations will also be affected by these decisions and the extent to which they have addressed concerns such as the depletion of resources, biodiversity loss, and long-lived radioactive wastes.

Young people can play an active role in protecting and improving the environment. They can change their lifestyle and how it affects the environment. According to the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development young people can make their homes, schools and youth organizations more environmentally friendly by adopting environmentally friendly practices, recycling of different materials as well as preserving resources such as water and electricity. Engaging youth in environmental protection not only creates direct impact on changing youth behaviors and attitudes, but possibly influence their parents, relatives and families.

World's rivers are contaminated with dangerous levels of antibiotics, study finds

Rivers around the world are contaminated with dangerous levels of antibiotics, according to a major new study.

Concentrations of antibiotics in some waterways exceed safe levels by 300 times, a global team of scientists led by the University of York found.

The Thames was contaminated with five antibiotics, including levels of ciprofloxacin – used to treat skin and urinary tract infections – that were three times what is considered safe.

Researchers looked at 14 commonly used antibiotics in rivers flowing through 72 countries and found antibiotics were in two-thirds of samples.

Scientists fear antibiotics in rivers cause bacteria to develop resistance meaning they can no longer be used in medicines for humans. The UN estimates that the rise in antibiotic resistance could kill 10 million people by 2050.

"A lot of the resistance genes we see in human pathogens originated from environmental bacteria," Professor William Gaze, a microbial ecologist at the University of Exeter who was not involved in the study, told The Guardian.

Drugs get into rivers via human and animal waste, as well as leaks from wastewater treatment and drug manufacturing sources.

In one site in Bangladesh, levels of metronidazole – which is used to treat mouth and skin infections – were 300 times greater than what is considered safe. The most common antibiotic was a urinary tract infection antibiotic called trimethoprim, which was present in 307 of 711 sites tested.

Scientists flew out 92 testing kits to partners across the world who took samples from local rivers. Researchers found Bangladesh, Kenya, Ghana, Pakistan and Nigeria were home to the most contaminated rivers. The team said that the safe limits were most frequently exceeded in Asia and Africa.

However, sites in Europe, North America and South America also had high levels of contamination showing that antibiotic contamination was a "global problem".

Professor Alistair Boxall, from the York Environmental Sustainability Institute, said: "The results are quite eye opening and worrying, demonstrating the widespread contamination of river systems around the world with antibiotic compounds.

"Many scientists and policy makers now recognize the role of the natural environment in the antimicrobial resistance problem. Our data show that antibiotic contamination of rivers could be an important contributor.

"Solving the problem is going to be a mammoth challenge and will need investment in infrastructure for waste and wastewater treatment, tighter regulation and the cleaning up of already contaminated sites."

(Source: The Independent)

First Announcement



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Houthi: Drone strikes response to Saudi spurning of peace

TEHRAN — A senior Houthi official says Yemen has resumed its retaliatory drone attacks deep inside Saudi Arabia in response to the kingdom's spurning of "peace initiatives" sponsored by the United Nations.

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Committee of Yemen, said on Sunday the Houthi movement had agreed to halt strikes last year "in good faith" and was ready to take more steps.

"But unfortunately the aggressor countries misinterpreted these efforts (as weakness) and regarded them with contempt and indifference," he told Reuters news agency.

Houthi further dismissed Saudi allegations that the drone strikes had been carried out on Iran's orders. "We are independent in our decisions and... we are not subordinated to anyone," he said.

He pointed out that Yemeni forces had unilaterally withdrawn from three Red Sea ports, and criticized Saudi Arabia and its mercenaries for their failure to do so.



The movement, which has been significantly helping the Yemeni army against a Saudi war for the past four years, signed a UN-brokered truce deal with the Saudi side

in Stockholm on December 13. According to the agreement, Houthi fighters and Saudi mercenaries must withdraw from three ports in Yemen, particularly Hu-

daydah, through which more than 70 percent of Yemen's imports are made.

The Saudi-led military aggression, which started in March 2015, has already claimed tens of thousands of Yemeni lives.

According to Press TV, Over the past week, Yemeni fighters have launched three drone attacks on the airport in Saudi Arabia's southern Najran region. A U.S.-made Patriot missile battery at the airport was also targeted in the attacks.

A drone strike was carried out deep inside Saudi territory on two oil pumping stations on May 14.

The Houthi movement has warned that the attack ushered in a new phase of large-scale retaliatory attacks against vital targets in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Senior Houthi official Mohammad al-Bukhaiti described Yemeni drone strikes in line with the right of self-defense, saying they will stop once Saudi and UAE regimes change course and put an end to their military aggression.

Israel assassinated Kuntar with help of Syria terrorists



TEHRAN — A former Israeli army officer has admitted that Israel's military, with the help of militants in Syria, assassinated Samir Kuntar, a commander of Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement, during air raids in 2015.

