

**Dear readers,**  
The next issue of the Tehran Times will be published on Saturday, June 8.



## Oil to surpass \$100 if first bullet fired in Persian Gulf: Rahim Safavi

**1 →** Washington re-imposed sanctions last year and ratcheted them up in May, ordering all countries to halt imports of Iranian oil. In recent weeks it has also hinted at military confrontation, saying it was sending extra forces to the Middle East to respond to an Iranian threat.



“The first bullet fired in the Persian Gulf will push oil prices above \$100. This would be unbearable to America, Europe and the U.S. allies like Japan and South Korea,” Rahim Safavi was quoted as saying by Fars news agency.

U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly attacked the nuclear deal signed by his predecessor Barack Obama, calling it the “worst ever deal”, “flawed”, “horror show”, etc. He also says it does not include Iran’s ballistic missile program and Tehran’s role in

the Middle East.

Trump said last week he was hopeful Iran would come to negotiating table to reach a new deal.

On Sunday, Iran’s military chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri dismissed any negotiations with Washington on Iran’s missile program.

“The Iranian nation with not retreat an iota from Iran’s defensive capabilities,” Bagheri said, according to the Fars news agency.

President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday suggested Iran may be willing to hold talks if the United States showed it respect, but he insisted that Tehran would not be pressured into negotiations.

## OIC summit had no achievement for Muslim world, Palestine: MP

**TEHRAN (MNA)** – Deputy Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Kamal Dehqani Firouz-abadi said on Sunday that the recent OIC summit in Mecca had no achievement for the Muslim world and Palestine.

It was just held to secure the benefits of the Israeli regime, he lamented.

The main achievement of the recent OIC summit in Mecca was for Saudi Arabia, which tried to give its crimes and plundering in Yemen a legal faceover, Deqani said.

“Saudi regime and the United Arab Emirates seek to secure the interests of the Zionist regime and the U.S., the reason for which is their political reliance on the Americans,” he said.

“The U.S. imposes pressure on independent countries, such as Iran, and tries to rally other countries against them,” he said, “Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates implement U.S.’ policies in the region, while the public opinion of the Islamic countries disagrees with them.”

He also evaluated the upcoming meeting in Bahrain to have a similar nature to that of the OIC summit.

A conference in Bahrain is to be held on June 25-26, in support of a controversial proposal by the United States, known as the “Deal of the Century”, for the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

Meanwhile, the OIC summit in Mecca said in its final statement on Saturday that it opposes all illegal Israeli measures aimed at changing facts in occupied Palestinian territories including Jerusalem, and undermining the two-state solution. It urged member countries to take “appropriate measures” against countries that move their embassies to Jerusalem.

## Washington defunds anti-Iran Twitter account after being exposed

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The U.S. State Department has stopped funding a Twitter account after the account was exposed as working for the body.

The financial tie was exposed by Human Rights Watch’s Middle East and North Africa Director Sarah Leah Whitson, according to the Middle East eye.

“This is a U.S. State Department funded account,” she wrote in a tweet recently.

The account which runs under the name IranDisinfo was reportedly tasked with attacking critics of U.S. President Donald Trump’s anti-Iran policies, including withdrawal from the international nuclear deal, reintroduction of illegal sanctions and stepping up threats against Tehran.

The account targeted an HRW researcher in search of the impacts of U.S. sanctions on Iranian patients and their access to medicine.

“They’re creating their own echo chamber, and it appears that they’re funding it,” Ryan Costello, policy director at the National Iranian American Council (NIAC), told the Middle East Eye as cited in a Friday report. “It strikes me as authoritarian, that you would have funding that’s being used - either by intention or manipulated - to go after domestic opponents of the Trump administration. It’s not something that’s democratic or fair and balanced.”

A U.S. official also acknowledged that the account recently deviated from its official purpose of allegedly debunking disinformation about Iran.

“We have, however, identified recent tweets that fall outside the scope of the project to counter foreign state propaganda or disinformation,” the official said. “Today, the Department suspended the funding for the Iran Disinfo project until the implementer takes necessary steps to ensure that any future activity remains within the agreed scope of work.”

It is not clear how much money the State Department has spent for the anti-Iran project, whose operators are also unknown.

“They need to be completely transparent about the scope of the activities - who their grantees are on Iran programming and for what purpose,” Costello said.

Under Trump, the U.S. has been pursuing a “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran but to no avail. Tehran has slammed the U.S. economic and psychological warfare, vowing to defend its interests in the region in case of U.S. aggression.

# Iran won’t back down even one iota on its defense principle: commander

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The chief of staff of the Armed Forces underlined on Sunday that Iran will not back down even one iota from its position to improve its defense capability despite all threats by enemies.

“The Iranian nation will not withdraw from the country’s defense power even an iota as it is a principle of the revolution,” Hossein Baqeri underscored.

Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri made the remarks in a statement ahead of the 30th anniversary of Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini’s demise on June 4.

The top general also said no issue in West Asia can be resolved without Iran’s involvement.

“Extension of Iran’s strategic depth and regional might has created new and undoubtable conditions that today no issue in West Asia can be resolved without Iran’s partnership.”

He also said the resistance front has turned into a nightmare for Israel and caused panic among Tel Aviv officials.

“Formation of the Islamic resistance front has entangled the usurper and occupying Zionist regime in a security nightmare and panic more than ever despite all-out support by the West and sometimes by Arabs,”



Bagheri asserted.

Stressing that Iran’s capability to turn the threats into opportunity to develop the revolution’s core achievements, especially defense capability and missile technology achievements, he said, “The Iranian nation

will cut the hands and feet of any aggressor.”

His remarks came after Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei dismissed any possibility for Iran to negotiate on its defense capability. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in

a meeting with a group of university professors, academics and researchers in Tehran last Wednesday.

Referring to escalating pressure by the U.S. to bring Iran back to the negotiations table, the Leader said, “By returning to the negotiation table, they mean we negotiate with America. We will not negotiate with American officials. Because there is no point negotiating and it is detrimental.”

The Leader assured his audience that Iran welcomes negotiations with any other governments. “We have no problems negotiating with others or with Europeans. In negotiating with others and with Europeans, our only concern is the issue to be negotiated.”

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that the Islamic Republic will never trade its core values. “We will not negotiate on the core issues of the revolution. Negotiations on this issue implies trading; that is, they mean we give up on our defensive capabilities. We will not negotiate our military capability.”

The Leader described dialogue as a pretext that the United States uses to pressure Iran.

“America’s tactic is to enhance their strategy of pressuring Iran. They want to cash in on the pressures through negotiation.”

## Rouhani says Iran holds talks with someone who shows respect

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** – In an indirect reference to the U.S. administration late on Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani said Iran holds talks with someone who shows respect and acts within the framework of international law.

“We are logical and we do hold talks; if they sit at the negotiating table with respect and within the framework of international law and not just order negotiation. In that case we will not follow,” he said during a meeting with a group of athletes.

He noted that Iran will not surrender to powers who bully and make excessive demands.

“The same enemy who declared its aim last year to destroy the Islamic Republic of Iran, today explicitly states that it does not want to do anything to (our) system. The same enemy who claimed it is the biggest military power in the world and is able to destroy the Iranian armed forces if it wants, today announces that it does not seek war,” Rouhani stated.

Also on Wednesday, Rouhani said that “road to diplomacy” is not closed if the U.S. abides by its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal.

The remarks by Rouhani came two days after Trump told reporters in a joint press conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo that the United States is not seeking “regime change” in Iran.

Rouhani also echoed remarks by his foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who said on May 21 that it is “actions” and “not words” which will show Donald Trump’s intent.

“We pay attention to actions and not words. The path is not blocked if they stop practicing wrong deeds against the Iranian people and imposing sanctions and instead abide by their commitments and return to the negotiating table that they themselves left,” Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

He added, “If you choose another way in practice and abandon cruel deeds in your decisions, the Iranian people will open the way for you.”

In an interview with Al-Alam News



Network aired on Friday, Zarif said that the U.S. administration sometimes speaks harshly and sometimes positively, however, what is important to Iran is actions and not words.

The U.S. has launched an economic war against Iran and threatens others if they seek to have relations with Iran, Zarif pointed out.

“This is a policy that the U.S. must abandon. This policy must be stopped. This is the policy of bullying and economic terrorism that must be stopped,” he insisted.

The chief diplomat said such policy will not work against Iran.

However, Zarif said that Iran is so powerful that it can stand against any threat.

Elsewhere, he said that the issue of talks with the U.S. should be decided by the country’s top officials.

“We believe that the prerequisite to this issue is that negotiation should have a meaning. Dialogue makes sense when the other side abides by its commitments. We held talks with the U.S. for several months. We do not see any difference between the former government of the U.S. and the current one. Certain people think that we have problems with Mr. Trump. It is not so. As I said, we negotiated with the U.S. administration but it did not fulfil its obligations. During Obama’s tenure, the U.S. did not fulfill all of its obligations. During Trump’s time, the U.S. administration clearly left the nuclear deal. It shows that there is no administration that we can hold talks with,” he lamented.

## U.S. maximum pressure against Iran will reach nowhere: British diplomat

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The British Ambassador to Tehran, Rob Macaire, has said that the U.S. policy of exerting maximum pressure against Iran will reach nowhere.

In an interview with an Iranian newspaper published on Sunday, he expressed regret over Washington’s act in quitting the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

He told the Kar-o Karegar publication that Britain will remain committed to implementation of the JCPOA as long as Iran does so.

The ambassador added that London will make any efforts to help Iran enjoy benefits of the deal.

Jens Ploetner, the political director at the German Foreign Ministry, also held talks with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Araghchi last Thursday in Tehran. Ploetner said Germany will “remain committed” to the JCPOA.

Ploetner also said, “European countries will keep up their efforts and consultations aimed at meeting Iran’s demands and preserving the JCPOA.”

On May 8, Iran announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities. It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to shield it from the sanctions’ effects.

Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put caps on its nuclear work in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions. However, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled Washington out of the nuclear deal in May 2018 and ordered reimposition of sanctions against Iran. The first round of sanctions went into force on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran’s oil exports and banks, were snapped back on November 4.

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

Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ger-



man Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron held a phone conversation on May 21, discussing ways to preserve the nuclear deal and continuing economic and trade cooperation with Iran.

“Discussing developments related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program, the leaders noted the importance of preserving this agreement that is a key factor in maintaining international stability and security. They confirmed the commitment of Russia, France and Germany to continuing mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation with Iran,” the Kremlin said in a statement.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said that Washington will not stand in the way of a system Europeans are developing to shield companies dealing with Iran from the U.S. sanctions, so long as it provides only humanitarian and other permitted goods.

“When we think about INSTEX, if it’s aimed at facilitating the movement of goods that are authorized to move, it’s unproblematic,” AP quoted him as saying after a meeting with German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on Friday.

On January 31, France, Germany and Britain, the three European parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, 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).

## Shinzo Abe plans to meet Iranian top officials in June

*By staff and agency*

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe plans to visit Iran in June and is expected to meet with top Iranian officials.

According to Bloomberg, Abe plans to meet with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on June 12 and Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on June 13, the Mainichi reported.

The visit is aimed at helping encourage dialogue with the U.S. and ease tensions, according to the Mainichi. Abe plans to travel to Iran from June 12 to 14. The visit will be the first by an incumbent Japanese prime minister since 1978.

NHK reported on May 27 that Japan’s government officials are making final adjustments for Abe’s planned visit to Iran.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi also confirmed last week that preparations are being made for Abe’s visit.

During his talks with U.S. President Donald Trump in Tokyo on May 27, Abe reiterated his intention to act as an intermediary between the U.S. and Iran.

At a joint press conference with Trump, 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.”

Tensions have been rising between Tehran and Wash-



ington since the U.S. withdrew from the UN-endorsed nuclear agreement in May last year and ordered sanctions on Iran.

Tensions entered a new stage since April when the U.S. designated the IRGC (part of the Iranian military)

as a terrorist organization, announced that it does no renew waivers for the eight major buyers of the Iranian oil, and started beefing up its military presence in the region, particularly in the Persian Gulf.

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

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

“Japan is concerned about surging tensions surrounding the Middle East,” Abe said during the visit.

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

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

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

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



# Zarif: “We don’t differentiate between economic war and military war”

Foreign minister says “the only thing that works with Iran is respect”

Iran will not be intimidated by President Trump’s “art of the deal pressure” by using economic sanctions to push Iran to negotiate a new nuclear deal, the country’s top diplomat told ABC News.

In an exclusive interview, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif also told “This Week” Co-Anchor Martha Raddatz that “there will be consequences” if the United States keeps up its economic pressure campaign against Iran’s people.

Zarif labeled the new U.S. sanctions as “economic terrorism” that “targets ordinary Iranian people” because even though food and medicine are exempted from the sanctions, the financial transactions associated with them are not.

“If the objective of President Trump is to impose pressure on normal Iranians, on ordinary Iranians, he is certainly achieving that,” Zarif said. “But he will not achieve his policy objectives through pressure on the Iranians.”

President Trump has said that he is willing to engage in new talks with Iran toward negotiating a new and tougher nuclear deal.

“I want to get along with everybody, if it’s possible. I even want to get along with Iran, and Iran wants to talk,” President Trump told reporters on Thursday. “And if they want to talk, I’m available.”

Zarif, however, said the prospects of potential talks are “not very likely, because talking is the continuation of the process of pressure.”

The foreign minister also noted that Trump’s business experience in real estate -- as described in his 1987 book, “Trump: The Art of the Deal” -- will not work with Iran.

“This may work in a real estate market. It does not work in dealing with Iran,” he said. “It may work even with in dealing with other countries, for a brief period, not for



**The foreign minister says Trump’s business experience in real estate -- as described in his 1987 book, “Trump: The Art of the Deal” -- will not work with Iran.**

long term, but it doesn’t work with Iran for a brief period, or in medium or long.

“The only thing that works with Iran is respect,” he said.

Asked what message he would give directly to the U.S. president, Zarif advised against threatening the country.

“I’ve said it before, threats against Iran never work,” he said during the interview. “Never threaten an Iranian. Try respect, that may work.”

In early May, the Trump administration announced it was sending the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group and B-52’s to the Middle East to deter new Iranian military

threats to U.S. forces and interests.

U.S. officials have since said that a key component of the intelligence that led the Pentagon to move additional forces to the region were satellite images that allegedly showed Iran had placed cruise missiles aboard small civilian boats known as dhows.

Zarif dismissed the U.S. claims that there was a new Iranian threat to the region and countered that it was the U.S. Navy’s presence that was destabilizing.

“We call this place the Persian Gulf for a reason,” said Zarif. “It’s next to us. We have a right to defend ourselves.

“Just imagine if Iran were to come to California coast [or the] Florida coast,” he added. “How do you feel? How would you treat that? The United States is sending nuclear ships to our waters, to our vicinity.”

As for how Iran could respond in the future to what it considers further escalations, the foreign minister told Raddatz his country will take a page from the Trump administration’s playbook.

“I like to keep President Trump guessing because he likes everybody in the world to keep on guessing about what is happening in the United States,” said Zarif.

But Zarif warned that “there will be consequences” if the U.S. continues adding more economic sanctions.

“If the United States decide to cause so much pain on the Iranian people by imposing economic warfare, by engaging in economic terrorism against Iran, then there will be consequences,” he said.

“We don’t differentiate between economic war and military war,” he cautioned. “The U.S. is engaged in war against us, and a war is painful to our participants. We have a very clear notion that in a war, nobody wins. In a war, everybody loses the loss of some will be greater than the loss of others.”

Asked by Raddatz if the consequences he was referring to was the equivalent of the phrase used by American officials that “all options are on the table,” Zarif explained that he was referring to self defense.

“All options are on the table belongs to the time when the use of force was legal, and that is about 100 years ago,” said Zarif. “What we say is that we exercise our self defense. Self defense is allowed. President Trump has announced that he is engaged in a war and economic war against Iran, and we have an obligation to defend our people against that economic war.”

## Celebrity invited to oversee election process



**POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN** – The Guardian Council has invited an Iranian celebrity to oversee the election process during the upcoming elections as a means to help transparency.

Abbasali Kadkhodaei, the spokesman of the council, tweeted on Sunday that following Pegah Ahangarani’s questions regarding the presidential elections of 2009, he had invited her to attend the upcoming election process at the council.

“Ms. Ahangarani had questions regarding the 88 (2009) election, which I tried to answer. In the end I invited her to oversee the upcoming election process at the Guardian Council as one of the public supervisors so that she would be familiarized with how our supervisors work firsthand,” Kadkhodaei wrote.

He did not elaborate on the kinds of questions that Ahangarani had asked.

## Army Air Defense Force makes security plans for Imam Khomeini demise anniversary

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — Commander of the newly established Air Defense Force of the Army has said special plans have been devised to ensure security of the commemorative services marking the death anniversary of Imam Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic.

Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard on Sunday said the Army’s Air Defense carries out special operational plans to provide aerial security during every national or religious ceremony, festival or gathering.

He said the Air Defense devises appropriate operational schemes for major events that include crowds of people in the streets, such as the anniversary of the demise of Imam Khomeini or ceremonies marking the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The commander also noted that his forces employ “modern and innovative” equipment and tactics to detect, track, intercept or shoot down various types of drones and small flying objects, considering the ease of use of unmanned aerial vehicles that threaten security.

Every year, the anniversary of Imam Khomeini’s demise is marked with a ceremony at his mausoleum with senior Iranian officials in attendance.

Also, large crowds of Iranians travel to Tehran from different parts of the country to attend the ceremony and pay tribute to Imam Khomeini at his shrine.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Moussavi Khomeini, better known as Imam Khomeini, engineered Iran’s 1979 Islamic Revolution, which led to the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Shah of Iran.

Imam Khomeini passed away on June 3, 1989, at the age of 87.

## Pompeo says U.S. prepared to engage in talks with Iran without pre-conditions

By staff & agencies

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday the U.S. is prepared to engage in talks with Iran without pre-conditions, according to Reuters.

He was in Bern, Switzerland, and met with Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis.

Pompeo started a Europe tour on Thursday to seek support and a potential diplomatic climb-down to ease rising tensions between the U.S. and Iran.



According to AP, he was traveling to Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Britain to assure European leaders that the U.S. is not looking for conflict, press them to do what they can to cool the situation, and perhaps open a channel of communication with the Islamic Republic.

His three days in Bern will be the first visit to the Swiss capital by a secretary of state in more than two decades and comes amid public signals from President Donald Trump that he wants to talk with Iran.

After a meeting with German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on Friday, Pompeo said Washington will not stand in the way of a system Europeans are developing to shield companies dealing with Iran from the U.S. sanctions, so long as it provides only humanitarian and other permitted goods.

“When we think about INSTEX, if it’s aimed at facilitating the movement of goods that are authorized to move, it’s unproblematic,” AP quoted him as saying.

## Iran after brotherly ties with neighbors: ambassador

**POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN** – The Iranian ambassador to Kuwait says the Islamic Republic has always insisted on talks, peace, preventing animosity and establishing friendly and brotherly ties with neighboring countries.