According to UK-based Arab newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat, the ex-army officer Marco Morno said the operation was carried out with information from "one of the leaders of the Syrian opposition factions."

According to Press TV, the attack was conducted by two warplanes that bombed a building with four long-range missiles in Jaramana, near Damascus, in late 2015.

Back then, Kuntar was in Syria helping government forces and Hezbollah fight back foreign-backed Takfiri terrorists in the Arab country.

"Samir Kuntar, the longest serving Arab prisoner in Israeli jails, was killed in a terrorist rocket attack targeting a building in

the southern parts of Jaramana, Damascus countryside," the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported at the time.

He had spent about 30 years in Israeli prisons and was released in 2008 as part of a swap deal between Tel Aviv and Hezbollah in exchange for the bodies of two Israeli soldiers killed during the 2006 war.

According to the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a pro-militant monitoring group, Kuntar had been the target of various failed Israeli assassination attempts in Syria.

Morno, who was responsible for communicating with militants in Syria, revealed the details of Kuntar's assassination during an interview with an Israeli news site on Thursday. The information he disclosed was allowed to be published under military censorship. Hezbollah has been effectively helping the Syrian government in its fight against terrorists.

Trump presses Japan over trade gap, expects 'good things' from North Korea



TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump pressed Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Monday to even out a trade imbalance with the United States and said he was happy with how things were going with North Korea but was in no rush to reach a peace deal.

Trump told a news conference with Abe after their summit that his goal was to remove trade barriers to put U.S. exports on a fair footing in Japan. He said he hoped to have more to announce on trade very soon and said he and Abe had agreed to expand cooperation in human space exploration, Reuters reported.

"We have an unbelievably large imbalance, as you know, trade imbalance with Japan for many, many years. Japan having the big advantage," Trump said.

"They are brilliant business people,

and put us in a very tough spot. But I think we will have a deal with Japan," he added.

Abe, for his part, said the two leaders had agreed to speed up trade talks but dodged a question about timing.

Trump, who is on a four-day state visit to Japan meant to showcase the Japan-U.S. alliance, said on Twitter on Sunday that he expected big moves on trade would wait until after Japan's upper house election in July.

"Trade-wise, I think we'll be announcing some things, probably in August, that will be very good for both countries," Trump said on Monday at the start of the talks. "We'll get the balance of trade, I think, straightened out rapidly."

Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasutoshi Nishimura told reporters there was no agreement to reach a trade deal by August.

Nationalists surge in EU Parliament, but pro-EU parties remain dominant

TEHRAN — Pro-European parties kept a firm grip on the EU parliament on Monday as liberal and green parties matched a surge by eurosceptic parties, who won control of a quarter of seats in European elections for the first time.

The far-right and nationalists in Italy, Britain, France and Poland came out on top in their national votes on Sunday, shaking up politics at home but failing to dramatically alter the balance of pro-European power in EU assembly, Reuters reported.

Facing a more hostile Russia, China's growing economic might and an unpredictable U.S. President Donald Trump, many Europeans appeared to heed a message that the EU needed to stick together to protect workers' rights, free speech and democracy.

Investor sentiment was bolstered by the smaller than expected gains by populist parties. However, the drop in support for the main center-right and center-left blocs could complicate policymaking and require broader cross-party agreements and discipline, market analysts said.

Provisional results published at 08:18 GMT on Monday showed the Socialists, Greens, liberals and conservatives with 507 of the 751 seats in the EU Parliament, which helps pass laws for more than 500 million Europeans.

French President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Renaissance platform added to gains for liberals at the EU level while support for the Greens surged, giving four groups the pro-EU middle ground and holding on to two-thirds of seats.

Macron and Sanchez were to meet later on Monday, the first in a series of meetings between EU leaders before

they gather for a summit on Tuesday evening in Brussels to discuss the outcome of the parliament vote.

■ Brexit, far-right protest

A stronger voice for the liberals and Greens could see the next EU executive seek a tougher line on regulating polluting industries, taxing multinational companies or demanding trading partners help contain climate change.

They could also press EU member states, notably in the east, not to damage civil rights.

Cries of "Europe is back" among voters waving blue and gold EU flags outside European Parliament in Brussels on Sunday night also showed the ebullient mood among Europeans delighted with a sharply higher turnout across the bloc.

Turnout in the world's second-biggest election rose to 51% from 43% in 2014, its highest in 20 years and the first reverse of falling participation since the first direct EU vote in 1979.

Disenchantment with the European project, which has struggled through economic and migration crises over the past five years, has made the bloc seem distant to voters and anger with the traditional parties was palpable across the bloc.

Riding a wave of anger at the British government's failure to take the United Kingdom out of the European Union, Nigel Farage's Brexit Party won a resounding victory.

The result showed Britain even more polarized over its Brexit divorce, nearly three years since a 2016 referendum in which it voted 52% to 48% to leave.