Mohammad Irani said Iran considers constructive relations with Kuwait which is based on mutual interests and peaceful coexistence as a pattern for relations with neighboring states, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Pointing to the importance of reviving the International Quds Day, Irani said Ramadan is the month of Palestine, month of retaking Beit-ul-Moqaddas from the Zionist occupiers and condemning conspiracies which aim to normalize ties with Israel and implement “deal of the century” proposed by the Trump administration.

The enemies of Palestine and Quds tried



over the past year to raid the holy city and recognize it as the capital of aggressors, President Rouhani said earlier while referring to the recognition of the city as the capital of the Zionist regime by some states, including the U.S.

## Ayatollah Khamenei to lead Eid-al-Fitr prayers

**POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN** — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei will lead the Eid-al-Fitr prayers at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Mosalla, the Leader’s office has announced.

In a statement, the Leader’s office said the Eid al-Fitr prayers will be held at 8:30 am, local time, in Tehran, Mehr reported.

The exact date of Eid-al-Fitr is yet to be determined by groups responsible to monitor the appearance of the new moon’s crescent in different parts of the country as it depends on the lunar cycle but it is likely to be on Wednesday.

Eid al-Fitr, also called the “Festival of Breaking the Fast”, is an important religious holiday celebrated by Muslims



worldwide that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting. This religious Eid (Muslim religious festival) is the first and only day in the month of Shawwal during which Muslims are not permitted to fast.

## Top MP: Tehran-Washington disputes cannot be mediated

**POLITICAL DESK TEHRAN** — Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh believes that the disagreements between Iran and the United States cannot be mediated.

“I believe that Iran-U.S. ties cannot be mediated. Many U.S. issues and differences [with Iran] are clear and there are no taboos for negotiations,” ISNA on Sunday quoted Falahatpisheh as saying.

Noting that the conditions are not ripe for talks with Washington, he said, “Trump is under severe pressure by the hardliners.” “Trump and the hardliners in his administration are after disgracing the Iranian nation and this is unacceptable in the eyes of our people,” he stated.

Referring to visits by other countries’ officials to Iran in recent weeks, the senior MP said they are “worried about the region and their own countries. They know that any tension will engulf the whole region. Therefore, they naturally try to play a mediatory role.”

He went on to say that U.S. officials are moving in an unrealistic direction and that the Iranian leaders will not



reveal their real decision in the current circumstances. “So when they (Americans) abandon these psychological

warfare and enter the actual atmosphere, other decisions will be adopted [by Iran].”

The anti-Iran remarks of the U.S. President rise from his anger since the Iranian nation has not given in to pressures, Falahatpisheh pointed out.

“The Iranian people have adapted themselves to the new conditions and reached many achievements, such as a two-fold increase in non-oil exports and also a boom in domestic production. Of course, there are some shortcomings but the ultimate result is that Trump is not happy with current conditions.” Back in May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the JCPOA and ordered sanctions on Iran. This happened despite the fact that the IAEA had issued numerous reports, confirming Tehran’s full commitment to the multinational agreement.

A year after the U.S. withdrawal, the Supreme National Security Council issued a statement declaring partial suspension of Iran’s undertakings under the JCPOA. The SNSC said if the remaining parties to the pact fail to reach an agreement to remedy for the sanctions, Iran will take the next steps. The ultimatum is for two months.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	224544.3
IFX	2851.11

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,023 rials
GBP	53,079 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$61.99/b
WTI	\$53.50/b
OPEC Basket	\$68.84/b
Gold	\$1,306.70/oz
Silver	\$14.64/oz
Platinum	\$797.10/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Italy’s narrow path to recovery

By Pier Carlo Padoan

Italy faces a double economic crisis in which two recessions and a banking crisis over the past decade have come on top of a slow structural decline in growth over a far longer period. And the country’s high level of public debt leaves policymakers with limited options.

Central banks’ forays into quasi-fiscal policymaking have invited unwelcome political attention, particularly from populists. To protect their own independence and ensure ongoing macroeconomic stability, monetary policymakers must reassert their traditional role and develop new instruments to fulfill it.

The public debt is now an astronomical €2.3 trillion (\$2.6 trillion), or 131% of GDP, requiring the authorities to issue more than €400 billion per year of government bonds. This makes Italy’s economy extremely vulnerable to external shocks, and means careful public-finance management is crucial for maintaining market confidence.

Investor sentiment can change suddenly – as in the fall of 2011, when the spread between the yields on Italian bonds and German Bunds reached a peak of 575 basis points. Sucked into the vortex of a serious financial crisis, Italy could not avoid a severe recession.

The markets in Italy

Here, the fundamental issue of reputation comes into play. As with people, a country’s credibility can be destroyed in a few weeks and may take years to recover. And the markets are ready to present Italy with the bill, as we saw in the summer of 2018 when the new coalition government of the Five Star Movement (M5S) and the League party announced its spending plans.

Given the constraints imposed by the public debt, Italy must continue to consolidate its public finances. At the same time, policymakers need to lay the foundations for the road back from low growth and declining productivity. After all, Italy’s economy was growing by one percentage point per year less than the eurozone average well before the 2008 global financial crisis.

Italy must urgently regain competitiveness, boost productivity, and reduce taxes without worsening its budget balance. This will require structural reforms to reduce bottlenecks in the economy – for example, by opening up entire sectors that remain substantially monopolistic – and fundamentally reorganizing the public administration. The country needs targeted investments in innovation, training, and research, and tangible and intangible infrastructure. And it needs direct interventions to support the most vulnerable sections of the population and make growth more inclusive.

These are huge tasks at a crucial juncture for Italy. The biggest challenge is to find the necessary political consensus for such a strategy, given that reforms – especially the most painful ones – generate costs long before they yield benefits. Moreover, it is difficult to combine budgetary discipline with measures aimed at quickly increasing disposable income, strengthening social protection, and helping the many citizens who, owing to an economic crisis that caused Italy’s GDP to contract by 9%, are facing severe distress.

In a recent book, I argue that Italy’s Democratic Party, and center-left forces more broadly, lost the 2018 election because, after leading the country out of recession and dealing with a very difficult banking crisis, they failed to respond quickly and clearly to long-mounting popular discontent. The election was held amid growing disaffection with politics, at a time when the public mood – and not only in Italy – was decidedly favorable to forces calling themselves populist and seeking to defend national sovereignty.

The current expenditure

Given such pressures, Italy’s ruling coalition may be tempted to ignore the EU’s fiscal rules, finance new current expenditure, and cut taxes without regard to the budget deficit. In reality, however, the path to recovery will be narrow for any Italian government. There are no shortcuts to reducing the country’s huge debt, despite insistent calls from some commentators for extraordinary measures. But policymakers can, and must, support stable and inclusive growth while keeping the public finances under control.

Italy’s economic debate also has a European dimension, which has become all the more important following the recent European Parliament election. Two points merit emphasis: first, the parliament continues to have a pro-European majority, and Italy, with a government fixated on national sovereignty, finds itself increasingly isolated.

The government’s hopes of forcing the EU to relax its fiscal rules will soon run up against these facts. Moreover, the government mistakenly believes that its nationalist counterparts elsewhere in the EU will show greater leniency toward Italy on budgetary matters.

But that’s not all. The Italian government’s growing isolation in Europe leaves the country on the sidelines of decision-making processes concerning key issues of European governance and reform of the eurozone. Here, too, Italy could follow a narrow path to rebuild reputation and trust, yet it risks veering off course and losing the ability to defend its interests effectively in Europe.

Italy already faces a difficult road to economic recovery, and to generating sustainable, job-creating, and inclusive growth. We should not make it even harder for ourselves.

(Source: syndicate.org)

‘Annual wheat production estimated to rise 1.2m tons’

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s annual production of wheat is estimated to grow 1.2 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020), Esmaeil Esfandiari-Pour, the advisor to Agriculture Minister, told IRIB on Sunday.

He said some 14.5 million tons of wheat is predicted to be produced in the country in current year.

Some 2.2 million tons of wheat have been purchased at the guaranteed price from farmers of 18 provinces in current year, 80 percent of the dues has been paid

to the farmers and the rest will be gradually paid, Esfandiari-Pour added.

He evaluated the process of wheat production and delivery as desirable in the current year and noted that the country will be self-sufficient in wheat production in the current year like the previous three years.

Last week, Esfandiari-Pour, who is also the head of the government program to buy wheat from farmers, said that better rainfall across Iran will offset the loss of crops from unprecedented flash flooding in some provinces in March, Press TV reported.

According to him, Iran’s use of improved



seed technology over the past five years has boosted the country’s self-sufficiency in wheat by more than 30.

Largely self-sufficient in wheat a decade

ago, Iran emerged as one of the world’s biggest importers a few years ago but a raft of measures taken by the government is returning the country to where it was.

‘Tehran, Ankara working on mechanism to bypass U.S. sanctions’

**1 →** “All countries are entitled to develop common trade ties with each other and nothing illegal has been done in this regard,” Farazmand said.

“This is not done to prevent U.S. sanctions. We do not want to circumvent regulations,” he underlined, “However, the U.S. is carrying out an economic terrorism besides sanctions on Iran which is violating our countries’ rights.”

According to Iranian officials, Turkey is vehemently interested in increasing volume of gas purchase from Iran.

The country is also among critics of U.S. sanctions on Iranian oil exports.

Back in mid-May, Governor General of Tehran Province Anoushiravan Mohseni Bandpey and Turkey’s Ambassador to Iran Derya Örs hailed the two countries’ close ties, and discussed

ways to ease trade between the two sides.

Bandpey, during the meeting with Örs, called for efforts to remove any barriers to trade transactions between Iran and Turkey.

The two countries enjoy high potentials and capacities and can succeed in removing barriers to bilateral trade, he added.

Turkey has always been a good trade partner for Iran in difficult time, he said, adding, “In addition, Turkey is considered as one of Iran’s tourism destinations and Tehran is also a good destination for Turkish tourists with its many tourism attractions.”

With proper targeting on investment, mutual trade and business relations can be expanded, the governor general stated.

Given the suitable capacities, trade and business ties between Tehran and Ankara can be

TCCIMA to dispatch trade delegation to Belarus in late-July

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) is going to dispatch a trade delegation to Belarus capital city of Minsk on July 23, TCCIMA portal reported.

The four-day visit comes after the ambassador of Belarus in Tehran met with the TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari and called for expansion of economic ties.

As reported, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has invited the Iranian private companies to visit the country and hold meetings with their Belarussian counterparts.

Headed by Khansari, the Iranian delegation will include representatives of companies active in a variety of areas including oil and gas, petrochemicals foodstuff, metal and metal products, sulfur, pharmaceuticals,



cement, agriculture machinery including trucks, tractors and combines, mechanical machinery and their components, electrical and electronic equipment, paper and wood and technical engineering services.

In addition to meeting with the country’s trade and economic officials, the members of the trade delegation will have the opportunity to hold business talks with their counterparts and visit exhibitions as well as industrial zones.

S. Korea’s export keeps falling for six months to May

South Korea’s export kept falling for six straight months to May on the continued downturn in business cycle of the global semiconductor industry and the emerging global trade dispute, according to a government report.

According to borneobulletin.com.bn, export, which accounts for about half of the export-driven economy, amounted to D45.91 billion in May, down 9.4 percent from the same month of last year, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.

The outbound shipment continued to shrink

since December last year. The falling pace of export in May was faster than a two percent slide in the previous month on the global trade friction, caused by the U.S. protectionist moves.

The downturn in business cycle of the global chip industry continued last month, negatively affecting the export of semiconductors that had led the overall export growth before turning downward.

In terms of volume, the export rose for two months to May, indicating the recent export reduction was attributable to the lower export price.

Iran to hold pavilion in Hong Kong’s Food Expo 2019

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) is planning to open Iranian pavilion at the 30th edition of Hong Kong’s HKTDC Food Expo 2019 which is due to be held during August 15-17 at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, the portal of TPO announced.

Iranian companies active in the various fields of food industry, including dried fruits, herbs, saffron, breads, beverages, sweets, frozen foods, canned and processed foods, dairy, organic foods, rice, tea as well as packing, services and transportation, would be showcasing their latest products, services and achievements in HKTDC 2019.

The Iranian pavilion is aimed to bolster the presence of Iranian companies

in target markets, establishing mutual relations with foreign companies and food industry entrepreneurs participating in the exhibition, and ultimately promoting a successful and sustainable presence in the regional markets.

Featuring more than 1,560 exhibitors with amazing food and beverages from around the world, the 30th HKTDC Food Expo presents an exciting range of delicacies for visitors and opens up fruitful opportunities traders and exhibitors.

The exhibition is comprised of two separate sections, one business (called Trade Hall) and one general which is for ordinary visitors.

Last year, the Food Expo drew 510,000 visitors while its Trade Hall attracted more than 21,000 trade buyers.

Trump’s tariff pain set to ricochet from China to global economy

President Donald Trump claims China is paying his tariffs; furniture salesman Mack Yuan in the east-coast commercial heartland of Zhejiang says to differ.

“We don’t pay any tariffs,” says Yuan, whose company Dakang Holdings Co. sells about half its products to the U.S., including to Walmart Inc. and Costco Wholesale Corp.

His confidence is based on the novel designs of the company’s gaming and office chairs -- products that U.S. buyers can’t easily replace. U.S. sales are unaffected and Walmart has raised the price of their products almost 10%, says Yuan. A spokesperson for Walmart declined to comment on specific cases.

The impact of Trump’s tariff hike on \$200 billion of Chinese imports to 25% from 10% from May 10 is beginning to ripple through supply chains. Evidence from Chinese companies suggests it will pack a punch against lower-end products while leaving many companies a little further up the value chain largely unscathed.

Global economy

What is already looking more certain is that the rising costs will be felt across the global economy. Prices will rise for American consumers in some cases, hurt Chinese and American corporate profits in others, and drag down growth of nations caught in the crossfire should the global expansion decelerate.

“China probably loses most on paper because it has a big trade surplus with the U.S.,” said Tao Dong, vice chairman for Greater China at Credit Suisse Private Banking in Hong Kong. The “U.S. consumer needs to pay as well. Most other countries run surpluses against China, so if the Chinese economy slows down many others will as well.”

China added to the overall burden Saturday when it raised



retaliatory tariffs on \$60 billion of American goods. As some Chinese companies grapple with Trump’s latest tariff hike, others are bracing for threatened 25% tariffs on another \$300 billion worth of Chinese goods, including children’s clothing, toys, cell phones and laptops.

That would mean practically all of China’s exports to the U.S. would be drawn into the trade war. Bloomberg Economics estimates a full-blown tariff conflict could cut about \$600 billion off global growth by 2021.

Foshan Dongfang Medical Equipment Manufactory Ltd., a maker of wheelchairs in the southern province of Guangdong, fears higher tariffs will put it in a dogfight with Taiwanese competitors that had priced products as much as 20% higher before the latest tariff hike, says sales director Amy Zhou.

“Clients are becoming cautious everywhere,” she said. “Last year was difficult enough, but this year is worse.”

The hair dryers and curling irons made by Taizhou Jinba Health Technology Co. in Zhejiang are on the \$300 billion

list, but staff there remain unfazed. American companies or consumers will have to pay any additional tariffs because they can’t source products from elsewhere, said a company employee named Tao, who declined to give his full name or position in a telephone interview.

Additional tariffs

“Southeast Asian nations don’t have the supply chain, and they even can’t make components,” said Tao, whose company sells half its products to the U.S. “For hairdryers, where can they buy these products? If from Europe that is going to be even more expensive. American importers will have to pay for the additional tariffs if it happens, and then the retail prices will inevitably go up.”

An International Monetary Fund blog in May co-authored by chief economist Gita Gopinath concluded that “consumers in the U.S. and China are unequivocally the losers from trade tensions.” A National Bureau of Economic Research working paper co-authored by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York’s Mary Amiti found “complete passthrough of the tariffs into domestic prices of imported goods.”

Impacts may change with higher tariffs on a broader range of goods. The big risk for China is longer-term damage to its role as the world’s preeminent production hub, said Yao Wei, chief China economist at Societe Generale SA in Paris. Multinational and Chinese companies are more actively seeking alternative production bases and this may accelerate at the same time as foreign direct investment falls, risking long-lasting damage to China’s productivity, she says.

While some non-Chinese companies will pick up new business as buyers source from alternative markets, the overall macro spillovers from the trade war are bad news for just about everyone.

(Source: bloomberg.com)

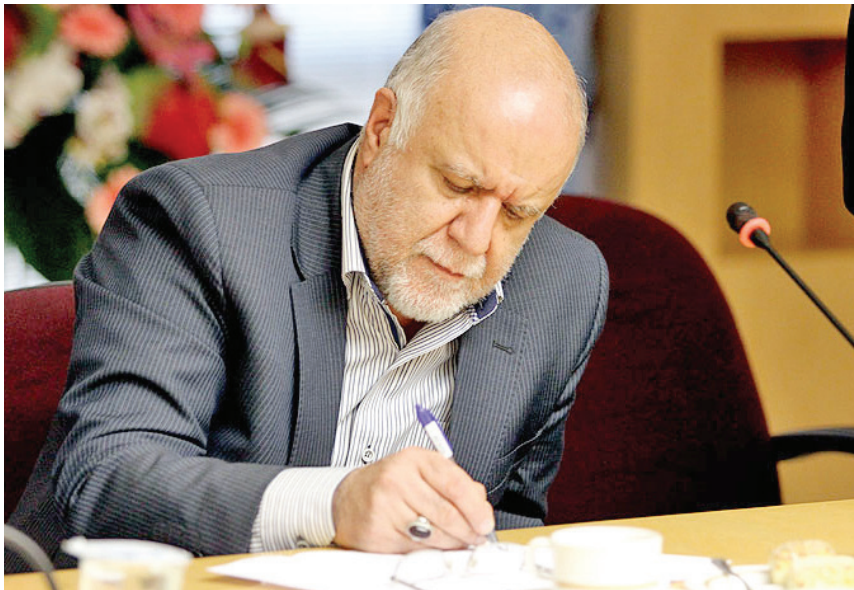


# Iranian oil ministry outlines priorities for major subsidiaries

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, in separate decrees, outlined the current fiscal year (March 21, 2019-March 19, 2020) priorities of the ministry's four major subsidiaries, Shana reported on Saturday.

In the decree addressed to Masoud Karbasian, the head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), completion and inauguration of the phases 13, 14, 22 and 24 of South Pars gas field (in the Persian Gulf) as well as increasing the capacity of crude oil production in the joint fields of Karun region and construction of the Goureh-Jask oil pipeline and the Jask port's oil terminal are mentioned as the main priorities for NIOC.

As for the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), Hassan Montazer Torbati, the head of the company, is asked to put few tasks on agenda as priorities of NIGC, among which completion of gas supply network to Sistan-Baluchestan Province in southeastern Iran and also connecting all the country's industrial zones and power plants to the network, supplying gas to one million new urban and rural households and finally gas supply to 7600 industrial



units which consume liquefied gas can be mentioned.