While Britain's departure from the bloc will require its EU lawmakers to give up their seats, Farage's party and its allies won 29 seats, the same number as Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right European People's Party in Germany.

In Italy, the far-right League became Italy's largest party, giving greater authority to its leader Matteo Salvini who is pushing for swinging tax cuts in defiance of EU budget rules.

Poland's eurosceptic ruling Law and Justice party (PIS) also came out ahead. In France, Marine Le Pen's anti-immigration, anti-Brussels National Rally edged Macron's pro-European centrist movement. Far-right separatists also saw support surge in Belgium.

Washington Post dirty deal with MBS on Khashoggi

1 → Informed sources have reported that the Saudis has sent its representative to the United States since last month to make this secret deal.

The publication of the most recent anti-Iranian articles in Washington Post, the first joint collaborative campaign of this dependent newspaper and the Saudis after the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

But there are some important points that can not easily be overtaken.

First, the Washington Post's claim belong to 2018, about 15 months ago, and could not relate to recent developments, since at that time, it was not essentially a matter of oil.

Meanwhile, Iran has consistently stated that, unlike the United States, Western actors and Arab allies, have not taken undisclosed action in the region, and declare their actions without any reservations.

For example, in the 33-day Gaza war, Iran declared its support for resistance and the Supreme Leader announced on the Friday prayers that "the Bahraini island accuses Iran of interfering. We are saying here to Bahrain, if we intervene, we would say plainly that, as we announced it in the Gaza Strip. If Iran had interfered in Bahrain, then the situation in Bahrain was certainly being different." The next issue is the nature of the

Washington Post's claim against Iran. The fact is that the Islamic Republic of Iran is capable of confronting any threat and does not need any proactive action, as it targeted them in the Deirazor in response to the terrorist attack on the building of the parliament.

Moreover, the concurrence of the Washington Post's claim with the anti-Iranian Saudis claim can be seen as a concerted effort to counter Iran's move, as the Saudi regime, in a letter to the Security Council, claimed responsibility for the recent drone strike on its oil facilities was entrusted to Ansarullah Yemen and Iran.

It is clear for everyone that Saudi-U.S. alliance which has failed in confrontation with the will of the Yemeni people with these media war try to hide the inability of the aggressive coalition against the nation and the Yemeni Resistance Forces. In this equation, the media tension of the Trump administration should also be considered because he created the anti-Iranian atmosphere in media looking for first, justification for increasing the dispatch of new forces to the Middle East and secondly, it seeks to justify the sale of weapons to Arab countries that are killing Yemenis and supporting terrorism in the region.

Tens of thousands of anti-Netanyahu Israelis protest in Tel Aviv

1 → "We won't let you be Erdogan. We won't have a Turkish dictator. We won't allow it." Laid said, addressing Netanyahu.

Some demonstrators wore Ottoman-style fez hats, a reference to Turkey, and waved Israeli flags and banners calling for "keeping Israel free."

The demonstrators say Netanyahu's incoming coalition is pushing for legislation to shield him from prosecution and is looking to restrict the power of the Supreme Court. Netanyahu is in the final stages of trying to form a new coalition government.

"We are not your subjects. We won't let you destroy the Supreme Court. You are not above the law," Lapid told the crowds.

In February, Israel's attorney general decided to indict Netanyahu on corruption charges, pending a final hearing.

Palestinians call on world nations to boycott U.S. conference in Bahrain

TEHRAN — The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has called on the international community to boycott a forthcoming U.S. conference in Bahrain, which Palestinians view as a platform to sell out their rights.

Washington announced last week it would co-host the June 25-26 meeting in Bahrain's capital city of Manama, purportedly to encourage investment in the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip.

However, Palestinian officials say the real aim is to pave the ground for the Trump administration to unveil its much-hyped "deal of the century" which they have already rejected as a non-starter.

"The PLO affirms its final opposition to the conference and it hasn't authorized any party to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people," the PLO Executive Committee said in a statement on Sunday.

"The goal pursued by the U.S. for the workshop is to start implementing the deal of the century and link it to economy after it takes steps in implementing the political parts of the deal," the PLO added.

It said the so-called "deal of the century" would "enforce the Israeli occupation and erase the national and legal rights of the Palestinian people."

The PLO stressed its rejection of the controversial U.S. plan, saying the organization "is sticking to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

U.S. President Donald Trump is reportedly about to unveil the plan at the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan and after the formation of a new Israeli cabinet, most likely in June.

According to Press TV, on Saturday, PLO Secretary General Saeb Erekat also called on all countries to boycott the conference, saying it "will surely fail without Palestinian participation."

N. Korea calls America's Bolton 'inordinately ignorant' over missile test remarks

TEHRAN — North Korea has criticized U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton, calling him a "war fanatic" and a "human defect" that should be banished after the hawkish US official said Pyongyang's latest missile tests violated UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.

A spokesman for the North's Foreign Ministry said Bolton's comments about Pyongyang's tests of two long-range and several short-range missiles were "inordinately ignorant" and "beyond stupid."

The American security official said on May 24 that "there is no doubt" North Korea's missile tests earlier this month violated UNSC resolutions.

The unnamed North Korean spokesman said the launches did not target or threaten any neighboring country. "Banning launches using ballistic technology is equal to telling us to give up our right to self defense," he added.

He further called Bolton a "war maniac" who keeps "whispering war" into President Donald Trump's ears. Bolton, the spokesman added, is more working to "destroy" rather than maintain "peace and security."

"Such human defect must go away as soon as possible," the North Korean official added.

In his comments about North Korea's tests, Bolton went further than his boss, President Trump, who first said he was "unhappy" with the tests and later downplayed their significance.

In a tweet, Trump dismissed Bolton's concerns over North Korea testing of "some small weapons."

On Monday, Trump — who is on a visit to Japan — said there was "great respect" between the United States and North Korea and predicted "lots of good things."

Russia voices readiness to play role in Venezuela talks with opposition in Oslo

TEHRAN — Russia has expressed readiness to play a role in a new round of peace talks between the government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and the U.S.-backed opposition slated for next week in Norway's capital, Oslo.

The Norwegian government announced Sunday that delegates from the Maduro government and the opposition will resume negotiations in Oslo in an effort to find ways out of a months-long political crisis plaguing the Latin American country. Norway will be acting as a mediator.

An earlier round of such talks was held in Oslo this month, but the opposition said there were no face-to-face meetings.

According to Press TV, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed the continuation of the talks, saying it was ready to assist in the negotiating process.

"Moscow welcomes the announcement about the continuation of contacts between the Venezuelan government and opposition being held in Oslo through Norway's good services," said the statement.

The political crisis began in Venezuela in January when opposition figure Juan Guaido — who heads Venezuela's now defunct National Assembly — abruptly declared himself "interim president" and called for early election. Caracas called it a coup attempt masterminded by the U.S.

Russia further warned against external powers trying to foist ultimatums on the Venezuelan leadership.

Iran ready for VNL challenge: Igor Kolakovic

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran volleyball coach Igor Kolakovic says they are well-prepared for the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League Week 1.

The 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League will be the second edition of the FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League, an annual international men's volleyball tournament contested by 16 national teams.

Iran and Italy will open the second edition on May 31 in the Chinese city of Jiangmen, Guangdong province.

The Jiangmen pool also features hosts China and Germany. Team Melli are scheduled to face China and Germany on June 1 and 2, respectively.

"The first week is the toughest week and we know that a difficult task is ahead of us. We will travel to China to win our matches despite knowing that volleyball is not predictable," Kolakovic said.

"Iran have a strong combination of experienced and young talented players. I hope we keep our good condition until the end of the tournament. We know that Iranian people have high expectations but all 16 teams are there to qualify for the final round," the Montenegrin added.

"I hope we do our best in the competition because our players are well-prepared to advance to the final round. We wanted to arrange a couple of friendly matches before taking part in the competition but nobody accepted it. Anyway, Iran want to win a place in the final round," Kolakovic concluded.

The men's VNL features 16 teams playing in round-robin over five weekends.

The competition will wrap up on June 30, before the top six teams move to Chicago for the finals from July 10-14.

This will be the first edition of the World League or the Nations League to have the Final Round hosted in North America.



© TEHRAN TIMES/ Maryam Kamyab

Reza Ghoochannejhad leaves Sydney FC



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iranian striker Reza Ghoochannejhad left A-League club Sydney FC following the expiry of his contract with the team.

Nicknamed 'Gucci' joined Sydney FC from top Cypriot club APOEL on loan for six months on 31 January, becoming the first Iranian international in the A-League.

He scored his first goal for the club against Adelaide United and later scored the winning penalty in the 2019 A-League Grand Final.

"Thank you @sydneyfootballclub. You have been so good to me and my family, we'll never forget it. Thanks to the technical and the medical staff, my teammates and all the other people involved in this beautiful club. We're gonna miss you," Ghoochannejhad said on his Instagram.

Reports suggest that Iranian giants Persepolis are going to sign him as a replacement for Ali Alipour, who has been linked with a move to Greek and Belgian teams.

Ghoochannejhad, who scored Iran's only goal at the 2014 FIFA World Cup, has had a successful career in Holland, England and Belgium.

Born in Iran, the 31-year old emigrated to Holland at an early age, representing the Dutch under 16, 17, 18 and 19 teams before being offered the chance to represent the country of his birth by former Real Madrid Head Coach Carlos Queiroz.

The forward played 44 times for his country scoring 17 goals and twice being selected in Iran's World Cup squads, before retiring from international football after last year's tournament in Russia.