Alireza Sadeq- Abadi, the managing

director of National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC), is set to take necessary measures to develop

and stabilize Abadan Refinery along with construction and completion of Siraf Refinery Complex as well as the Bandar Abbas - Sirjan - Rafsanjan new crude oil pipeline.

The National Petrochemical Company (NPC) headed by Behzad Mohammadi is asked to complete the phase 1 of Bushehr Methanol Petrochemical Complexes and also complete Kaveh Methanol Complex in the Persian Gulf port city of Bandar Dayyer, Bushehr Province as well as Ilam olefin plant project in the west of the country.

As the deputy oil minister for research and technology, Saied Mohammadzadeh, was also set to fulfill the task of taking necessary measures for commercialization and manufacturing of 10 highly-consumed items in the oil industry in collaboration with the private sector.

Every year the oil ministry sets some tasks and goals for its subsidiary companies to fulfill by the end of the fiscal year.

Recently, focusing on domestic production, developing joint oil and gas fields while paying especial attention to environmental protection have been among the main priorities of the Iranian Oil Ministry.

## ‘Over 3,200 rooftop PV stations operational across Iran’

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Currently over 3,200 rooftop photovoltaic power stations (known as PV systems) are operational across Iran, the portal of Iranian Energy Ministry (known as PAVEN) reported on Sunday quoting an energy official.

According to the Director General of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA) regulatory office, Mojtaba Loni, more than 90 percent of these renewable power stations have been installed in underprivileged areas.

"In addition to providing sustainable income for rural households and reducing urban immigration by creating an alternative business in drought-affected regions, installing such solar power stations, has led to a boost in livelihoods of border residents and less developed areas," Loni said.

In late September 2018, Seyyed Mohammad Sadegzadeh, head of SATBA, announced that over 2000

new rooftop photovoltaic power stations are going to be installed across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2020).

The official noted, at the time, that 2000 PV systems were operational across the country. This shows that the number of rooftop PV systems have increased by 1200 since September 2018.

Renewables, including hydropower, account for just six percent of energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

According to PAVEN, the capacity of Iran's renewable power plants currently stands at 724 megawatts (MW) and 416 MW capacity of new power plants are also under construction.

Of the country's total renewable capacity, 44 percent is the share of solar power plants while the share of wind farms stands at 40 percent and small-scaled hydropower plants generate 13 percent of the total re-



newable capacity.

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

## Oman increases spot market LNG sales as production rises

Oman has increased the number of cargoes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) it offers to the spot market in recent months thanks to rising feed gas output and ongoing improvements to the facilities, industry sources and traders said.

As per gulfbusiness.com, Oman, a top 10 global LNG exporter for the past decade, commissioned natural gas production from a new field at the end of 2017 leading LNG exports to jump last year and to keep rising this year.

Oman LNG, the majority state-owned operator, has a number of long-term takers for its LNG including South Korean utility KOGAS and Spain's Union Fenosa (UFG), but has come to the spot market to tender some excess volumes, traders said.

"Feed-gas production is going well," one trader said. "They have up to one (tender) a week. It depends on the time of the year and so on, so there is variability."

Oman most recently is known to have tendered cargoes for loading at the end of June, the start of July and August, trade sources said.

Another LNG trader said he saw two or three LNG



tenders from Oman a month. "Every month they optimize the UFG contract and sell additional (cargoes) east of Suez," this trader said.

A third trader said he had noticed an increase in tenders from Oman LNG although could not put a number on it.

Oman's LNG volumes rose 17 percent in 2018 to 9.54 million tons, Refinitiv Eikon data showed, after the ramp-up of the BP-operated Khazzan field.

With 7.2 million tons shipped so far this year, the plant

is on track to send 10.22 million tons in 2019 (mtpa), close to its 10.4 mtpa capacity.

In addition to production at Khazzan, Oman LNG last year began a de-bottlenecking project of the three facilities, or trains, at the plant, which should increase capacity by a further 1.5 mtpa by 2021, according to regional media.

A global influx of new LNG production, especially from the United States and Russia, has seeped into the spot market and, with demand from Asia at subdued levels, led to depressed prices.

By far the majority of global LNG output is delivered on long-term contracts but around 25 per cent is sold on a spot basis, an opaque market where prompt cargoes are offered in tenders and bilateral deals. That proportion is growing.

It was not immediately clear who the buyers of Oman LNG's cargo tenders were.

"Don't think there is a trend," the first trader said, adding trading houses, such as Vitol and Gunvor, as well as portfolio players, such as Shell and BP, were likely among the buyers. "I think Asian demand may pick up in a couple of months for winter buying."

## ‘Energy for democracy’: A plan for out-of-this-world solar power

By Chris Zappone

Baycan has teamed up with one of the world's foremost experts in space-based power to design and build a new system to supply energy for the country.

Their proposal is to test and then launch a series of orbiting solar power stations to capture sunlight, convert it to radio waves and send the energy down to terrestrial receivers to provide a source of endless clean electricity.

The plan to help Australia achieve total energy security and dramatically slash carbon emissions would also make the country less vulnerable to coercion in energy markets, the Melbourne architect said.

"This is energy for democracy," said Baycan, acknowledging that space itself has become democratized, through greater commercialization, new technology and new businesses.

Reusable launch systems, such as those pioneered by SpaceX, can dramatically lower the cost of putting objects in space from \$20,000 a kilogram of cargo a decade ago to closer to \$2000.

The boom in the commercial space industry now constitutes an estimated three-quarters of global space activity. Advances in 3D printing make for new possibilities in space construction, as well.

**Global demand for energy rising**

The effects of climate change, meanwhile, accelerate and the global demand for energy rises.



There's another factor. National security: China also has plans to develop space-based power, potentially outmaneuvering democracies on a technology they first invented.

Serdar's partner on this project is California-based John Mankins, who, after a long career at NASA, wrote the book on space-based solar power. Literally. In 2014, he published The Case for Space Solar Power, which outlines the latest ideas on a technology undergoing constant improvements.

Baycan's bet, as well as Mankins', is that enough has changed on Earth since the idea was first developed in the 1960s to make space-based solar a reality for Australia and the U.S. The technology is called Solar Power Satellite by means of Arbitrarily Large Phased Array (SPS-ALPHA), which refers to the innovative modular design of the cells used to capture solar power in orbit.

Australia would require 10 to 12 units, stationed in geo-synchronous orbit, at a production cost of \$10 billion each. Each one

would be able to produce about 20 billion kilowatt hours a year, essentially indefinitely.

Mankins said the use of radio waves to transmit electricity from point to point, over "very long distances is proven technology." The most recent time was a test at over 160 kilometers.

**Solar power**

"Although space systems must be developed, the principle technologies for space solar power have all been proven, either in the laboratory or in terrestrial applications," he said.

Baycan and Mankins met during at a National Space Society summit in the U.S. last year, after Baycan was asked to join a team of U.S. experts planning for human habitation of Mars.

Tectura Architects, Baycan's firm, is known for its design of the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Parkville and the development of the Kingston Center for Monash Health, among numerous other projects.

Baycan's designs, drawing on his nearly three-decade career in scientific and educational architecture, were shortlisted in a competition.

"We spoke about how this is going to benefit both countries and create an extraordinary number of jobs," said Baycan, who compared space-based power to the Snowy Hydro power scheme, which, after World War II, opened up swaths of the country for development.

An "Australian needs to be involved in effective and practical space industries that have implementation on Earth," he said.

That's a goal shared by the Australian Space Agency, formed last year, with an eye to helping develop local industry and expertise in order to get a bigger share of the growing \$345 billion global space industry.

Space engineer Stephen Bornstein of Cyborg Dynamics Engineering, who is not involved in solar power, said falling launch costs had changed the economics of the business. Yet, the efficiency of space-based power would have to be proven in order for a project such as Baycan's to succeed.

Solar power from space needed a "good, strong business case as to how that would be deemed a reasonable power source in comparison to ground-based solar".

Baycan, however, believes the urgency created by climate change, a worsening international political situation, and a renewed focus on nation-state technological competition make the case for action.

"Standing still, Australia's going to get run over," he said.

(Source: theage.com.au)

## More than 80% of Iran's dams are full: WRMC

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — During the nine-month period in Iran's current hydrological year (Sep. 23, 2018-May 28, 2019), 82 percent of the country's dams have been filled, 28 percent more last year's same period, IRNA reported Sunday.

The figure stood at 54 percent during the last water year's same period, according to the data provided by Iran Water Resources Management Company (WRMC).

According to data, the outflow of the country's dams has reached over 55.43 billion cubic meters (bcm) while the figure only touched 17.4 billion cubic meters last year.

Currently over 41.15 bcm of water is stored behind the country's 178 major dams, 53 percent more compared to the last year's same period.

The storage was reported to reach 26.91 bcm last year.

The inflow of water into the country's 178 major dams stood at 71.6 billion cubic meters since the beginning of the current year, which is 277 percent more than last year's same period.

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 current water year, however, kicked off with great amount of rainfalls across the country which even caused some floods in northern and eastern provinces.



## Large wind farm project looks for NM contractors, suppliers

By Lisa Dunlap

A major construction project south of Portales expected to create many jobs in the area is looking for New Mexico-based contractors and suppliers.

The Hobbs office of the engineering firm of Souder Miller & Associates is working with Xcel Energy to identify potential New Mexico contractors for the Sagamore Wind Project, located in Roosevelt County, not far from Dora. The general contractor on the project is Wanzek Construction.

"We signed an agreement with the New Mexico Attorney General's Office to engage as many New Mexico firms as possible in the construction of Sagamore," Wes Reeves, director of media relations for Xcel's New Mexico and Texas operations.

"One interesting benefit is that Souder Miller will also report back where they believe New Mexico is deficient in terms of capacity to carry out these large-scale construction projects, which should help state leaders in their efforts to boost workforce development in New Mexico."

Reeves said that construction should begin about September. Right now the project is waiting for the completion of a study to determine the transmission infrastructure needed to connect to the existing regional power grid.



Xcel Energy is a multistate electric utility corporation planning to reduce its carbon emissions by 80% by 2030. It is purchasing or building 12 wind farms in numerous states as part of that effort. Xcel acquired the Sagamore project from Invenery Wind Energy North America and its subsidiary, Sagamore Wind Project LLC. Invenery initiated efforts to obtain land, permits and necessary state approvals for the project on behalf of Xcel.

**Energy from turbines**

The project represents an \$865 million investment and is expected to generate about 522 megawatts of energy from about 261 turbines when complete at the end of 2020, enough power for about 193,000 homes.

As part of the agreement, Xcel negotiated with the New Mexico Attorney General's Office to spend at least \$57 million of the project costs with New Mexico companies. Reeves said that New Mexico contractors are expected to do about 30% of the construction work.

According to information released by Souder Miller this week, New Mexico contractors and suppliers are needed for many different aspects of building the 150,000-acre project, including for roads, wind turbine foundations, trenching and wiring. Interested construction companies or suppliers can submit pre-qualification information on the company's website.

The turbines themselves are manufactured by Vestas-American Wind Technology Inc. and will be installed by Wanzek, Reeves said.

According to testimony provided to the New Mexico Public Regulations Commission during the application process, the project is expected to create 195 local jobs, including 61 onsite jobs, during an 18-month development and construction stage and generate at least \$3.25 million in wages, which does not include jobs related to the turbines or the other project suppliers. Once operating, the site is expected to support 48 local jobs, including at least 12 direct jobs, and 73 statewide jobs during the life of the project, expected to be about 25 years.

The project is also benefiting about 150 private landowners, who will receive about \$5 million in lease payments over 25 years. About 18,000 acres owned by the New Mexico State Land Office is also impacted by the project, and typically that office receives easement payments or some other type of compensation from land users.

(Source: rdnnews.com)



## International Qud's Day, Zaria massacre, Nigerian Army and Wahabism in Nigeria

By Ammar Muhammad Rajab

**NIGERIA/ ABUJA** — This year's annual International Qud's day comes with special processions around the world due to the continued aggressive responses of the illegal state of Israel against Palestinians. People who choose humanity above all labels, came out en masse around the world to show their solidarity to the oppressed Palestinians and woes to the Israel. In Nigeria, over 20 cities including the federal capital territory, Abuja members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria under the leadership of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky held this year Qud's procession. This year's procession ended peacefully except in Kaduna, where the Nigerian Police use live ammunition on the protesters were they injured 3 and arrested 12 protesters.

While giving an open invitation to Muslims and the world on August 7th, 1979 to observe the day, Imam Khomeini of blessed memory said "I invite Muslims all over the globe to consecrate the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, which is a day of fate and which could also become the day on which the fate of Palestinian people might be determined as Quds day and to proclaim the legitimate right of the Muslim people of Palestine." The day is meant to express solidarity and global support to Palestinians, and indeed all other oppressed. Observed through processions, conferences and rallies by nations, human rights activists and civil liberties organizations, this inspiring declaration of the late Imam evidently received borderless acceptance.

Not only Muslims, even among the Jews who aren't Zionist on a day like this, shows their support to Palestinians through rallies and conferences among others. Many people on the last Friday of Ramadan around the world embarked on this event that show solidarity to Palestinians.

On the other hand, Zaria massacre is a crime against humanity, the Nigerian army murdered innocent civilians in a cold blood. It is of important the Nigerian army and adherents of Wahabism to know that; whoever killed a person innocently, in the hereafter will come before almighty Allah in his hands with blood of the person they shed. More than 1000 days after, the Zaria pogrom is still remembered daily. It is precisely that it cannot be washed-out, history has written it. Since the pre-planned attacked (under the pretext of 'blockade of road') by the Nigerian government through its army on the members of Islamic Movement in Nigeria led by Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky which he is still incommunicado, till date, he has not been given his provisional constitutional rights, which shows how anarchical the Buhari led government is.

His rights to movement and association have been trampled on. It's baffling that the Nigerian army that is supposed to be secular as the state claims democracy as its system of government carrying-out 48 hours operation on its citizens killing thousand unarmed civilians without the president of the nation-state caution, bring the culprits to book and commiserate with the family members of the martyrs and declared national mourning. Instead, he went on to accuse the members of the Islamic movement in Nigeria with running a 'State within a State'. The president's allegation also proved the attack is premeditated.

The old man is confused and knuckle-headed and don't have the knowledge of political administration. It's cleared that in democracy system of government, the Nigerian army in a converged operation are under the command of the Police when it comes to civilian's affairs, but in Nigeria, it's vice versa.

The democracy is on paper but not in practice. Rather, the Nigerian army to do their duties preventing the sovereignty from invasion in various territories, but they made themselves busy in killing their citizens, and continue plotting against them. This is shame to the military and the government entirely! Some of the proved that linked the Nigerian army and the Wahabism, it is that of meeting with the so-called Wahabi 'clerics' in the aftermath of the massacre. The Nigerian army and the Wahabism have the same thoughts of attacking and killing does they think they are against them. The wahabism ideology played an important role in killing the innocent Shiites members during the pogrom. Why the government through its army using religion to plots against Islamic movement in Nigeria? Are they not fed up with the blood they shed in December, 2015? Are they not fed up with the blood they shed in October, 2018 during the annual symbolic Arba'een trek of Imam Husaini (A.S) in the federal capital territory, Abuja? What is the connection of Nigerian army and Wahabism? Why the link now? This proved that; it is a contract from world funders of terrorism; Saudi-America-Israel (S.A.I) in a mission to wipe-out Islamic Movement in Nigeria, this is because of the ideology of Islamic movement in Nigeria which stand firmly with justice and oppressed people, and against injustice, corruption and oppressors. The double party (Nigerian army and Wahabism) their aimed is to kill who they think is against them and thinking that the best option to bring the end of dichotomy is by killings.

Recently, the Nigerian president, Buhari attended the OIC meeting held in Mecca where the Saudi Arabia's King Salman called for international action to stop Iranian influence around the world. There was no report of objection from the Nigerian president against this action; this is because the president is a direct beneficiary of the world funders of terrorism. The only exception of this action is Iraq. It's obvious to even blind man that Saudi Arabia is a staunch US ally, and those accepted the Saudi's called serve the interest of the Saudi, US and the illegitimate state of Israel. At a time, where the Israel continues their invasion against Palestinians without the solidarity and support of the Arab leaders, but they choose to gathered with the aim of supporting the rascality of the US which they bluntly illuminated that they are enemies of peace in the world. But despite their meaningless, worthless and purportless gathering in Mecca, this year Quds procession around the world shows that people of consciences are with the Palestinians and they will continue to rally around Palestinians in spite of all odds.

Zaria massacre is a crime against humanity, the Nigerian army murdered innocent civilians in a cold blood. It is of important the Nigerian army and Wahabism to know that; whoever killed a person innocently, in the hereafter he will come before almighty Allah in his hands with blood of the person he shed. It is obvious that; the Wahabism ideology is a cancer to the nation-state. The nation-state give it is citizens a guarantee to the freedom of religion, conscience, speech and life, but the Wahabism ideology said; whoever is not a Wahabist he is a 'infidel' and he has to be killed.

It is of paramount important to the non-Muslims to understand that; this ideology of Wahabism is far-away from the teachings of our beloved prophet. Our beloved prophet taught us how to live in every type of human life in a peaceful manner.

To the tyrants, if they are learning from human history, they will not use murder, detention or genocide as a tool to eliminate an ideology. There is an adage in archaeology which says; "a past is a clue to the present." This is to say; the main essence in learning history is to curve away the short comings of the past and avoid it in the presents.

See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com)

# Iran deserves credit and attention for trying



➔ It is a dynasty of paranoid freaks who are worse than poor representatives of Islam and who have created a Hell on earth of repression and barbarity against its own citizens who at the slightest signs of criticism, not to mention dissent, are literally subject to losing their heads. And no one can forget the dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi, a writer for the Washington Post, last October, who was lured into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

One has to wonder what the Saudis are so fearful of and why they feel obliged to spend untold billions on U.S weapons. It must be because the Saud family is despised even within its own borders and feels obliged to sustain itself solely on the backs of U.S. and even Israeli approvals and arms. But the so-called "Arab street" across the Arab world does not approve, however quiescent it has been in recent years.

The mere fact that the Saudis have sort of signed on to the virtually stillborn "Deal of the Century" developed almost solely by Zionists like Jared Kushner and others in the Trump orbit, and which will NEVER be acceptable to Palestinians no matter how much they suffer, suggests that in time most all repressive Arab regimes will likely face a second major surge of revolt from the Arab street as was first witnessed in 2011, particularly in Egypt.

Whether Arab or not, all countries, rich or poor, that rely solely on the projection or threat of military power are ultimately brought down, because they have no real friends or allies, just alleged mutual "interests" to maintain themselves. The U.S is no

exception to this rule in the longer run, too. All such countries tend to bankrupt themselves both morally and financially.