Wilmots to start his job as Iran coach on Tuesday



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Former Belgium and Ivory Coast coach Marc Wilmots will start his job as new head coach of Iran national football team on Tuesday.

The 50-year-old coach signed a contract with Iran football federation last week in Brussels, Belgium amid growing speculations over his future.

The former Belgian striker had reportedly signed a \$1.2 million (1 million euros) a year deal with Iran.

The contract runs until the end of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Wilmots took over from Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz who stepped down after eight years in charge in January following Iran's semi-final exit in the Asian Cup when they went

down 3-0 to Japan.

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.

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.

Karim Ansarifard to Rangers? Ibrox side linked with Iranian international striker



Rangers have been linked with Nottingham Forest striker Karim Ansarifard as the Light Blues seek attacking reinforcements.

Football Insider claims the Ibrox side face competition from clubs in Germany and Turkey for the 29-year-old's services.

The future of Colombian striker Alfredo Morelos is unclear, with the 22-year-old attracting interest from a host of clubs after another goal-laden season, while Kyle Lafferty's position is also unclear.

The Northern Irish striker rejoined the Light Blues last summer after a spell at Hearts but despite scoring a double on his debut, struggled for game time and fell down the pecking order with Morelos and, latterly, on-loan Bournemouth forward Jermain Defoe preferred in attack.

Lafferty played 25 times for the Ibrox side but completed the full 90 minutes

on just five occasions, with one coming in the Scottish Cup against Cowdenbeath.

Steven Gerrard is believed to be a fan of Iranian international Ansarifard, who has also had spells at Iran-based teams Saipa, Persepolis and Tractor Sazi as well as Osasuna in Spain and Panionios and Olympiacos in Greece.

He has scored 19 goals in 76 international appearances including one against Portugal in the 1-1 draw between the two sides at last year's World Cup.

Ansarifard is under contract at the City Ground until summer 2020 and while he has played just 12 game for Forest following a lengthy delay in obtaining a work permit and a spell at the 2019 AFC Asian Cup, his goal-scoring exploits for previous clubs have made him an attractive target for numerous clubs.

(Source: Scotman)

Lanky striker back on nat'l team for friendly vs. Iran



Striker Lee Jeong-hyeop has made it back to the men's national football team for the first time in nearly two years, as South Korea gear up for two friendly matches next month.

Head coach Paulo Bento announced his 25-man roster at the Korea Football Association (KFA) House in Seoul on Monday. South Korea will host Australia at Busan Asian Main Stadium in Busan, 450 kilometers southeast of Seoul, at 8 p.m. on June 7. And four days later, also at 8 p.m., South Korea will face Iran at Seoul World Cup Stadium in the nation's capital.

Lee, forward for Busan IPark in the second-tier K League 2, last played for South Korea at a friendly versus Colombia in November 2017.

Lee is enjoying a fine season with Busan IPark, with seven goals in nine matches.

Lee, 27, rose to unlikely stardom in early 2015 under former coach Uli Stielike, scoring three goals in his first six appearances, including two during South Korea's march to the final at the 2015 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup.

Iran are the top Asian Football Confederation (AFC) team in the FIFA rankings at No. 21, 16 spots ahead of South Korea and 20 spots above Australia.

South Korea have played Iran 30 times, with a record of nine wins, eight draws and 13 losses. South Korea's last win over Iran came in January 2011 in the quarterfinals of the AFC Asian Cup. In ensuing meetings, Iran enjoyed four consecutive 1-0 victories over South Korea before they played to a scoreless draw during the FIFA World Cup qualifiers in August 2017.

(Source: Yonhap)

Iran finishes 2nd at Greco Roman wrestling in Kazakhstan

MNA — The Iranian Greco Roman team managed to finish runner-up with one gold, one silver and three bronze medals at the Bolat Turlykhanov Memorial tournament in Kazakhstan.

The Bolat Turlykhanov Memorial Greco Roman tournament was held on 25-26 May 2019 in Kazakhstan's Almaty with participation of 181 wrestlers from Iran, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Russia, Bulgaria, Moldova and Mongolia in six weight categories.

At the end of the tournament, the Iranian team garnered five medals and finished second after Russia.

Medal winners for Iran included Alireza Nejati (gold, 60kg), Ramin Taheri (silver, 87kg), Mohammad Javad Rezaei (bronze, 67kg), Pezhman Pashtam (bronze, 77kg), and Shahab Ghoure-Jalili (bronze, 130kg).

Host country Kazakhstan claimed the third place of the tournament.

Alipour reportedly on AEK Athens's radar

PLDC — Reports suggest that AEK Athens football club is tracking Persepolis striker Ali Alipour.

Alipour, who scored 14 goals in Iran Professional League last season, has been linked with a move to the Greek football team, Sportdog.gr.