For an observer from afar, the absolute greatest tragedy suffered by Muslims over the course of decades now of Western domination of the Mideast has been the failure of Muslims, whether Sunni or Shi'a, to unite as a single cultural bloc of mostly unified people to ward off predatory Western imperialism, which has done little but sow discord across the Middle East.

The U.S. continuously blasts propaganda about Iran or any other largely Muslim country that refuses to buckle to Western control as

"terrorist" states whose primary aims are to create an absence of "peace" in the Middle East. So, if that's the case, what is one to make of the fact that Iran, for example, has not gone on a military offensive for over 200 years and is calling, again, for mutual non-aggression pacts with its neighbors? Is this something countries do when they want to dominate or harm others, one must ask. No, of course not.

In any case, non-aggression pacts historically have not been that effective in warding off conflicts between nations, mostly because they have often been violated by one side or another, but that hardly speaks for not

## Trump's policy towards Iran alienated U.S. from key allies: Sen. Feinstein

### EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

By Javad Heirannia & Elnaz Safavi

**TEHRAN**— In an interview with Tehran Times, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein said that the unilateral policy of the Trump administration against Iran has alienated the country from its key allies.

Recently, U.S. based "Politico" reported on Iranian Foreign Minister M.J. Zarif's meeting with Dianne Feinstein, the well-known American Democrat Senator during his recent visit to New York. "Alireza Miryousefi", spokesman of Iran Mission to the United Nation said that "The visit was in accordance with the usual process of the meetings that Iran holds with the Senate representatives."

Concerning this visit "Seyyed Abbas Mousavi", the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign affairs also stated, "Visiting and negotiating are two separate issues and this visit cannot be seen as a negotiation. We do not consider the members of the Senate as the U.S. administration. In addition, the members of the U.S. administration do not have permission to do it either. Currently, Iran does not have any plans to negotiate with the officials of the U.S. administration."

Recently, Senator Dianne Feinstein said, "To solve a problem that everyone wants to be solved there is no need to war."

In an interview with Dianne Feinstein, Tehran Times asked some questions about the visit, reasons behind it and the main subjects raised during it, and about whether the Iranian Foreign Ministry had requested for the meeting or not. Trump's hostile policy toward Iran, U.S. withdrawal



from the JCPOA also were discussed in the Interview with the democratic senator.

Dianne Feinstein is "California" Senator and a senior member of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary and former chief of the Senate intelligence committee. She is considered one of the influential senators of the Democrat party.

In answer to the following questions she told the Tehran Times:

"Since taking office, President Trump has adopted highly confrontational policies toward Iran. To my strong disappointment, on May 8, 2018, the President announced that he will withdraw the United States from the Iran nuclear agreement by re-imposing sanctions previously lifted by the

agreement, even though the U.S. Intelligence Community believes that Iran has complied with its treaty obligations. On April 8, 2019, President Trump also designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps—an arm of the Iranian government—as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO). This marks the first time a government entity has been designated as an FTO, and has the potential to significantly increase tensions with Iran.

While I firmly believe that Iran's government should be held accountable for its sponsorship of terror, regional aggression, illegal detention of dual U.S.-Iranian nationals, and repression of its own citizens, the Trump administration's go-it-alone policy toward Iran has alienated us from our key allies and raised the possibility of sparking another conflict in the Middle East. In fact, on May 8, 2019, Iranian President Rouhani announced that Iran would begin to halt its compliance with portions of the nuclear agreement.

I share your concerns about the Trump administration's actions and policies toward Iran, which is why I am an original cosponsor of the "Prevention of the Unconstitutional War with Iran Act of 2019" (S. 1039) introduced by Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) on April 4, 2019. This bill would prevent the President from using force against Iran without explicit congressional authorization to do so. S. 1039 currently awaits consideration by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, of which I am not a member.

I will be sure to keep your thoughts in mind as I continue to monitor the Trump administration's increasingly hostile actions toward Iran."

## Saudi Arabia started Yemen war for regional hegemony



to power. The result has been a humanitarian catastrophe. The state-orchestrated murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi finally energized Congress to challenge President Trump on the issue, though GOP congressional leaders worked to protect the bloody royal regime in Riyadh. Yet, all the media hype run by the Congress about the necessity of punishing Saudi Arabia and the MBS proved to be a show since not even one single tangible action has been taken in this regard. On the contrary, the US administration sold \$8.1 bln of arms to the Saudis last week!

The issue has also heated up at the United Nations. The world body should force the US to leave the Yemen war. American officials have pretended that Washington is not a combatant. However, the US has provided targeting intelligence, sold munitions and refueled Saudi aircraft. The UN knows that the US has provided essential combat support in a countrywide bombing campaign targeting weddings, funerals, and much in between, thereby killing tens of thousands

of civilians. American officials are to blame and the UN should hold them to account for complicity in Saudi war crimes.

At any rate, after four years Washington still has no security interest at stake in Yemen. The arguments typically made for US involvement and complicity are bootstrapped from responses to Riyadh's and Abu Dhabi's initial aggression; an aggression which was entirely unnecessary since, historically, money and patronage had guaranteed Saudi interests. These days, Yemeni missile attacks on cities in Saudi Arabia and ships in the Gulf of Aden are retaliation for US-backed Riyadh's attacks on Yemeni targets, many civilian.

The Pentagon regime's claim that aiding Riyadh's war reduces civilian casualties is risible: The UN says over sixty thousand civilians have been killed, most in Saudi coalition airstrikes. Nearly half the population needs aid; a million people have contracted cholera; famine stalks much of the land; civilian infrastructure, primitive to start, has been wrecked. The number of dead from malnu-

attempting to create them, as Iran is trying. This failure, it has been claimed, is because there has not existed an international system to enforce treaties or pacts.

A fair example of the absence of enforcement is that the U.S., ought to have been sanctioned (just as Iran has been sanctioned) by the other signatories to the JCPOA when Trump, just over a year ago, canned U.S. participation in the accord. Why has the U.S. and Trump have not been sanctioned in some creative way? The only answer seems to be cowardice and fear of reprisals from the U.S., and meanwhile Iran has faithfully abided by the term of the accord all long.

While individual Arab states on the Persian Gulf see Iran somewhat differently, there has long been the problematic fact that Iran is a much larger country in terms of land mass and population. This alone has created some unease with neighbors but there is nothing Iran can do about this. Then there is the divide between Sunnis and Shi'as, which goes way back initially to the seventh century.

The Iranian revolution in 1979 augmented sectarian differences and distrust between sects. But perhaps the biggest problem are the Israelis and Americans, who virtually depend on maintenance of what influence they have in the Mideast on Muslim division highlighted as division between Iran and neighbors. No question Arab Gulf states would probably not talk with the Israelis at all if ties with Tehran were improved. And as well, relations with the U.S. among Muslims generally would suffer as well...unless the U.S. got off its high horse of imperial domination.

trition approaches one hundred thousand. Emirati and Saudi interests are illicit, with Abu Dhabi promoting separatism in the South, making a peaceful, stable settlement even more difficult.

Which has left the Trump administration and its congressional servants, paraphrasing Secretary Mike Pompeo, to blame Iran. Yet in reality, Riyadh was pushing for hegemonic and colonial objectives, and not the interests of the international community, when it started the war.

The ongoing peace talks offer some hope, though. They have advanced further than previous attempts, and have reached some positive agreements, such as prisoner exchange, though implementation remains. The fact that Western nations have turned against the war as well should encourage the UN to start forcing Saudi Arabia and its allies to hold up their end of the bargain and comply with their obligations and also stop bombing civilians in Yemen before anyone could think of a more enduring peace.

So long as Riyadh can count on a blank check from Washington, it has no reason to temper its policy. The time is now for Washington to end its complicity or bear the full burden of what amounts to imperial warmongering. Only an end to the war can bring lasting relief to the children of Yemen. But until then, the international community must continue to put pressure on Riyadh, the UAE, the US and their allies to urgently address the humanitarian crisis. Yemen's Ansarullah Movement has complied with its undertakings under the deal and the whole world is waiting to see if the Saudis and their allies would eventually stop defiance and take action to let peace happen after four years, and the international community should ensure a harsh punishment if they wouldn't.



# Have Nationalists won in European elections? Is far right conquering Europe?

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — Many European politicians prefer not to deny the results of the European Parliamentary elections, especially the victory of anti-Euro-nationalist and nationalist factions in this election. However, it seems that in the near future, traditional European parties will try to determine their own proportions with nationalist movements.

The main question here is, what is the right European far right now, what is the position in the eurozone and the European Union, and how Western analysts interpret the results of the European parliamentary elections? Here are some reports and analyzes on the impact of nationalist currents on Europe:

No new dawn for far right in European election

As Deutsche Welle reported, support for extremist parties remains limited, with signs of protest voting around single issues. While euro skeptics fared well in several countries, DW research suggests more modest gains for the far-right. The party of Geert Wilders, the Islamophobic Dutch politician, lost all its seats in the European election.

Italy's deputy prime minister, Matteo Salvini, said this week that Europe is changing. The leader of the far-right League party hailed the results of elections to the European Parliament, referring to the success of parties led by France's Marine Le Pen and Britain's Nigel Farage as well as to his own.

But a close look at the results for the far right — parties characterized by extreme authoritarian, xenophobic and nationalist politics — suggests the shifts have been more subtle than populist rhetoric might suggest. In countries that had a very small far-right vote in 2014, extremists have gained ground, in some places putting them on a par with mainstream opposition parties for the first time.

But where the far right had already taken root, such as in France and Austria, there was little sign of a major surge beyond previous levels of support.

In France, Le Pen's National Rally (formerly known as the National Front) came up on top of the European poll, with just under 24% of the vote. But that was, in fact, a slight decrease in their 2014 result. And in elections to the country's national parliament in 2017, the party received about half that — 13%, suggesting the far-right party may have some appeal as a protest vote, but not when it comes to choosing who runs the country.

Liz Fekete, director of the Institute for Race Relations, said Le Pen had benefited from the failure of French president Emmanuel Macron to deliver on his promise of an alternative to establishment politics. But she warned against reading too much into the National Rally's strong performance in elections to the Brussels parliament. "Their achievements can be over-estimated because European elections tend to throw up quite strange results," she told DW.

In Britain, Farage's newly formed Brexit Party also came first in the election to the European parliament. But with little in the way of policy other than opposition to EU membership, the single-issue party's success does not suggest widespread support for a wider far-right platform.

Salvini's own party surged from the 6% it received in the 2014 European election to almost 34%. However, in a national election just last year, it collected a much lower share of the vote, at 17%. That was enough to make it the second-largest party on the country's parliament, but also shows the limits of its support. "Salvini is a powerful orator and manipulator of media and media images," said Liz Fekete. "He's managed to establish



a hegemony for his ideas."

But she sounded a note of skepticism over further increases in his support, pointing to a growing resistance in response to the League's fervent anti-migrant stance and its moves to shut down dissent.

"Key figures are emerging as uncorrupt, decent people, prepared to take on the system, and others are rallying around them." Fekete cited the example of Domenico Lucano, the former mayor of Riace who attracted worldwide attention when he welcomed refugees to his village in 2011. Lucano is now facing criminal charges of aiding illegal immigration, and his case has become a cause célèbre for those opposed to Salvini's far-right politics.

The country with the biggest increase in support for a far-right party was Slovakia. There, almost 120,000 people (12%) voted for the neo-Nazi "Our Slovakia" party, compared to 9,000 in the 2014 election. That put them in third place, not far behind Slovakia's social democrats, and gave them two seats in the European parliament.

Led by Marian Kotleba, its platform includes rhetoric against Slovakia's minority Roma community, while its leading members include people associated with anti-Semitism, Nazism and Holocaust denial. A court in Slovakia declined to ban the party earlier in the month. Its breakthrough in the European election builds on the 8% vote share it received in the 2016 national election, raising the prospect that it could be on an upward trajectory.

In Belgium, the Vlaams Belang party made a breakthrough after marshaling opposition to the UN migration pact, which it claimed would increase immigration. Germany, Sweden and Spain also saw increases in votes for the far right. Fekete said in some countries they were boosted by the lower turnout in European elections than national elections. However, it is also worth noting the swell of support for anti-Brexit parties. In terms of the overall vote share, the vote for hard Brexit parties — the Brexit Party and UKIP — amounted to 35%, while the vote for pro-Remain parties totaled almost 42%.

In Hungary, the vote for the nationalist Jobbik dwindled but the governing Fidesz party, which has adopted a far-right stance under prime minister Viktor Orban, received 52% of the vote in a joint list with the country's Christian Democrats. In Greece and Denmark, far-right parties lost support compared to 2014. In the Netherlands, the party of far-right politician Geert Wilders lost all four of its seats in the European parliament. The vote share for Greece's "Golden Dawn" was down from 9% to just under 5%.

Denmark's "People's Party," which had received 27% of the votes in 2014, plummeted

to 11%. That collapse in support may be confirmed in elections to the country's national parliament next week, where the group could lose its position as the second-largest party.

Liz Fekete said the far right had fragmented in Denmark and the Netherlands, casting doubt on Salvini's idea of a grand coalition of right-wing populist parties, which has attracted wide media coverage. She also noted that Farage's former party Ukip had been demolished by voters in Britain after taking a rightward turn.

DW analyzed the official results alongside data from ParlGov, compiled by researchers at the University of Bremen, to identify far-right parties that won seats in last week's elections to the European Parliament. The researchers classify parties into one of eight families according to their economic and social positions.

In the end, a promised populist surge turned out to be more of a ripple. After months of boasts, bluster and apocalyptic rhetoric about the end of the old Europe, the far right made striking gains in some countries but losses in others.

There were expected strong showings for leading figures of the European far right, such as Hungary's anti-immigration prime minister, Viktor Orbán, whose Fidesz party took more than half the vote, and Italy's interior minister, Matteo Salvini, whose Lega was the biggest party. Marine Le Pen's National Rally also narrowly topped the polls in France. Salvini said the vote showed "Europe is changing". Orbán spoke of "a new era in European politics."

But although there were losses for traditional big parties in many countries, far from all of those votes went to far-right or populist parties, with greens and other pro-European forces also doing well. Péter Krek?, who runs the Political Capital thinktank in Budapest, said: "I see a bit of a shift to the right but it's not something that will endanger the operation of the EU. Pro-European forces were also mobilised in these elections."

Nationalist and far-right parties will certainly have more representation in this European parliament than in any previous one. Salvini had attempted to capitalise on the mood, launching what he hoped would become a grand coalition before the vote, to bring all the anti-immigrant far-right parties under one umbrella.

But a combination of egos, policy differences on issues such as cooperation with Russia, and the existing network of European alliances meant even those far-right parties that have done well may struggle to build a coherent bloc in the new parliament. Cas Mudde, an expert on populism and professor at the University of Georgia, said: "I don't see one strong far-right group emerging soon."

The electoral picture for far-right parties varied from country to country: in Slovenia, an

anti-immigration party got the most number of votes, while in Slovakia, a progressive coalition that stood on a pro-European platform of tolerance came in first place. In Poland, the populist governing party won big but an extreme-right coalition failed to cross the 5% threshold. In Belgium, the far-right Vlaams Belang party was on course to win two MEP seats. In Holland, the anti-Islam Freedom party was due to lose all four of its seats, including that of its leader, Geert Wilders. Thierry Baudet, the new Dutch populist leader who has been taking votes from Wilders, is due to take three seats, which is fewer than opinion polls suggested.

The Danish People's party, which enthusiastically signed up to Salvini's new coalition, was decimated at the polls and on course to lose three of its four existing seats. Germany's AfD came fourth in the polls, winning a projected 11 seats.

Declaring victory outside the campaign headquarters of Fidesz, on the banks of the Danube in central Budapest on Sunday night, Orbán said the elections had given him a refreshed mandate to help build a different kind of Europe. Fidesz took 52% of the votes and 13 of Hungary's 21 seats. "We are small but we want to change Europe," he said, describing the elections as "the beginning of a new era against migration".

Fidesz is still hanging onto its membership of the centre-right European People's party grouping by a thread but Orbán has called Salvini a "hero" and hinted in recent months he may want to join forces with Salvini's new bloc after the elections.

Hungary's foreign minister, Péter Szijjártó, said "the status quo is over" in the European parliament. "Until now, after European elections, the puzzle was quite simple, the EPP and the socialists came together, counted the votes and there was a comfortable majority ... Now nobody is able to say what the final composition of the majority will look like."

That much is true, and the new European parliament will have a different feel to the old one, as the grip of traditional, old parties is further weakened. "The fragmentation of Europe's party systems is yet again the big story, as it already was, or should have been, in 2014," said Mudde. "There are fewer big parties, mainstream parties are now medium-sized, and some even small, while they are replaced by more and more medium-sized anti-establishment and new parties."

Among the anti-immigration and far-right parties, there are fissures on various issues, with Polish and Scandinavian parties deeply sceptical of Salvini and Le Pen's admiration for the Russian president, Vladimir Putin. Even if the far-right parties do vote together on certain issues, they will not necessarily be able to dominate the agenda.

Krek? said that even aggregating all the populist and anti-establishment parties from across the spectrum, they will not total more than one-third of all the seats in the new parliament. "Because most decisions only need a simple majority, all the talk of a blocking minority doesn't make much sense," he said.

A fact that should not be ignored! What is clear is that, despite the decline in the number and support of European public opinion in Europe from nationalist parties, these parties have grown in crucial countries such as France, Britain, Germany and Italy. The same thing can have a negative impact on the fate of the European Union and the euro area in the near future. From now on, people like Marine Le Pen, the leader of the French National Front, have taken steps to lead the political and executive equations of their countries. An issue that could increase the threats posed by the serious presence of nationalist currents in the European Union.

## Trump was witness war in Iraq destroyed Bush's Presidency: expert

**1 →** Since Iran announced that its limiting its participation in the JCPOA, Trump has repeatedly called for Iran to contact him, said all he wants is Iran not to have nuclear weapons (a significant climb down from Pompeo's 12 demands), and assured Tehran that he does not seek regime change. Clearly, he is feeling pressure, or at least, the downsides of his approach are becoming more obvious.



What I am mainly concerned about is the idea that Pompeo will talk Trump into some limited military action promising him that Iran will be paralyzed by fear of the U.S. military to respond. But at this point, Trump seems uninterested in further military escalation.

Some argues that President Trump priority is his trade wars. Recent trade wars with EU, China, and other are examples for this argument. What do you think?

A: Trump's voters and the American people more generally, have always treated economic issues as more vote-determinative than foreign policy and are particularly wooed, at this time, by certain victimhood narratives surrounding trade. The American people have faced significant economic challenges over the past few decades. Despite rising GDP and workforce skyrocketing productivity, the American public has not received a raise in 40 years. Meaning, their wages have been relatively stagnant, when adjusted to inflation, since the Reagan administration swept into office and adopted an economic policy designed for the investor class that focused on lower taxes, removal of trade barriers and limiting regulation.