Last year's champion AEK finished third in Greek League Season behind PAOK and Olympiakos

Belgium top football teams Sint-Truidense and Charleroi are reportedly going to sign the 25-year-old forward.

Alipour has helped Persepolis win IPL title for three years in a row.

Azmoun hopes to continue his good form next season

The Iranian international forward Sardar Azmoun spoke to the press after the final game of the season.

"Everything went very well, we won a well-deserved championship. I want to congratulate the fans, my team mates. We did everything right to become champions," Azmoun said.

"I would like to congratulate Fyodor Chalov for winning the Golden Boot. He is a good player. But for me the team winning is more important than personal awards. I have never thought about being top scorer. The title was what was important," he added.

"I have already said that everything has been very cool. We have a great team and great fans. I hope next season I will continue to play well and please the fans," Azmoun concluded.

(Source: FC-Zenit)

Ali Shafiei joins Stade Poitevin Volleyball Club

Iranian middle blocker Ali Shafiei has joined French volleyball club Stade Poitevin.

The 28-year-old player has joined the French club on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee.



"He is very explosive player and has a good reading of the game and a good crossing in the block. His floating service is also devastating," Stade Poitevin coach Brice Donat said.

Ali Shafiei is a member of Igor Kolakovic's team who is going to represent Iran at the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League Week 1.

Iran and Italy will open the second edition on May 31 in the Chinese city of Jiangmen, Guangdong province.

(Source: Lanouvelle Republique)

Iran freestylers win seven medals at Sassari City Matteo Pellicone Memorial

IRNA — Iranian freestyle wrestlers claimed seven medals at the 2019 Sassari City Matteo Pellicone Memorial on Saturday.

Ahmad Bazri in 86kg, Alireza Karimi in 92kg and Hamed Talebi Zarinkamar in 97kg claimed three gold medals.

Abbas Foroutan in 97kg won a silver and Nader Haj Aghania in 57kg, Younes Emami in 70kg and Arashk Mohebbi in 92kg won three bronze medals.

Kazakhstan won the team title with 162 points, followed by Russia (147 points) and Iran (111 points).

The 2019 Sassari City Matteo Pellicone Memorial was held in Sassari City, Italy from May 23 to 25.

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

People's true nature is revealed in their critical conditions.

Imam Ali (AS)

IRIB dismisses managers for program insulting Sunni personalities

A R T TEHRAN — The manager of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting's Channel 5, Javad Ramezannejad, and a program manager have been dismissed over a live broadcast of a celebration, during which a eulogist cursed a number of the early Islam personalities who are respected in Sunni Islam.



A logo for the IRIB Live TV.

The dismissals were announced by IRIB deputy director Morteza Mirbaqeri on Sunday after he received a letter from IRIB Managing Director Abdol Ali Aliasgari.

"Due to the disparagement in the live broadcast that hurt Sunni brothers, sisters and ulema, the manager of the channel and broadcast manager must be fired," Abdol Ali Aliasgari wrote in the letter to his assistant.

During the live program broadcast from Channel 5 last week to celebrate the birthday of Imam Hassan (AS), the second Shia imam, eulogist Ahad Qadami cursed three of the Rashidun caliphs and Aisha, daughter of Caliph Abi Bakr.

The decision to fire the IRIB managers was made after the live broadcast provoked a storm of strong criticism against the IRIB program from a number of Sunni MPs in the Majlis.

In a statement published prior to the decision, IRIB condemned Qadami's remarks and apologized to Sunnis for the comments.

Qadami also appeared in a Tehran court last week following a summons from the public prosecutor to explain about the issue.

Paris Literature Night reviews Afshin Yadollahi's "La Clepsydre de L'amour"

A R T TEHRAN — A French version of late Iranian songwriter Afshin Yadollahi's collection "La Clepsydre de L'amour" was reviewed on Saturday during the 7th edition of Literature Night, a book reading session organized by the Forum of Foreign Cultural Institutes — FICEP in Paris.



Front cover of the French version of Iranian songwriter Afshin Yadollahi's "La Clepsydre de L'amour" ("The Clepsydra of Love").

Sixteen other books translated into French were also reviewed during five 40-minute readings, which was attended by writers and translators.

Among the books were "Everything Is Now" by Julia Wolf from Germany, "Until Stones Become Softer Than Water" by Antonio Lobo Antunes from Portugal, "The Budapest Crossing" by Jonas Terey from Hungary, "I Already Told You" by Chen Yuhong from Taiwan and "Nami" by Bianca Bellova from the Czech Republic.

Translated into French by Mithra Farzad, "La Clepsydre de L'amour" ("The Clepsydra of Love") was published by Candle & Fog, the London-based Iranian-British publishing house in 2017.

The English version of the book, "Sidewalk in the Clouds", was translated by Caroline Crowsley and was published in 2015.