The key narrative embraced by many aggrieved white, middle and lower income voters, who were key to Trump's election, is that America's neoliberal inclination towards free trade agreements and its "stupid leaders" have allowed weaker countries to take advantage of the U.S. and institute trade policies that allow them to absorb America manufacturing jobs with lower wages and weaker regulatory regimes. Trump made this a prominent feature of his Presidential campaign and promised to make America respected again by starting and winning trade wars against those countries that have abused American permissiveness.

This narrative is attractive and simple but deeply flawed in many ways. Economists agree, the U.S. has actually lost more jobs to automation than trade and recreating the sixties and seventies, when America was flushed with manufacturing jobs thanks to the fact that its competitors were still reeling from World War II, is not realistic. So far, may experts argue that Trump has been willing to settle for token new concessions from peripheral countries that he could promote as victories at his notorious campaign-style rallies rather than pursuing meaningful change. His most important trade war, the one featuring China, also increasingly seems stuck in a battle of wills.

Based on the priority of trade war, some says President Trump's foreign policy toward Iran will not be close to John Bolton who wishes war with Iran. What do you think?

A: The trade war will not cause Trump to retreat from the sanctions. As long as the world and its corporation refuse to confront the US on its damaging sanctions behavior, maintain and extending secondary sanctions will be done easily.

Trump's understanding of the risks of war has actually pushed him to use sanctions more aggressively. Sanctions are a tool perfected by the previous administration and, for Trump, they are a cost-limited and safe weapon to deploy from afar without the fear of uncontrolled escalation. This is very reminiscent of the Obama administration's feverish use of drones after campaign success on an anti-war platform.

Some argues if President Trump cannot reach to his goals on Iran until the beginning of the presidential campaign, maybe he fires an odious persons like John Bolton. What is your assessment?

A: It is unlikely, but not inconceivable, that Trump would fire Bolton. It is much harder to see him firing Pompeo or fundamentally shifting direction on Iran. Pompeo, unlike Bolton, is close to Trump and trusted by him. Pompeo spent much time cultivating this relationship with Trump while leading the CIA, mainly by being present at the White House and interacting with Trump much more than would have been required.

The holistic shift in the administration's foreign policy decision making process that occurred during the second year, and by extension, the overall approach to Iran, is likely to endure. When Trump first came to office, he surrounded himself with CEOs and Generals. The American media repeatedly referred to these officials as the "grownups" in the room, assuming they would block Trump's more egregious designs. At least, to a point, they did. Trump once, reportedly, called for the Pentagon to draw up plans on assassinating Bashar Assad but those orders were thwarted by then-Secretary Mattis. What Trump has done, in his reorganization of this foreign policy team, has been to bring aboard hardline hawks who are at least assumed to be more qualified for drawing up conspiracies against America's foes. In this new dynamic, rather than Trump trying to invent hardline strategies and being tempered by the "grown-ups", he is giving Bolton and Pompeo space to take on their own power projection projects and simply policing their efforts occasionally. This current dynamic is more currently suited to his weaknesses in drafting national security solutions and is unlikely to be discarded.

As Trump fights Trade war with China, North Korea negotiations, Venezuela and Iran cases are the main issues in President Trump's foreign policy. How much do you think the upcoming elections cycle to choose the next presidential of U.S. will be affected by these issues?

A: In terms of how these separate but interconnected lines of effort by the U.S. will be affected by the election, it is difficult to say. U.S. presidents tend to become more cautious when entering election season. Major new initiatives or escalations are not likely once we reach the Iowa Caucuses in February of 2020. Even if Trump's domestic foreign policy fortunes are deteriorating quickly and he feels the need for a jingoistic moment, he will likely try to achieve that by demonizing immigrants and refugees from Latin America, not starting a war in the Middle East.

American campaign politics historically shies away from deep discussions of foreign policy. During this Democratic primary season, however, due to Trump's terrible policies and the more assertive position of left-wing political forces in America, American foreign policy is being discussed more seriously and critically than it has at any time since the cold war. Bernie Sanders has formed a cogent foreign policy thesis for his campaign that boldly rejects the mainstream consensus that America must enforce its will around the world. Other candidates have also taken specific and detailed positions in favor of more diplomacy and restraint. Most Democratic candidates have pledged to reenter the JCPOA if Iran fully complies. This debate makes one more hopeful of a more responsible foreign policy will emerge from Washington in the intermediate future.

## War with Iran is not Trump priority: expert

By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Research Assistant at Princeton University's Program on Science and Global Security, says war with Iran is not only Trump priority, but he is personally against it.

Sina Azodi adds "Next presidential elections will be important because anyone who challenges Trump will use these issues to attack Trump's policies on these issues - Trade war with China will hurt average American consumers."

Following is the full text of the interview:

Some argues that going to war with Iran is not President Trump policy preference. What is your opinion?

A: I think that not only it is not his priority, but he is personally against it. He ran on the campaign of pulling the U.S. out of the Middle East and he has repeatedly said that it is not in the U.S. interests to be engaged in the region. For example, at his State of the Union address he emphasized that great powers do not engage in perpetual wars.

Some argues that President Trump priority is his trade wars. Recent trade wars with EU, China, and other are examples for this argument. What do you think?

A: I don't think it is the trade war; rather he sees everything in transactions - that is it is a give and take - his business mentality has influenced his FP decision making: subcontracting foreign policy. In case of China, it is not just Trump that is concerned with China, U.S. views China as a potential competitor and seeks to contain China. For example one of the reasons that the U.S. pulled out of INF treaty was that China was rapidly increasing its missile capabilities while the U.S. was chained to the treaty limitations. Going back to Trump, he sees everything in transitions: you give me



money I give you security. This applies to South Korea and NATO too: Pay me to protect you

Based on the priority of trade war, some says President Trump's foreign policy toward Iran will not be close to John Bolton who wishes war with Iran. What do you think?

A: I think a potential war (in form of a very limited clash-not all out) with Iran is unlikely but still possible under three scenarios

A- Miscalculation and accidental fires that no body intended (a standoff situation with one side accidentally doing something)

B- A false-flag operation someone does something and puts the blame on Iran- could be anything - attack a ship and say it was Iran

C- Force Iran to the corner so much that it decides that

it has no option but to fight its way out of misery. (This is very unlikely, but has historical precedence - Japan facing the same situation decided to take on the U.S. at Pearl Harbor)

Some argues if President Trump cannot reach to his goals on Iran until the beginning of the presidential campaign, maybe he fires an odious persons like John Bolton. What is your assessment?

A: Trump has the tendency of firing people that he doesn't like or disagrees with- We know that he has some disagreements with Bolton on how to deal with Iran - But I don't know about the timing - It could be next week - Problem with Trump is his unpredictability (which I think he does it on purpose)

As Trump fights Trade war with China, North Korea negotiations, Venezuela and Iran cases are the main issues in President Trump's foreign policy. How much do you think the upcoming elections cycle to choose the next presidential of U.S. will be affected by these issues?

A: The next president will inherit a lot of foreign policy problems for the U.S. Rise of Russia and China are certainly troublesome for the U.S.

U.S. as the sole superpower since 1990s is under a lot of structural pressures- that is we are moving from a unipolar world to a multipolar world.

Next presidential elections will be important because anyone who challenges Trump will use these issues to attack Trump's policies on these issues - Trade war with China will hurt average American consumers. Relationship with allies are strained because of Trump's pressure and the rise of China and Russia, as mentioned will put the U.S. under further pressure.



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

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

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# Why does the moon keep flashing us?

There’s something flashing us on the moon, and we don’t know what it is. But that might be about to change.

We have known about the mysterious flashes since at least the late 1960s, when the astronomers Barbara Middlehurst and Patrick Moore reviewed the scientific literature and found nearly 400 reports of strange events on the moon. Small regions of the lunar surface would get suddenly brighter or darker, without obvious explanation. The scientists’ survey of the flashes and dimming, which they called “lunar transient phenomena,” was published in the journal Science on Jan. 27, 1967. (Later, astronomers flipped the words around, terming the events “transient lunar phenomena.”)

“The emitted light is usually described as reddish or pinkish, sometimes with a ‘sparkling’ or ‘flowing’ appearance,” wrote the astronomer A. A. Mills in the March 1970 journal Nature. “The coloration may extend for a distance of 10 miles [16 kilometers] or more on the lunar surface, with brighter spots 2 to 3 miles [3 to 5 km] across, and is commonly associated with veiling of the surface features. The average duration of an event is some 20 minutes, but it may persist intermittently for a few hours.”

Amateur astronomers can sometimes spot the flashes with the help of a decent



telescope, though the flashes are unpredictable and finding one can involve hours or days of waiting.

Mills noted, bafflingly, that the events leave no obvious marks on the lunar surface after they pass.

Scientists have returned to the subject

periodically in the five decades since, but without turning up conclusive explanations. These events are now known to happen a few times a week. This year, a new team of astronomers has returned to the question with an observatory specially designed for the task.

The new instrument observes the moon constantly using two cameras located 60 miles (100 km) north of Seville in Spain. When both cameras spot a flash, according to a statement from the telescope’s designers, they record detailed photos and videos of the events, and send an email to Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (JMU) in Bavaria, Germany, which runs the telescopes.

The observatory is still under development, according to the statement, with ongoing improvements to its software since it went online in April. Still, researchers have their suspicions as to what it will discover.

“Seismic activities were also observed on the moon. When the surface moves, gases that reflect sunlight could escape from the interior of the moon,” Hakan Kayal, a researcher at JMU and head of the telescope project, said in the statement. “This would explain the luminous phenomena, some of which last for hours.” Kayal said that, given current plans to establish a base on the moon, it’s important to know just what’s going on up there, so folks living at the base can be prepared for their environment.

But even if that base never happens, it would be nice to know why the moon keeps flashing us.

(Source: Live Science)

## ‘Captivating’ – BFI shares first footage of a solar eclipse from 1900



The first moving picture of a solar eclipse, captured by a British magician-turned-film-maker more than a century ago, has been rediscovered in the archive of the Royal Astronomical Society.

The shaky footage, recorded by John Nevil Maskelyne using a specially-adapted camera, shows the moon passing in front of the sun while he was on a British Astronomical Association expedition to North Carolina in the United States.

Conservation experts at the British Film Institute scanned, reassembled and retimed the footage, frame by frame, and have now released it in 4k as part of their Victorian film collection.

The pictures come from Maskelyne’s second attempt to record an eclipse and is the only footage of his that is known to have survived. His first go at recording an eclipse in India in 1898 was successful, until

the film was stolen on his journey home.

Maskelyne, who co-ran the Egyptian Hall magic theatre in London’s Piccadilly, wrote several books on the art. He became one of the world’s first hackers when he hijacked Guglielmo Marconi’s demonstration of the wireless in 1903 to broadcast his own message and reveal the setup’s security flaws.

“Early film historians have been looking for this film for many years. Like one of his elaborate illusions, it’s exciting to think that this only known surviving film by Maskelyne has reappeared now,” said Bryony Dixon, BFI silent film curator.

“These scenes of a total solar eclipse – one of the most spectacular sights in astronomy – are a captivating glimpse of Victorian science in action,” said Prof Mike Cruise, president of the Royal Astronomical Society.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Fossils reveal saber-toothed cats may have pierced rivals’ skulls



Saber-toothed cats may sometimes have wielded their formidable canine teeth as deadly weapons to puncture the skulls of rival cats.

It was already suspected that Smilodon cats used their huge canines to take down prey, perhaps by ripping out the prey’s throat. But some researchers argued that the daggerlike teeth, which could grow up to 28 centimeters long in the largest species, were too thin and fragile to puncture bone without breaking.

But a new analysis of two skulls from Smilodon populator, a saber-toothed cat species that prowled what is now South America, contests that idea, says a team of Argentinian researchers led by Nicolás Chimento. Large puncture holes in the top of the fossil skulls match the size and shape of canines of saber-toothed cats, the researchers report online in the May Comptes Rendus Palevol. Similar injuries

are sometimes seen in the skulls of living cats, such as leopards, jaguars and cheetahs, the authors write.

“Smilodon canines were strong enough to penetrate bone and were formidable hunting weapons,” says Chimento, a paleontologist at the Bernardino Rivadavia Argentine Natural Science Museum in Buenos Aires. The skull wounds were probably made during tussles while “fighting for territoriality, access to females or food.”

The punctured skulls, dating from the Late Pleistocene Epoch, sometime between 11,000 and 126,000 years, were discovered in northeastern Argentina. An amateur collector found one in 1992, while coauthor Javier Ochoa, a paleontologist at the Florentino Ameghino Regional Museum in Córdoba, found the other. It’s likely that North America’s closely related S. fatalis would have exhibited similar behavior, Chimento says.

(Source: sciencenews.org)

## 14,000-year-old cave footprints provide snapshot of Stone Age family day out

A Stone Age family of five crawled through a narrow Italian cave 14,000 years ago because they were curious about what was inside, according to a new study. They carried make-shift torches and wooden sticks to guide them through the darkness – and may even have brought their dog in too.

Researchers analyzed the ancient tracks left in a layer of clay inside a deep cave of Bäsura in the Toirano cave complex in northern Italy.

It is the first time crawling has been documented in ancient humans, according to researchers from the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.

Around 180 prints were made by these curious prehistoric explorers who crawled through the low cave using their hands, knees and the balls of their feet. The youngest child was probably only two years old, and would have been following two older siblings aged around six and 11.

The family walked close to the side of the cave and have left charcoal-smudged handprints on the wall. The children picked up mud from the floor and splattered it on the wall with their fingers, according to the study published in eLife.

“Most likely they were pushed into the cave by simple curiosity and a sense of wonder for unexplored places,” first



author Marco Romano, Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa told Ars Technica.

Shortly after the family left the cave experts believe a stalactite fell, which blocked the inner chamber and meant the traces of their little trip was preserved.

In the 1950s it was opened up using dynamite. It was then that the human traces were found.

Scientists used modern dating methods and software to analyze the structure of the tracks. “Together, these ap-

proaches allowed us to construct a narrative of how the humans entered and exited the cave, and their activities once they were inside,” said Dr Romano.

“In our study, we wanted to see how ancient humans explored this fascinating cave system. Specifically, we set out to discover how many people entered the cave, whether they explored as individuals or as a group, their age, gender and what kind of route they took once inside the cave,” he said.

The findings suggest that young children were active group members during the Stone Age, even when carrying out dangerous activities.

Such excursions were made for work and pleasure. “Hunter-gatherers may therefore have been driven by fun activities during exploration, as well as simply the need to find food,” said Dr Romano.

Based on 3D models of knee prints, scientists believe the family were in good shape and probably did a lot of exercise as hunter gatherers.

They followed the cave for more than 150 meters. A pair of prints show the spot where the leader probably stood up tall and paused before deciding to continue. They were probably in the cave for just a matter of minutes.

(Source: The Independent)

## NASA’s major projects busting budgets, schedules

NASA’s major projects are busting budgets and schedules like never before, according to a congressional watchdog agency.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office has reported that NASA’s major projects are more than 27 percent over baseline costs and the average launch delay is 13 months. That’s the largest schedule delay since the GAO began assessing NASA’s major projects 10 years ago.

The still-in-development James Webb Space Telescope is the major offender. The projected launch date for this advanced successor to the Hubble Space Telescope is now 2021, with an estimated \$9.6 billion price tag, the GAO noted. Its original target launch date was 2007, with initial cost estimates as low as \$1 billion.

NASA’s yet-to-fly mega rocket, the Space Launch System, also faces big cost overruns

because of production challenges and, likely, even more launch delays.

On the bright side, the Parker Solar Probe launched last summer and looping ever closer around the sun came in millions under budget and was also on time.

The GAO defines a major project as having at least \$250 million in lifetime costs. Altogether, NASA plans to invest \$63 billion on the 24 major projects listed

in the GAO’s latest report.

The partial government shutdown, which stretched from December to January, was not factored into the report.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

(Source: AP)

## Space firm founded by billionaire Paul Allen closing operations

Stratolaunch Systems Corporation, the space company founded by late billionaire and Microsoft Corp co-founder Paul Allen, is closing operations, cutting short ambitious plans to challenge traditional aerospace companies in a new “space race,” four people familiar with the matter said on Friday.

The company, a unit of Allen’s privately held investment vehicle Vulcan Inc, had been developing a portfolio of launch vehicles including the world’s largest airplane by wingspan to launch satellites and eventually humans into space.

Allen, who founded Seattle-based Stratolaunch in 2011, died at age 65 in October.

Vulcan has been exploring a possible sale of Stratolaunch’s assets and intellectual property, according to one of the four sources and also a fifth person.

A representative of Stratolaunch Systems Corp initially said the company did not “have any news or announcements to share at this time.” Later, she said by phone: “Stratolaunch remains operational” while declining further comment.

Efforts to reach Vulcan Inc for comment were not successful.

The four persons familiar with the matter all spoke on condition of anonymity, as did the fifth source, citing the confidential nature of the matter.

A spokesman for Northrop Grumman Corp, which owns Scaled Composites, the main contractor for Stratolaunch’s carrier plane, declined to discuss the company’s operations. Stratolaunch aimed to launch Northrop’s small-payload Pegasus from Stratolaunch’s carrier plane in 2020.

Allen’s Stratolaunch had been compared to billionaire Richard Branson’s Virgin Galactic - which is developing a similar high-altitude launch system - Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origin and Elon Musk’s SpaceX. They all seek to cash in on growing demand for satellite launch services and, eventually, space travel, a market long dominated by industry stalwarts such as United Launch Alliance - a partnership between Boeing Co and Lockheed Martin Corp.

The centerpiece of Stratolaunch’s strategy was its carbon-composite carrier plane, with a 117-meter wingspan and powered by six engines. The plane flew for the first time in April.

In August 2018, Stratolaunch said a planned medium-lift rocket would fly as early as 2022 and said it was in the early stages of developing a variant with a larger payload capacity.

It also said it was designing a reusable space plane to carry cargo to and from Earth and a follow-on variant that could carry people.

Allen, who also owned the National Football League’s Seattle Seahawks and the National Basketball Association’s Portland Trailblazers, had said he long harbored space fantasies.

“I dreamed of becoming an astronaut,” he said at the company’s launch in 2011. Poor eyesight ruined his dreams of becoming a pilot, but he said his ambitions for space travel never died.

In January, three months after Allen’s death, Stratolaunch said it was scrapping the rocket-building portion of the company but would continue to focus on its carrier plane. “We are streamlining operations, focusing on the aircraft and our ability to support a demonstration launch of the Northrop Grumman Pegasus XL air-launch vehicle,” the company said at the time, according to website GeekWire.

As of April 1, Stratolaunch had only 21 employees, compared with 77 last December, one of the four sources said. Most of the remaining employees were focused on completing the carrier plane’s test flight.

The decision to set an exit strategy was made late last year by Allen’s sister, Jody Allen, chair of Vulcan Inc and trustee of the Paul G. Allen Trust, one of the four people and the fifth industry source said.

Jody Allen decided to let the carrier aircraft fly to honor her brother’s wishes and also to prove the vehicle and concept worked, one of the four people said.

(Source: Reuters)

## From sky farms to lab-grown shrimp, Singapore eyes food future

Singapore, the tiny Southeast Asian city-state, is an unlikely place for a farming revolution.

With tiered fish farms, vegetable plots atop office buildings and lab-grown shrimp, the island aims to beef up its own food production and rely less on imports to feed its 5.6 million people.

Singapore produces about 10% of its food but as climate change and population growth threatens global food supplies, it aims to raise that to 30% by 2030 under a plan known as ‘30-by-30’.

The challenge is space.

With only 1% of Singapore’s 724 sq km (280 sq miles) land area devoted to agriculture and production costs higher than the rest of Southeast Asia, the pressure is on new urban farmers to answer the government’s call to “grow more with less”.

“Whenever I talk about food security in Singapore, I tell folks don’t think land - think space. Because you can go upwards and sideways,” said Paul Teng, a professor specializing in agriculture at Nanyang Technological University.

Sustenir Agriculture is one of more than 30 vertical farms in Singapore, which has seen a doubling in so-called sky farms in three years.

The hydroponic farm grows non-native varieties like kale, cherry tomatoes and strawberries indoors under artificial lights and sells the produce to local supermarkets and online grocers.

Sustenir raised S\$22 million (\$16 million) from backers including Singapore state investor Temasek and Australia’s Grok Ventures last year, which will be used for an expansion in Singapore and opening in Hong Kong.

Temasek is also providing funds to Apollo Aquaculture Group which is building a S\$70 million highly-automated, eight-storey fish farm. Apollo says the new farm will deliver more than a twenty-fold increase in its annual output of 110 tonnes of fish.

“It is too unpredictable to do things now in the traditional way,” said Apollo CEO Eric Ng, citing problems with algae blooms in recent years that have wiped out farmers’ fish stocks.

Singapore has not given a total price tag for ‘30-by-30’, first unveiled in March, but it has various funding schemes.

Aside from Temasek, the government has put aside S\$144 million for research and development into food, and S\$63 million for agriculture firms to use technology to boost productivity.

It also plans to build an 18-hectare (44 acre) agri-food site for indoor plant factories and insect farms by mid-2021.

“Investor interest in urban agriculture is rising as environmental pressures and technology developments catalyze new ways of producing food locally,” said Anuj Maheshwari, a managing director at Temasek who focuses on agri-business.

Not everyone is convinced by the focus on high-tech.

Egg farmer William Ho, 53, says the government is putting too much stock in new agri-tech firms with no track record.

(Source: Reuters)



## Budget airlines the flavor of South Korean aviation market, Jeju travel booms

Kim Bo-Min, a Starbucks barista, paid 140,000 won (\$118) for a round-trip from her hometown of Daegu to the popular resort island of Jeju, arriving on T'Way Air Co Ltd, part of South Korea's rapidly growing low-cost airline sector.

The route between Jeju and Seoul has in fact emerged as the world's busiest domestic one as travelers like Bo-Min flock to the southern resort island, lured by cheaper rates from budget carriers. The 28-year-old barista would have paid 22% more if she had flown Korean Air Lines Co Ltd.



Tourists arrive at Jeju International Airport in Jeju on Jeju Island, South Korea May 30, 2019.

"I have taken both full-service airlines and budget carriers for my previous Jeju trips, but I do not think there is much difference when it comes to services," she told Reuters after her flight of under one hour to Jeju.

Korean low-cost carriers (LCCs) have cornered a large chunk of the domestic market since Jeju Air Co Ltd launched in 2005 with five Q400 turboprops, turning up the heat for bigger players like Korean Air and Asiana Airlines Inc and pushing them to start their own budget brands.

Jeju Air is South Korea's No.3 airline by revenue, operating 6 local and 66 international routes with 42 Boeing 737-700 jets. In November, it placed a \$4.4 billion order for 50 737 MAX jets.

The budget airline boom has fueled a spike in travel to Jeju, with the number of tourists jumping almost three-fold to 14.3 million over 2005-2018 from 5.3 million, Jeju Tourism Association data shows.

South Korea's five no-frills carriers had a 61% share of the Jeju travel market in 2018, according to data firm OAG.

"Not too long ago, many South Koreans found air travel a luxury, but perception has changed as budget carriers brought us lower fares, allowing more affordable travel," an official at Korea's Airports Corporation's Jeju International Airport said, declining to be named due to company policy.

In broader North Asia, LCCs have been slower to take off than in other parts of the world, due partly to slow-moving Chinese policies, a domestic aviation duopoly in Japan and Cathay Pacific's dominance of the Hong Kong market.

But South Korea, host to the high-profile International Air Transport Association annual meeting in Seoul this weekend, is the outlier, with local start-ups like Jeju, financially backed by the Jeju Island government, being encouraged to grow.

The country's transport ministry in March issued aviation business licenses to three additional budget carriers, further crowding the industry and intensifying competition.

The 53% domestic market share of carriers like Jeju and Jin Air Co Ltd outstrips the 9% LCC penetration in Japan and 13% in China, data from CAPA Centre for Aviation shows.

(Source: Reuters)



## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Island of Saint-Louis

Established as a French colonial settlement in the 17th century, Saint-Louis was urbanised in the mid-19th century. It was the capital of Senegal from 1872 to 1957 and played an important cultural and economic role in the whole of West Africa.

The Island of Saint-Louis, oceanic port of West Africa, constitutes a unique landscape. Indeed, this miniscule strip of land, today wedged between two arms of the mouth of the Senegal River, enjoys an exceptional environment – a subtle marriage between land and water.



As the first French chartered company on the Atlantic coast of African in 1659, the Island of Saint-Louis became the hub for European traders travelling up the river year round in search of slaves but also gum arabic, gold, leather and other products.

The historic city of Saint-Louis exercised considerable influence in the parts of Africa under French dominion, and even further afield, in terms of architecture and also as regards education, culture, craftsmanship and services. In this respect, it was the first laboratory of this new, different society comprising a cultural mix and hybridization, a crucible of development and diffusion of cultural syntheses and a call for citizenship for all of FWA, thus contributing to the birth of a new humanism.

The designated property covers the entire area of the Island of Saint-Louis, including the banks and quays, as well as the Faïdherbe Bridge.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Six places to visit in Hamedan

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The west central Iranian city of Hamedan, never falls short of offering cultural heritage sites to its visitors. Scenic natural landscapes, traditional restaurants, public gardens and colorful outdoor markets and more importantly, its hospitable people make for an unexpected slice of the city.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations, and there's a scattering of historical curiosities.

Sprawling on a high plain, Hamedan is graciously cool in August but snow prone and freezing from December to March. In summer the air is often hazy, but on a rare, clear spring day there are impressive glimpses of snow-capped Alvand Kuh (3580m), sitting aloof above the ragged neocolonial cupolas of Imam Khomeini Sq. Here are a select of travel attractions in the city:

#### ■ Ganjnameh



Prehistoric rock carvings of Ganjnameh is a can't-miss destination when you are traveling to Hamedan.

Literally meaning "Treasure Epistle", Ganjnameh features sets of cuneiform inscriptions written in three languages of ancient Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian.

Dating back to the age of Achaemenid Kings Darius I (521-485 BC) and Xerxes I (485-65 BC), the inscriptions were first studied in detail by the French painter and archaeologist Eugene Flandin, who was accompanied by Pascal Coste.

The right inscription, belonging to Xerxes I, reads: "The Great God [is] Ahuramazda, greatest of all the gods, who created the earth and the sky and the people; who made Xerxes king, and outstanding king as outstanding ruler among innumerable rulers; I [am] the great king Xerxes, king of kings, king of lands with numerous inhabitants, king of this vast kingdom with far-away territories, son of the Achaemenid monarch Darius."

An adjacent 9-meter-high waterfall becomes a popular ice-climbing spot in wintertime. In contrast, Alvand summit can be reached as a day trip in summer. The relaxed ambience of the site, which is located just a short drive from the city, also opens up an opportunity for hiking on the side of Mount Alvand.

#### ■ Hegmataneh Hill



The Hegmataneh Hill, also called Tepe Hegmataneh (thought to correspond to the ancient citadel of Ecbatana), has a circumference of 1.4 kilometers with an area of about 40 hectares.

The view of distant mountains from the top of this low, open hill is pleasantly rewarding, especially in the late afternoon, but it's what lies below that excites archaeologists: an ancient Median and Achaemenid city. Small sections have been excavated over the last century, most extensively in the 1990s. There's a smart museum nearby, as well as two Armenian churches, now part of Hamadan University.

Ecbatana was first excavated in 1913 by the French Assyriologist Charles Fossey. Excavations have been limited due to the modern town covering most of the ancient site. In 2006, excavations in a limited area of Hagmataneh Hill failed to discover anything older than the Parthian period (247 BC – 224 CE), but this does not rule out older archaeological layers existing elsewhere within the vast site.



A view of Imam Khomeini Sq. in Hamedan, west central Iran.

#### ■ Masjed-e Jameh



One of the oldest mosques in Hamedan, the Masjed-e Jameh is located near Imam Khomeini Sq. and to the west of Ekbatan Avenue. A vaulted passage of a historical bazaar leads into the courtyard of the large Qajar-era mosque.

The mosque is rectangular in shape, and formerly had four porches of which three have been remained. This structure comprises of two areas for nocturnal prayers, a brick dome and a large and pleasant court-yard with a huge pool in the center.

The disused south iwan (entrance) leads into a hall over which there's an impressively large brick dome. The north iwan is lavished with patterned blue tile work that continues on four of the mosque's six minarets. Some areas are restricted to men only.

#### ■ Gonbadeh Alavian



The centuries-old Gonbadeh Alavian (Alavian Dome) is regarded as an outstanding example of Persian-Islamic architecture. However, its 12th-century green dome, immortalized by a reference to it in the poet Khaqani (c. 1121 – 1190)'s work, has long since been removed, but its brick tower remains famous for the swirling floral stucco added in the Ilkhanid Mongol era; this ornamentation is described by an enraptured Robert Byron in Road to Oxiana.

In its small cellar, there are tombs of two elders of Alavian family. The interior area is formed of six rooms with arches. Cube-shaped graves covered with turquoise bricks are in the center.

A rectangular plaque with stucco honeycomb patterns and flower motifs is hanged above the entrance of the structure. The outer frame of this plaque bears stucco reliefs of Quranic inscriptions in the Kufic calligraphy hand.

#### ■ Bu-Ali Sina Mausoleum



The iconic 1952 Bu-Ali Sina (Avicenna) Mausoleum dominates his namesake square and resembles a concrete crayon pointing to the heavens. It was loosely modelled on Qabus' 1000-year-old tower in Gonbad-e Kavus, which is a UNESCO World Heritage.

There is a single-room museum of Avicenna memorabilia, his tombstone, a small library and a display on medicinal herbs.

Avicenna (born 980, near Bukhara, Iran [now in Uzbekistan]—died 1037, Hamadan, Iran), was a Muslim physician, the most famous and influential of the philosopher-scientists of the medieval Islamic world. He was particularly noted for his contributions in the fields of Aristotelian philosophy and medicine. He composed the Kitab al-shifa (Book of the Cure), a vast philosophical and scientific encyclopedia, and Al-Qanun fi al-tibb (The Canon of Medicine), which is among the most famous books in the history of medicine.

#### ■ Ali Sadr Cave



The scenic Ali Sadr Cave is a gigantic water-filled cavern widely believed to date from Jurassic era. Entrance to the lengthy cave is situated some 70km north of Hamadan.

The cave embraces a huge matrix of sunless channels, ponds, grottoes and water passages which are stretched along with imposing rock formations and stalactite-covered tops in a span of several kilometers.

Sightseeing there is connected with traversing in well-lit labyrinths of water ways via paddle boats, walking on subterranean islets, as well as observing rock carvings of hunting scenes, artifacts, paintings and vessels which are associated with prehistorical troglodytes.

Some tour operators and tourism marketers say that a standard tour proceeds visitors some 2,000 meters inside the cave, over 1,400 of which is covered by boats that makes it one of the longest underground boat trips in the world.

The cave can be reached after some one hour of riding from Hamadan through the countryside. There are usually shuttles and taxis as well.

#### ■ A capital of Asian tourism

Last November, Hamedan played host to the 40th United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Affiliate Members Plenary Session, attended by tens of international representatives, scholars and academia.

Addressing the session, Zurab Pololikashvili, the UNWTO secretary general, said "We are willing to introduce Iran to the world as a safe and peaceful destination... We are here to help Iran become more powerful, and as a result, to make the World Tourism Organization more powerful."

According to the UNWTO website, the seminar addresses the role of innovation and technology in the development of cultural tourism and in enhancing destinations' competitiveness and attractiveness.

Hamedan was taken on appearance of the "capital of Asian tourism in 2018", a privilege, which was approved in the second ACD Tourism Ministers Meeting held in Cambodia, June 2017.

## Airbus A300: Plane that launched an empire

This year, around 4 billion plane passengers will take to the sky -- and most of them will travel in an Airbus or a Boeing.

These two Goliaths have dominated aerospace manufacturing for half a century, with few competitors coming close.

While U.S. company Boeing, the world leader, has been around since 1916, its European rival Airbus emerged much later.

In the years after World War II, American companies dominated the aviation industry and so, in the late 1960s, a consortium of European aerospace manufacturers, then known as Airbus Industrie, came together to develop a challenger.

On May 29, 1969, at the Paris Air Show, an historic agreement was signed between the French Minister of Transport Jean Chamant and the German Minister of Economic Affairs Karl Schiller.

Airbus Industrie would develop the world's first wide-body twin-engine jet airliner, the Airbus A300. It was a plane that would launch an empire.

#### ■ Light and efficient

There were a couple of innovations that

made this plane special. The wide body and raised cabin floor meant it could carry passengers and cargo at the same time, allowing airlines to increase profitability.

The wings, designed by Hawker Siddeley, gave the airplane enough lift to climb faster and attain a level cruise altitude sooner than other passenger aircraft of the time, giving cabin crew more time for the in-flight service.

It could hold 270 passengers and, with a range of 1,200 nautical miles, was designed to serve the short- to medium-haul market. Because it had two engines rather than the standard three, it was lighter and more efficient than its contemporary U.S. rivals, such as the Lockheed L-1011 TriStar and the McDonnell Douglas DC-10.

#### ■ Construction

Construction was a pan-European exercise. The wings were constructed in the UK, then transported to Bremen, Germany, to be fitted with moving surfaces. They were then shipped to nearby Lemwerder, Germany, where they -- along with the rear fuselage sections -- were flown to the final assembly line in Toulouse, France.

The engines came from the U.S., the tail assemblies from Spain, while the central wingbox and nose were built in the French towns of St Nazaire and Nantes.

The road convoy of parts to the assembly line attracted curious crowds -- an Airbus tradition that would continue through the decades, with people regularly turning out to see the components arrive for the mammoth A380.

#### ■ Unveiling

The A300B was unveiled to the French public on September 28, 1972, in a joint ceremony with another European plane which was to make history: the legendary, supersonic Concorde.

The A300B made its first flight one month later, in October 1972, landing in high crosswinds that tested the mettle of pilots Max Fischl and Bernard Ziegler.

The plane entered service with Air France in May 1974. Sales were slow at the start, and it was unclear whether the European start-up would survive.

Three-engine planes were still the industry standard, and there was skepticism whether

two engines could safely carry passengers over long distances.

A lifeline appeared in 1977 when the U.S.-based Eastern Airlines gave them a shot by leasing four planes for six months. The company ended up buying those craft and ordering 19 more.

A decade after the arrival of the A300, the Airbus family expanded with the A310 taking to the air in 1982 and the A300-600 in 1983.

The A310 was a shorter, longer-ranger aircraft than the 300, seating 218 in a two-class configuration.

The A300-600, meanwhile, introduced an improved wing featuring a recambered trailing edge.

The A300/A310 would spawn many variants, but two stand out as the most exciting.

There's the Airbus A300 Zero-G, a reduced-gravity aircraft used for training astronauts. And then there's the A300-600ST Beluga, a huge, whale-shaped cargo freight version of the A300-600, used to transport Airbus parts from factory to final assembly line.

(Source: CNN)



# About 12 percent of Iranian adults are daily smokers: report

**HEALTH** **TEHRAN** — About 12 percent of Iranian adults above 15 years old are daily smokers, Tobacco Prevention and Control Research Center announced, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Including hookah smokers, the percentage of smokers reach about 20 percent, the report added.

About 20 percent of men and two to three percent of women are daily smokers, the head of the center Gholamreza Heidari announced.

Some 30 percent of women and 35 percent of men smoke hookah, which cause lung diseases and other health problems, he added.

Tobacco smoking cause 75 percent of lung disease. Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 toxic chemicals, which affect all organs of the body," he explained.

Not only smokers but those who live with them are subjected to lung diseases. Even the tobacco smoke contamination that remains after the cigarette is extinguished is dangerous especially for kids, he lamented.

The statistics provided by the center is submitted to health ministry in order to be used



in the national tobacco control plan, he said.

Online or on call services should be provided for smoking cessation in person or for

groups, he said.

Hard-hitting anti-tobacco advertisements and graphic pack warnings can be effective in

increasing the number of smokers who quit, however, the pictures on figurate packs are not still warning in Iran, he lamented.

The increase in tobacco price is a cost-effective way which leads to 10% decrease in tobacco consumption, he said.

**Smoking kills more than 8 million people a year**

World Health Organization warns that more than 40 percent of smokers globally die from lung diseases, such as cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and tuberculosis.

The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced, killing more than 8 million people a year. More than 7 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use while around 1.2 million are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.

The U.N. agency reports 3.3 million users will die from lung-related diseases. This number includes people exposed to second-hand smoke, among them more than 60,000 children under age five who die of lower respiratory infections due to passive smoking.

## ‘Blood pressure information of 3.3 million Iranians registered’

**HEALTH** **TEHRAN** — About three million and 300 thousand Iranians have registered their blood pressure information at the health ministry's comprehensive network, entitled SIB, Persian acronym for 'Integrated Health System', the executive secretary of the national campaign for controlling hypertension announced, Fars reported on Saturday.

The campaign, which began on May 17, World Hypertension Day, focuses on the issue as one of the most important causes of cardiovascular disease, which is the main reason for 40 percent of deaths in Iran.

A total of 55 thousand people also submitted their information online self-declaration form for blood pressure on health ministry's website.

During the campaign, which continues until June 6, people are notified about the campaign, its subject and targets and from June 6 to July 6 the field works are carried out such as taking the blood pressure of target groups, registering their information and referring the patients to specialists.

Over 40 million of Iran's population is older than 30 years

old and is the target population in addition to pregnant women and those with kidney diseases, he explained.

The campaign is underway in 18,000 local health centers, 6,700 health service departments, 240 clinics and 1002 hospitals nationwide and it is predicted that at least 2461 stands in different parts of cities observe blood pressure of citizens during the campaign, he explained.