The book is a collection of poems that analyzes the pains and damages caused by the failure of a romantic relationship. Yadollahi, who was also a psychiatrist, died in a car crash in March 2017 at the age of 48.

Research centers gain online access to rare manuscripts at Mashhad library

CULTURE TEHRAN — Several Iranian libraries and research centers have gained online access to digital copies of the rare manuscripts preserved at the Astan-e Qods Razavi Organization for Libraries, Museums and Archives Centers in Mashhad.

The Majlis Library, Museum and Documentation Center in Tehran, Esra International Foundation for Revealed Knowledge in Qom, Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy in Qom, Khan Seminary in Yazd and the University of Neyshabur are among the centers, the director of the Digital Books Department of the library, Ali Zarrabi, said in a press release published on Sunday.

The decision has been made after the director of the organization met several top clerics and scholars in Qom and Tehran, he added.

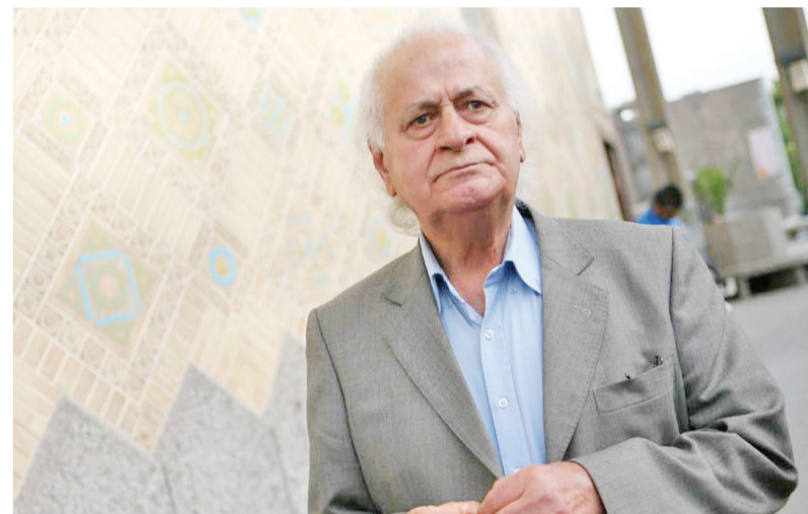
The organization keeps digital copies of over 20,000 manuscripts, 39,000 lithographic books, a great number of theses and about 50,000 books in other languages.

The Astan-e Qods Razavi Organization for Libraries, Museums and Archives Centers, which is adjacent to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), houses over 78,000 copies of rare Islamic manuscripts.



A rare Persian manuscript from the Astan-e Qods Razavi Organization for Libraries, Museums and Archives Centers in Mashhad.

Iranian dubber Parviz Bahram dies at 86



Parviz Bahram in an undated photo.

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian dubber Parviz Bahram who lent his voice to many leading actors of the world cinema such as Orson Welles, Robert Taylor and Laurence Olivier died of blood cancer at his home on Monday morning. He was 86, his wife Iran Shadab confirmed.

Bahram began his career with acting and directing plays and made his first dubbing role at the Iran Film Studio in 1950.

A few years later, Bahram and

his friends established the dubbing department in Iran's National TV.

Bahram was also popular for his collaboration in dubbing "Der Alte" aired by IRIB during the 1990s. He lent his voice the Chief Inspector Erwin Köster in the German TV series.

His other outstanding work is the narration he did for "The Silk Road", a documentary television series produced by Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) from 1980 to 1985 and aired by the IRIB over that time period.

Mashhad library to unveil rare manuscript of Nahj-ul-Balagha

CULTURE TEHRAN — One of the oldest manuscript copies of the Nahj-ul-Balagha, an anthology of political discourses, sermons, letters and sayings attributed to Imam Ali (AS), will be showcased in an exhibition at the Astan-e Qods Razavi Library and Museum in Mashhad.

The exhibition will open today at the museum, which is adjacent to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the Astan-e Qods Razavi Organization for Libraries, Museums and Archives Centers announced on Sunday.

This copy was inscribed by Mohammad ibn Mohammad

ibn Ahmad al-Naqib in 1150 CE and was donated to a library of the holy shrine in 1655.

The Nahj-ul-Balagha ("The Peak of Eloquence") was compiled by Seyyed Razi (d. 1015). It has been translated into many languages, including English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Florian Zeller's "Mother" to go on stage in Tehran



A poster for Florian Zeller's play "The Mother", which will be directed by Ali Ahmadi at Tehran's Iranshahr Theater Complex.

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Ali Ahmadi plans to stage French writer Florian Zeller's play "The Mother" at Tehran's Iranshahr Theater Complex during June.

Written in 2010, the play is about Anne, who was always the happiest when her children were young and she could devote herself entirely to the needs of her family.

Now, the years have gone by and her children have grown up and have lives and loves of their own, leaving her spending

hours alone with depression.