**100,000 Iranians die of high blood pressure annually**

In mid-May, the Health Ministry's director for non-communicable diseases Afshin Ostovar announced that About 100,000 Iranians die of high blood pressure annually.

One third of Iranian population above 30 suffer from hypertension and during past 25 years, the number of Iranians suffering from hypertension has increased by three-fold in Iran.

Some 97,000 Iranians died of diseases caused by hypertension in 2017, according to Dr. Ramin Heshmat, who is an associate professor of epidemiology in Tehran University of Medical Sciences.



World Health Organization (WHO) has set a target for a 25% relative reduction in the prevalence of raised blood pressure by 2025.

## ‘Genetic mapping can prevent diseases’

**HEALTH** **TEHRAN** — Many diseases can be prevented through genetic mapping, professor of pharmaceutical science Kheirollah Gholami said, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Genetic mapping offers evidence that a disease transmitted from parent to child is linked to one or more genes and provides clues about which chromosome contains the gene and precisely where the gene lies on that chromosome.

Genetic mapping can prevent many disease and paves the way for personalized pharmacotherapy, which is according to the person's genetic, he said.

According to genetic mapping, the physician can advise the most effective medicine with least side effects according to the patient's genome, he added.

The lifestyle and diet of the patient can also be ad-



justed to his or her genetic characteristics, he said.

Genetic mapping - also called linkage mapping - have been used successfully to find the gene responsible for relatively rare, single-gene inherited disorders such as cystic fibrosis and Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Genetic maps are also useful in guiding scientists to the many genes that are believed to play a role in the development of more common disorders such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and psychiatric conditions.

To produce a genetic map, researchers collect blood or tissue samples from members of families in which a certain disease or trait is prevalent. Using various laboratory techniques, the scientists isolate DNA from these samples and examine it for unique patterns that are seen only in family members who have the disease or trait.

## The state of cancer: Are we close to a cure?

Cancer is the leading cause of death across the globe. For years now, researchers have led meticulous studies focused on how to stop this deadly disease in its tracks. How close are we to finding more effective treatments?

The World Health Organization (WHO) note that, worldwide, nearly 1 in 6 deaths are down to cancer.

In the United States alone, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) estimated 1,688,780 new cancer cases and 600,920 cancer-related deaths in 2017.

Currently, the most common types of cancer treatment are chemotherapy, radiotherapy, tumor surgery, and — in the case prostate cancer and breast cancer — hormonal therapy.

However, other types of treatment are beginning to pick up steam: therapies that — on their own or in combination with other treatments — are meant to help defeat cancer more efficiently and, ideally, have fewer side effects.

Innovations in cancer treatment aim to address a set of issues that will typically face healthcare providers and patients, including aggressive treatment accompanied by unwanted side effects, tumor recurrence after treatment, surgery, or both, and aggressive cancers that are resilient to widely utilized treatments.

Below, we review some of the most recent cancer research breakthroughs that give us renewed hope that better therapies and prevention strategies will soon follow suit.

**Boosting the immune system's 'arsenal'**

One type of therapy that has attracted a lot of attention recently is immunotherapy, which aims to reinforce our own bodies'

existing arsenal against foreign bodies and harmful cells: our immune system's response to the spread of cancer tumors.

But many types of cancer cell are so dangerous because they have ways of "duping" the immune system — either into ignoring them altogether or else into giving them a "helping hand."

Therefore, some types of aggressive cancer are able to spread more easily and become resistant to chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

However, thanks to in vitro and in vivo experiments, researchers are now learning how they might be able to "deactivate" the cancer cells' protective systems. A study published last year in Nature Immunology found that macrophages, or white blood cells, that are normally tasked with "eating up" cellular debris and other harmful foreign "objects" failed to obliterate the super-aggressive cancer cells.

That was because, in their interaction with the cancer cells, the macrophages read not one but two signals meant to repel their "cleansing" action.

This knowledge, however, also showed the scientists the way forward: by blocking the two relevant signaling pathways, they re-enabled the white blood cells to do their work.

**Therapeutic viruses and innovative 'vaccines'**

A surprising weapon in the fight against cancer could be therapeutic viruses, as revealed by a team from the United Kingdom earlier this year. In their experiments, they managed to use a reovirus to attack brain cancer cells while leaving healthy cells alone.

"This is the first time it has been shown that a therapeutic virus is able to pass

through the brain-blood barrier," explained the study authors, which "opens up the possibility [that] this type of immunotherapy could be used to treat more people with aggressive brain cancers."

Another area for improvement in immunotherapy is "dendritic vaccines," a strategy wherein dendritic cells (which play a key role in the body's immune response) are collected from a person's body, "armed" with tumor-specific antigens — which will teach them to "hunt" and destroy relevant cancer cells — and injected back into the body to boost the immune system.

In a new study, researchers in Switzerland identified a way to improve the action of these dendritic vaccines by creating artificial receptors able to recognize and "abduct" tiny vesicles that have been linked to cancer tumors' spread in the body.

By attaching these artificial receptors to the dendritic cells in the "vaccines," the therapeutic cells are enabled to recognize harmful cancer cells with more accuracy.

Importantly, recent studies have shown that immunotherapy may work best if delivered in tandem with chemotherapy — specifically, if the chemotherapy drugs are delivered first, and they are followed up with immunotherapy.

But this approach does have some pitfalls; it is difficult to control the effects of this combined method, so sometimes, healthy tissue may be attacked alongside cancer tumors.

However, scientists from two institutions in North Carolina have developed a substance that, once injected into the body, becomes gel-like: a "bioresponsive scaffold system." The scaffold can hold both chemotherapy and immunotherapy drugs at once, releasing them systemati-

## Health ministry warns about Crimean-Congo fever prevalence

**HEALTH** **TEHRAN** — Since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), 12 people have been diagnosed with Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever and two of them lost their lives, said Mohammad Mahdi Guya, the Director of Communicable Diseases Department at the Ministry of Health, ISNA reported on Saturday.

The prevalence of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever in the country has reduced to half in comparison to the same period during the last year, however the disease happens more in hot weather hence a more precise statistics will be revealed in late summer, he explained.

The disease was spotted in the cities of Iranshahr, Zabol, Kermanshah and Bandar Abbas as well as Gilan province, he said.



Those who work in slaughterhouses or keep livestock at their home and those who live in rural places are more endangered, he said.

The virus is primarily transmitted to people from ticks and livestock animals. Human-to-human transmission can occur resulting from close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected persons.

The contact with meat which is frozen for more than 24 hours does not transmit the virus, he explained.

He also warned about nurses and medical staff who may adopt a patient with Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, he said.

Well-cooked meat does not transmit the virus, however, eating raw meat may transmit the virus, he warned.

According to health ministry, annually, some 100 to 150 cases of Crimean-Congo fever are reported in Iran.

According to World Health Organization, the Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus causes severe viral hemorrhagic fever outbreaks.

CCHF outbreaks have a case fatality rate of up to 40%.

The CCHF is a widespread disease caused by a tick-borne virus. The CCHF virus causes severe viral hemorrhagic fever outbreaks, with a case fatality rate of 10–40%.

## 4,000 Iranian newborns are diagnosed with congenital hypothyroidism annually

**HEALTH** **TEHRAN** — Annually 4,000 Iranian newborns are diagnosed with congenital hypothyroidism, head of endocrinology and metabolic department of health ministry announced, Fars reported on Saturday.

Shahin Yarahmadi said that all newborns in Iran undergo newborn screening and those who are recognized with CH are introduced to medical centers to further treatments.

One third of newborns diagnosed with hypothyroidism are cured in short term however the rest should receive life-long treatments, she explained.

The delayed diagnosis lead to decrease in IQ of newborns, she explained.

"We have already 6000 diagnosis labs to test CH across Iran and fortunately even one newborn in Iran is not affected by delayed diagnosis of congenital hypothyroidism, she said.

Newborn screening (NS) for congenital hypothyroidism (CH) is one of the major achievements in preventive medicine. Most neonates born with CH have normal appearance and no detectable physical signs. Hypothyroidism in the newborn period is almost always overlooked, and delayed diagnosis leads to the most severe outcome of CH, mental retardation, emphasizing the importance of NS.

Blood spot thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) or thyroxine (T4) or both can be used for CH screening. The latter is more sensitive but not cost-effective, so screening by TSH or T4 is used in different programs around the world.



## Heavily processed food like ready meals and ice-cream linked to early death

People who eat large amounts of heavily processed foods, from breakfast cereals and ready meals to muffins and ice-cream, have a greater risk of heart attack, stroke and early death, according to two major studies.

The findings, from separate teams in France and Spain, add to a growing body of evidence that foods made in factories with industrial ingredients may have a hand in an array of medical disorders such as cancer, obesity and high blood pressure.

In the French NutriSanté study, researchers at the University of Paris gathered details on the diets and health of more than 105,000 people. Over five years of follow-up, those who consumed the most "ultra-processed" food were most at risk of stroke, heart attack and other cardiovascular problems. When the amount of ultra-processed food in the diet rose 10 percentage points, for example from 10% to 20%, the risk of the diseases rose 12%.

The study, published in the British Medical Journal, does not prove that ultra-processed foods cause disease. Nor does the effect appear particularly large, even in the most enthusiastic junk food consumers. The results suggest that 277 cases of cardiovascular disease would arise each year in 100,000 heavy consumers of ultra-processed foods, versus 242 cases in the same number of low consumers.

But Mathilde Touvier, a member of the French team, said there was sufficient evidence for public health authorities to apply the precautionary principle and advise people to cut down. "The public should avoid these foods as much as they can," she said. "We need to go back to more basic diets."

(Source: The Guardian)

(source: Medical News Today)



## Locals build bird nests; flocks of storks fly to western Iran

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Locals started to build tens of nests for storks in the western city of Marivan, Kordestan province, which attracted many of the birds to stay during the warm season, IRNA reported.

Zarivar Lake, a major tourist attraction, is home to thousands of storks that wing their ways to make their nests around the lake’s mountainous areas, however locals in surrounded villages decided to build safer nests for them.



Looking at the trees while walking through the town and villages many storks’ nests are beautifully placed among the dormant branches of the trees, which are vacant even in winter and waiting for the storks to come back next year.

Dareh Tafi is a village near Zarivar Lake, which plays host to some 60 pair of storks live in three villages around the lake. Appreciating the locals for taking care of storks, he noted that storks nesting is a sign of peace and safety, and this a good thing happening for all the environment enthusiasts.

Zana Shirzadi, one of the Dareh Tafi locals told IRNA that in the past few years, only a couple were staying above one of the village’s electricity pylons, however people began to build safer nests on the top of the trees to prevent them from electrocution or losing their chicks falling off.

Then, larger flocks of storks gradually came to the village and preferred to stay all around the summer, he added.

Locals are very protective of the storks and even during winter they take care of the vacant nests and prepare them for the storks’ return, and when they get hurt or injured everybody makes efforts to heal them, he noted.

He further called on the provincial department of environment to help young locals in building more nests over the village and protect the species.

Sabah Panahi, Marivan’s environment chief said that some 700 pair of storks live in three villages around the lake.

He went on to say that “we observe and control the storks’ migration over the area annually, and take urgent measures in case of any disease spread or carcasses, however, there have not been any disease breakout.

Storks are large, long-legged, long-necked wading birds with long, stout bills. They belong to the family called Ciconiidae, and make up the order Ciconiiformes.

Storks dwell in many regions and tend to live in drier habitats than the closely related herons, spoonbills and ibises; they also lack the powder down that those groups use to clean off fish slime. Bill-clattering is an important mode of communication at the nest. Many species are migratory. Most storks eat frogs, fish, insects, earthworms, small birds and small mammals. There are nineteen living species of storks in six genera.

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Indian MPs demand Kohinoor’s return

(May 4, 2000)  
MPs in India demanded that the United Kingdom hand over the renowned Kohinoor diamond. The Kohinoor is an Indian diamond weighing 106 carats, which has been part of the British Crown Jewels for almost 150 years. The MPs claim that the Kohinoor was taken away illegally, which is why they want it back. The British Prime Minister Tony Blair has appointed a parliamentary committee to place the **looted**antiques from the **Empire** and I thought this was the best opportunity. The response is **muted** because it has not yet been **played up** in India. Once it **comes before** parliament, then you will see some kind of campaign will **build up**. There are so many things of India which are either lying in the **basement** of the **Victoria and Albert Museum** or in the India Office Library. My purpose is that those things, which are really connected with our history, should come back here or **at least** should be **given on loan**.

■ **Words**  
**looted:** stolen  
**Empire:** an empire is a group of countries controlled by one country - here referring to the former British Empire  
**muted:** not very strong  
**to play up:** to emphasize a fact or feature and try to make people think that it is more important than it really is  
**come before:** considered or approved by a group in power - in this instance parliament  
**build up:** get bigger - the campaign will get bigger and gain support  
**basement:** the basement of a building is a floor built partly or wholly below ground level  
**Victoria and Albert Museum:** the world’s largest museum of decorative arts named after Queen Victoria and Prince Albert  
**at least:** here used to mean the minimum which should be done in the circumstances  
**given on loan:** lent

(Source: BBC)



# 50bcm of groundwater withdrawn annually in Iran

**ENVIRONMENT d e s k** **TEHRAN** — An annual amount of 50 billion cubic meters of groundwater resources are withdrawn to supply agricultural, industrial as well as drinking water in Iran, a researcher in the field of water resources has stated.

The amount is 10 times greater than the water covering Lake Urmia, amounting to 5 billion cubic meters, ISNA quoted Mohammad Reza Goldansaz as saying on Sunday.

About 60 percent of drinking water and the water used in industrial sector and 50 percent of the water consumed in agriculture sector is pumped from aquifers, he noted.

Referring to the country being highly dependent on underground water, Goldansaz said that if the resource runs out, we will face serious problems.

■ **None-renewable reservoir depleting constantly**

Looking at the subsurface water level in the country’s plains, you will find out that it is constantly falling in most of the plains, which totally means excessive withdrawal from a none-renewable reservoir, he added.

“Groundwater is a valuable resource due to being formed over long periods of time, however, they are completely dependent on occasional rainfall occurrences to recharge. So, they are both renewable and non-renewable, due to the precipitation rates of the country.”

“While in our country, facing permanent droughts and receiving low precipitation, an immediate recharge is farfetched, therefore the water is being withdrawn from non-renewable resources,” he lamented.

Goldansaz went on to say that since past 50 years, over 130 billion cubic meters of underground water resources have been depleted.

■ **Renewable water resources no exception**

Environmental official Mohammad Mojabi said in July 2018 that renewable water resources have drastically decreased to less than 100 billion cubic meters from 132 billion cubic meters over the past 50 years, demonstrating 25 percent decline.

Moreover, temperature has increased by 1.1 degrees on the Celsius scale over the past 15 years, which mainly decreases the moisture and increase evaporation



**Despite the dire consequences of groundwater resources depletion across the country, no measures have been taken to curb the withdrawal, so, the country’s subsurface water condition is worrisome.**

and accordingly give rise to sand and dust storms, he added.

Groundwater resources are also in a bad condition, he lamented, adding that out of 609 aquifers in the country 309 are depleted and water withdrawal is not allowed anymore in these aquifers.

■ **Dire consequences of ground water drainage**

Goldansaz went on to explain that underground water drainage has devastating consequences such as dried up rivers and wetlands, destruction of vegetation, increase in sand and dust storms, land subsidence, formation of holes and long gaps in the plains and increased salinity of aquifers.

Land subsidence, in addition to hurting infrastructures and buildings, has an irreversible damage to aquifers, since it results in filling of vacant cavities between soil particles and water storage capacity in the aquifers are lost, he added.

Earlier in September 2018, geologist Mohammad Javad Bolourchi said that over 300 plains in Iran are at high risk

of experiencing land subsidence, and as long as there is virtually no reduction in illegal overuse of groundwater resources, curbing subsidence will coincide with depletion of aquifers.

For instance, studies indicated that the plains in Varamin county, southern Tehran are subsidizing by an average of one millimeter a day (36 centimeters a year), he noted, lamenting that many aquifers in central part of the country are reported salty, which needs huge water desalination systems.

In the Iranian calendar year 1384 (March 2005-March 2006), the subsidence rate in Tehran plain has been measured at 17 centimeters a year, it has been measured 12 centimeters in Varamin county, in southern Tehran.

This is while the run-down in plains of Mashhad or Rafsanjan, which has set the record high for this phenomenon since the Iranian calendar year 1345 (March 1966-March 1967), is certainly higher, regarding the reduction in precipitation rate.

■ **Underground reservoirs condition worrisome**

Despite the dire consequences of groundwater resources depletion across the country, no measures have been taken to curb the withdrawal, so, the country’s subsurface water condition is worrisome, Goldansaz regretted.

Comparing aquifers level in past 10 years, he said, have indicated that water level reduction in most aquifers amount to less than 50 centimeters annually, however, water level in some of the major ones reduced over 50 centimeters.

In some small number of aquifers a decline of over 2 meters have been reported, and unfortunately the highest water level reduction is recorded in an aquifer located in Arsanjan county in Fars province, which lowered by 3.4 meters per annum, he added.

In fact, over the past decade water level in aquifers in the area reduced by 30 meters, he regretted, adding, Arsanjan county is among the areas bearing the most damages from excessive water withdrawal.

Of course, considering water level reduction alone is not a complete assessment of the condition’s severity, but in the first step it can provide a clearer picture of the aquifers condition in the country, he concluded.

■ **Why subsurface reservoirs are highly vital?**

According to the U.S. Geological Survey’s (USGS) Water Science School groundwater is a valuable resource throughout the world. Where surface water, such as lakes and rivers, are scarce or inaccessible, groundwater supplies many of the hydrologic needs of people everywhere. Groundwater depletion, a term often defined as long-term water-level declines caused by sustained groundwater pumping, is a key issue associated with groundwater use.

The water stored in the ground can be compared to money kept in a bank account. If you withdraw money at a faster rate than you deposit new money you will eventually start having account-supply problems. Pumping water out of the ground faster than it is replenished over the long-term causes similar problems. Some of the negative effects of groundwater depletion include drying up of wells, reduction of water in streams and lakes, deterioration of water quality, increased pumping costs, and land subsidence.

## Summer traffic scheme to begin in a week

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Summer traffic scheme, aiming to increase road safety and reduce car crashes during holiday trips, will begin on June 10, Traffic Police Chief Seyed Kamal Hadianfar has said.

During the Iranian New Year holidays (March 16-April 5), due to poor weather conditions, the number of traffic-related deaths decreased by 17.6 percent compared to the same period last year, he noted.

Vehicle rollover constituted 25 percent of accidents during the Iranian New Year holidays, he said, IRNA news agency reported on Sunday.

“During the first and second months of this year, traffic related fatalities reduced by 11.6 percent and 14.3 percent, respectively.

“So, in past months, car crash casualties reduced by 2,000 individuals compared to the same period last year,” he added.

He further lamented that four major violations, namely, distracted driving, unsafe speed, overtaking and drowsy driving, have contributed to 82 percent of road crashes occurred in the country.