Anne is convinced that her husband is having an affair and she starts thinking if only her son breaks up with his girlfriend, he would return home and change her life.

"The Mother" was awarded the Moliere Award for Best Play in 2011.

Translated into Persian by Tinush Nazmju, the play was published by Nei Publications in 2017.

Pantea Bahram and Pejman Jamshidi are the main members of the cast for the play.

"Aladdin" taking flight with \$105 million in North America

LOS ANGELES (Variety.com) — Disney's live-action "Aladdin" is flying high with an estimated \$105 million in North America during the four-day Memorial Day holiday weekend.

It's the sixth-highest Memorial Day weekend total ever, topping the 2011 mark of \$103.4 million for "The Hangover Part II." The top total came in 2007, when "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End" took in \$139 million in its first four days. "Aladdin" is also dominating moviegoing internationally with \$121 million in 56 markets.

"Aladdin" has outperformed Disney's pre-opening domestic projections, which were in the \$75 million to \$85 million range, taking in \$86.1 million in its first three days. The reboot of the original 1992 animated movie — which generated \$502 million in worldwide box office — stars Mena Massoud as Aladdin, Will Smith as the Genie, Naomi Scott as Jasmine and Marwan Kenzari as Jafar. Guy Ritchie directed "Aladdin," produced by Dan Lin and Jonathan Ehrlich.

Comscore's PostTrak general audience survey found that 67% of patrons said they would "definitely recommend" the film to their friends. Notably, 39% said their affection for the original was their primary reason for seeing the film, a high percentage that reflects moviegoers' love for the "Aladdin" brand and the characters in the film.

"A very strong 22% said they would see the film again in theatres — much higher than the norm of 14%," noted Paul Dergarabedian, Comscore's senior media analyst.



Cast members Naomi Scott and Will Smith attend the premiere of "Aladdin" at El Capitan theatre in Los Angeles, California, U.S. May 21, 2019. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

Comscore estimated that total domestic business for the four-day weekend was \$226 million. That was about \$1.8 million shy of the total for the same frame last year, when "Solo: A Star Wars Story" launched with \$103 million. The top Memorial Day weekend took place in 2013 when "Fast and Furious 6" launched and North American moviegoing totaled \$314 million for the four days.

"A very solid Memorial Day weekend was led by the bigger-than-expected performance of Disney's 'Aladdin' conjured up huge numbers of moviegoers looking for the perfect family-friendly treat over the extended holiday weekend," he said.

Sony's launch of horror-thriller "Brightburn" should pull in about \$9 million for the holiday weekend to finish fifth and United Artists-Annapurna's teen comedy "Booksmart" will open in sixth at around \$8 million. Both were positioned as counter-programmers to "Aladdin" and finished slightly below forecasts.

South Korean social satire "Parasite" wins Palme d'Or at Cannes

CANNES, France (Reuters) — "Parasite", a wickedly humorous suspense movie about class struggles directed by South Korea's Bong Joon-Ho, won the top Palme d'Or prize at the Cannes Film Festival on Saturday, on a big night for newcomer filmmakers too.

Bong, who made his mark at Cannes in 2017 with Netflix-produced "Okja", is the first South Korean to nab the award at the world's biggest cinema showcase.

The festival also shone a light on a debut feature-length movie by Franco-Senegalese director Mati Diop, whose haunting migrant tale "Atlantics" clinched the runner-up Grand Prix award.

The unanimous decision to crown "Parasite" partly came down to its unexpected mash-up of genres, this year's jury president, Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, the Mexican maker of "Birdman", told reporters.

It was up against films by a whole cast of industry heavyweights, including Quentin Tarantino's latest opus, "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood."

Set in modern South Korea, "Parasite" follows a down-on-its-luck family of four who worm their way into jobs in a wealthy household. The darkly comic tale doubles up as a thriller, with flashes of violence.

Bong told Reuters that his film — which pokes fun at the affluent mother gushing about her art genius son, or at a family in a cramped flat trying to capture the Wi-Fi signal off their neighbors — reflected "the



Director Bong Joon-ho, Palme d'Or award winner for his film "Parasite" (Gisaengchung), reacts at the closing ceremony of the 72nd Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, May 25, 2019. (Reuters/Stephane Mahe)

reality of the times." "I really respect films that deal with heavy political issues very seriously but I much prefer to mix that with humor," Bong said.

"While they're laughing I want them to be hit like a hidden blade behind their pocket when they're not expecting it."

The award adds to a successful run at the French cinema showcase for Asian films after Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda got the prestigious gong last year.

With four female directors in contention for the Palme d'Or this year out of 21 entries — at a time when filmmakers are pushing for more gender equality in the industry — it was Diop who made a splash in the end.

"Atlantics" is a ghost story that turns the spotlight on the women who are left behind as their partners and loved ones set off from Dakar on a perilous sea crossing.