“In order to avoid such accidents in the summer, a peak travel time for Iranians, we will launch a traffic scheme by

the next week, through which many of traffic police forces will stand guard and monitor the roads and highways to ensure travelers safety, he concluded.

Every year the lives of approximately 1.35 million people worldwide are cut short as a result of a road traffic crash, WHO reports. Between 20 and 50 million more people suffer non-fatal injuries, with many incurring a disability as a result of their injury.

WHO highlights that road traffic injuries can be prevented. Governments need to take action to address road safety in a holistic manner. This requires involvement from multiple sectors such as transport, police, health, education, and actions that address the safety of roads, vehicles, and road users.

Effective interventions include designing safer infrastructure and incorporating road safety features into land-use and transport planning, improving the safety features of vehicles, improving post-crash care for victims of road crashes, setting and enforcing laws relating to key risks, and raising public awareness.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

### Motorcyclists responsible for 63% of accidents in Tehran

Motorcycle riders are the highest contributors to road fatality being responsible for 63 percent of the accidents happened in the Iranian capital in the first 10 months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (starting on March 21, 2018), head of accidents department of Tehran Traffic Police has said.

Unfortunately, motorcycle users represent over 38 percent of the total traffic fatalities happened in the aforementioned period, Tasnim quoted Ehsan Momeni as saying on Tuesday.

As per the figures revealed by forensics, young motorcyclists aged 18-28 years constituted 33 percent of the fatal crashes resulted in their deaths, while being blamed for over 63 percent of the total accidents, he lamented.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “galacto-, gala-, galact-”

■ **Meaning:** milk  
■ **For example:** The Milky Way is the *galaxy* which is the home of our Solar System.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Have (got) something against somebody/something

■ **Meaning:** to dislike or be opposed to someone or something for a particular reason:  
■ **For example:** I can’t see what you’ve got against the idea.

## IDIOM

### Bucket list

■ **Explanation:** a list of things a person would like to do or achieve before a certain age or before dying  
■ **For example:** I have never visited the pyramids of Egypt but they’re on my bucket list.

### راكبان موتورسیكت در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات تهران مقصر بودند

رئیس اداره تصادفات پلیس راهور تهران بزرگ گفت: در ده ماهه نخست سال ۹۷ راکبان موتورسیکلت در تهران در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات به عنوان مقصر حادثه شناخته شده‌اند.

به گزارش روز سه شنبه خبرگزاری تسنیم؛ سرهنگ احسان مؤمنی در تشریح تصادفات منجر به فوت شهر تهران گفت: ۳۸ درصد کل متوفیان حوادث رانندگی مربوط به موتورسیکلت سواران بوده است.

وی اظهار کرد: با توجه به آمار پزشکی قانونی ۳۳ درصد راکبان موتورسیکلت فوتی ۱۸ تا ۲۸ سال سن داشته‌اند و در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات به عنوان مقصر حادثه شناخته شده‌اند.



# ‘We will have surprises for you!’ Yemen warns aggressors

➡ “We have surprises for... [them] that they can never see coming,” the Yemeni defense minister said.

Yemeni armed forces are moving forward with manufacturing missiles as well as armed and offensive unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), rockets, and other kinds of weapons, Atifi said.

The Yemenis are currently in the final stages of developing various air defenses, he added.

The Yemeni forces would free the whole country and defend its territorial integrity, he said, emphasizing that they are now capable of launching attacks deep inside Saudi Arabia and targeting its vital facilities.

Yemeni fighters regularly target positions inside Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the Saudi-led war, which began in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall the former regime and eliminate the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

While those strikes often target Saudi Arabia's border areas, a number of drone strikes were carried out deep inside Saudi



territory on May 14. The drones used in the attacks flew undetected until they reached the designated target, namely two oil pumping stations, disrupting the flow.

Yemen has warned that it would carry out more such attacks.

The defense minister expressed Yemen's readiness for peace based on a United Na-

tions-brokered ceasefire agreed between the Houthis and the former regime in Sweden last December.

He said that under the truce, Yemeni fighters unilaterally retreated from Hudaydah. However, he added, aggressor forces maintain the siege of the Durayhimi district in violation of the truce.

The minister also said that the Saudi-led coalition still prevented food and medicine from entering the impoverished state.

Over the past month, Yemeni fighters 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 reportedly targeted in the attacks.

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

Ansarullah 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.

## Israeli paper betrays scandalous details of ‘deal of century’

**TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump's “the deal of the century” wants Palestinian refugees to be naturalized and settled in several countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq, Israeli daily Haaretz reports.

As the world marked the International Quds Day on Friday, political leaders warned of mysterious aspects of the much-touted U.S. plan and its ramifications for the future of Palestinians.

Iran's Parliament Speaker Ali Larjani said one definite prospect is that the plan seeks to do away with the issue of returning 6 million refugees to their homeland.

“To realize this goal, America is about to arrange an economic deal and get its money from the miserable Persian Gulf countries,” he said in Tehran according to Press TV.

Haaretz said Washington is thought to be pressing Lebanon to grant citizenship to Palestinian refugees living in the country.

“In the process, this is seen as defusing

the issue of a right of return of refugees to Israel, which has been a major obstacle to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,” the paper said.

According to UNRWA, the UN's Palestinian refugee agency, about 450,000 Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon.

Other reports have put the figure lower, prompting Lebanese groups to say that the census had been conducted under U.S. pressure designed to underreport the real numbers because that way Lebanon could absorb a modest-sized population.

The Lebanese constitution, however, provides that the country's territory is indivisible and that refugees living there are not to receive citizenship.

The official reason for this is that the absorption of Palestinian refugees would impair their claim to a right of return.

However, the U.S. has sugarcoated the plan with a lifeline to extract Lebanon from its economic crisis, where the country's debt is estimated at more than \$85 billion (about 155 percent of GDP), Haaretz said.

## Riots after Israeli forces, nationalists enter Al-Aqsa

**TEHRAN** — Israeli forces have entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound along with hundreds of Jews whom they allowed to access the compound on Jerusalem Day - when Israelis celebrate the anniversary of their occupation of East Jerusalem at the end of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Israeli forces fired tear gas and detained a number of Palestinians on Sunday who were attending prayers after protests erupted in the mosque compound following an announcement that Jews would enter the holy site.

According to Al Jazeera, it was the first time in about 30 years that Jews were allowed into the site during the final days of the fasting month of Ramadan, which coincided this year with the Israeli national holiday commemorating control over the city.

Earlier in the morning, Israeli police had deployed hundreds of their forces around the mosque compound and across the city as hundreds of Jews waited at the compound gates to enter.

Reporting from West Jerusalem, Al

Jazeera's Harry Fawcett said: “What had been announced was that Jews would not be allowed into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound because of the sensitivity coming up to the end of Ramadan.”

“But what actually took place was that hundreds of what we would expect to be right-wing settler and religious nationalists assembled at the gate demanding entrance.

“Once the police had apparently decided they would be allowed in, protests by Palestinians started and forces moved in to put down the demonstrations. At that point, the Jewish settlers were allowed to come in,” said Fawcett.

Video inside the compound showed Palestinians shouting “Allahu Akbar” (God is great) and throwing chairs and other objects at a doorway before tear gas and stun bombs were thrown at them.

Thousands of Jews have also flocked to the nearby Western Wall to mark the occasion ahead of celebrations and marches that will be held around the city in the afternoon and in the evening.

## China and U.S. clash again on trade and regional security

**TEHRAN** — China and the United States clashed again on trade and security, accusing each other of destabilizing the region and potentially the world.

Speaking on Sunday at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Asia's premier defense summit, China's Defense Minister Wei Fenghe warned the United States not to meddle in security disputes over Taiwan and the South China Sea, Reuters reported.

On Saturday, acting U.S. Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan told the meeting that the United States would no longer “tiptoe” around Chinese behavior in Asia.

“Perhaps the greatest long-term threat to the vital interests of states across this region comes from actors who seek to undermine, rather than uphold, the rules-based international order,” Shanahan said.

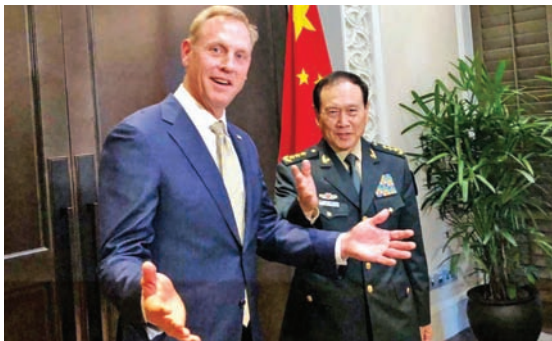
It was the latest exchange of acerbic comments between the two sides as their ties come under increasing strain due

to a bitter trade war, U.S. support for Taiwan and China's muscular military posture in the South China Sea, where the United States also conducts freedom-of-navigation patrols.

China has been particularly incensed by recent moves by President Donald Trump's administration to increase support for self-ruled and democratic Taiwan, including U.S. Navy sailings through the Taiwan Strait that separates the island from China.

Wei, dressed in his uniform of a general in the People's Liberation Army, said China would “fight to the end” if anyone tried to interfere in its relationship with Taiwan, which Beijing considers a sacred territory to be taken by force if necessary.

“If anyone dares to split Taiwan from China, the Chinese military has no choice but to fight at all costs ... The U.S. is indivisible, and so is China. China must be, and will be, reunified.”



He however said both sides realized that any war between the two “would bring disaster to both countries and the world.”

## Three explosions hit Kabul

Three explosions struck the Afghan capital, including a magnetic bomb attached to a bus carrying university students that killed at least one person, officials said.

The bus explosion wounded 10 people, Nasrat Rahimi, a spokesman for the Interior Ministry, said on Sunday.

Two roadside bombs were detonated about 20 minutes later, wounding seven more people, including five security forces in the same residential area of western Kabul.

“In total, one Afghan civilian was martyred and 17 others, including a local journalist and five Afghan forces, have been slightly wounded,” Rahimi said.

Several houses and shops around the blast sites were damaged. Security forces blocked all roads leading to the areas.

Wahidullah Mayar, a spokesman for the public health ministry, said at least four women were wounded in the bus bombing and had been taken to hospitals.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the Kabul attacks. Both the Taliban and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS) launch regular assaults in the capital.

### ■ Violence continues

Eight Afghan police were killed on Saturday and seven others wounded in a Taliban suicide attack in the eastern Ghazni city,

provincial police spokesman Ahmad Khan Seera told AFP news agency.

Even though the Taliban and the United States are set to begin a new round of peace talks in Doha this month, violence across Afghanistan continues unabated, with civilians often bearing the brunt of the bloodshed.

On Friday, a Taliban car bomber killed at least four Afghan civilians and lightly wounded four U.S. troops in an attack on a U.S. convoy in Kabul.

A day earlier, at least six people were killed and 16 more wounded in an ISIL-claimed suicide blast outside a military academy in

the capital.

Eight Afghan police were killed on Saturday and seven others wounded in a suicide attack in the eastern Ghazni city, provincial police spokesman Ahmad Khan Seera told AFP news agency.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had proposed a nationwide ceasefire at the start of Ramadan early last month, but the Taliban rejected the offer.

Last year, the Taliban observed a three-day ceasefire over Eid and many Afghans - exhausted by decades of war and violence - had pinned their hopes on another truce this year.

Theresa May said last week she would step down as leader of the governing Conservative Party on June 7 to open the way for a contest to succeed her.

So far, 12 Members of Parliament have said they will stand in the leadership election. They will be whittled down by their fellow lawmakers to a final two before the grassroots party members make the final choice.

Trump praised Johnson on his last visit to Britain in July 2018, saying that he thought he had the skills needed to be prime minister, shortly after Johnson resigned in protest at May's handling of Brexit.

Johnson, who has said he would be prepared to take Britain out of the EU without a deal on Oct. 31, has not commented on Trump's latest endorsement.

According to Reuters, Corbyn himself has been widely accused of failing to clarify Labour's position on Brexit by not saying outright whether or not it is decisively in favor of a second referendum on Brexit.



100,000 unrepresentative Conservative party members, but by the British people in a general election.”

After failing three times this year to get parliament to back her plan for leaving the European Union, Prime Minister

## Syrian air defenses confront Israeli attacks

**TEHRAN** — Syria's air defense systems have confronted Israeli attacks in the country's southwest, state media say, adding that three soldiers were killed in the raids.

Syria's official SANA news agency anonymously quoted a military source as saying that the air defenses had “confronted” and “downed the hostile missiles” that were targeting positions in southwestern Damascus at 03:22 a.m. local time (0030 GMT) on Sunday.

Israel, the source added, then engaged in renewed aggression by firing several missiles into the eastern countryside of Quneitra Province at 04:10 a.m. local time (0100 GMT).

The aggression killed three Syrian soldiers and injured seven others while causing some material damage, the source said.

According to the source, the missiles were coming from the direction of Syria's Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

SANA did not specify whether the missiles were fired from a ground or an aerial platform, but the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the Israeli regime had carried out airstrikes targeting “positions and warehouses” belonging to Syrian and allied forces near Damascus' al-Husseiniyah and al-Kiswah areas.

Later in the day, the Israeli military confirmed that its helicopters and planes had struck a number of targets linked to the Syrian army, including two artillery batteries, several observation and intelligence outposts, and an SA-2 type air defense unit.

It said the attacks came in response to two rockets that it alleged were fired from Syria at the occupied Golan Heights on Saturday night.

According to Press TV, the Israeli army has even released footage of the strike as well as aerial stills of various Syrian targets before they were reportedly attacked.

Israel has repeatedly attacked positions inside Syria. The Syrian military has mostly absorbed the Israeli strikes, locking its defense systems on incoming fire.

In early 2018, Syria targeted and shot down at least one Israeli F-16 that had intruded into its airspace.

## Trump to UK: no-deal Brexit is better than paying EU \$50bn

**TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump has waded once again into UK's Brexit debate, urging Theresa May's successor to leave the EU with no deal.

Trump said Britain should refuse to pay its 39 billion pound (\$49bn) EU divorce bill and “walk away” from Brexit talks if Brussels does not give the UK what it wants, he told the UK's Sunday Times newspaper.

The intervention comes after Trump used another newspaper interview to declare that former foreign minister Boris Johnson would be an “excellent” replacement for May.

The U.S. president begins a state visit to Britain on Monday that starts with a private lunch with Queen Elizabeth II and a state banquet at Buckingham Palace.

But large protests are also planned over what London Mayor Sadiq Khan described as Trump's “divisive behavior”, and opposition politicians are boycotting the banquet.

Trump embarrassed May with outspoken remarks on Brexit during his visit to Britain last year. On Sunday he again urged the next government to follow his own negotiating rule-book.

“If they don't get what they want, I would walk away... If you don't get the deal you want, if you don't get a fair deal, then you walk away,” he said in the article.

## U.S. Navy refused to keep USS John S. McCain out of Trump's sight

The U.S. Navy has confirmed it had received a request to keep a U.S. warship bearing the name of former political rival John McCain out of President Donald Trump's sight during his visit to Japan last week, but refused to do so.

“A request was made to the U.S. Navy to minimize the visibility of USS John S. McCain, however, all ships remained in their normal configuration during the President's visit,” reads a statement from Rear Adm. Charlie Brown, Chief of Navy Information, which the Pentagon released Saturday.

There were “no intentional efforts to explicitly exclude Sailors assigned to USS John S. McCain,” the statement adds.

The news was first reported by The Wall Street Journal which said the White House had requested the Navy to move the warship out of Trump's view prior to his visit.

“USS John McCain needs to be out of sight,” the outlet said, citing a May 15 email from a U.S. Indo-Pacific Command official to U.S. Navy and Air Force officials.

According to the Journal, a tarp was hung over the ship's name ahead of the visit, and sailors were instructed to remove any coverings from the ship with its name on it.

Meanwhile, Trump and Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan have both denied knowing anything about such orders.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Trump said while he was not “a big fan” of McCain, “I would never do a thing like that.” “Now, somebody did it because they thought I didn't like him, OK? And they were well-meaning. I will say,” he said.

A spokesman for Shanahan also issued a statement, saying, “Secretary Shanahan was not aware of the directive to move the USS John S. McCain nor was he aware of the concern precipitating the directive.”

The ship was named after McCain's father and grandfather, who were both decorated admirals. The Navy added the name of Sen. McCain, who had been a prisoner of war in Vietnam, to the ship in 2018.

Trump and McCain, who was the 2008 Republican presidential nominee, were frequently at odds before and during Trump's presidency. In 2015, Trump attacked McCain as “not a war hero” and again criticized the senator from Arizona after he died of brain cancer last August.

At a rally in March, the president complained he endorsed McCain “at his request, gave him the kind of funeral he wanted... but I didn't get a thank you.”

“I never liked him much,” Trump said. “I really probably never will.”

## Corbyn accuses Trump of interfering in UK politics with Johnson comments

**TEHRAN** — UK Labor opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn said on Saturday U.S. President Donald Trump's comments endorsing Conservative front-runner Boris Johnson as the next prime minister were an “unacceptable interference” in Britain's affairs. In an interview with the Sun newspaper ahead of his three-day state visit to Britain next week, Trump said of the former foreign secretary: “I think Boris would do a very good job. I think he would be excellent.”

Other Conservative lawmakers in the leadership race had sought his backing, he said, although not environment minister Michael Gove, who has criticized his stance on Iran.

Veteran Socialist Corbyn, who has declined an invitation to attend a state banquet with Trump during the visit, said: “President Trump's attempt to decide who will be Britain's next prime minister is an entirely unacceptable interference in our country's democracy.”

He added in a statement on Saturday: “The next prime minister should be chosen not by the U.S. president, nor by



## Poch targets Champions League final return with Spurs

Mauricio Pochettino appeared to rule out the possibility of leaving Tottenham following their Champions League final defeat against Liverpool.

Pochettino has been linked with the vacant Juventus manager's job following Massimiliano Allegri's departure last month.

But, when asked whether he would be in charge to lead Spurs in the Champions League next season, he said: "Always. We have to try, we have to believe. We hope it will happen again as soon as possible."

Pochettino also stressed how happy he was at Tottenham and how keen he is to experience similar occasions in charge of the club. "I am so happy to manage this group of players," he said. "Congratulations to Liverpool, they have a fantastic set of players and they've had a fantastic season."

"The standard are so high. It wasn't enough today and it's a shame. When you live this experience, you want to be again and you want to repeat. It is the best game in the world after the World Cup [final]. I hope we can repeat in the future."

The Tottenham boss defended his decision to throw Harry Kane straight back into the biggest game in the club's history having been sidelined for nearly two months ahead of Lucas Moura -- the hero of Amsterdam.

Kane, who sustained the ankle injury in the first leg of the Champions League quarterfinal against Manchester City in April, did not manage an attempt at goal until stoppage time, when Tottenham were 2-0 down and already chasing a lost cause.

Brazil international Moura, overcome by emotion after the final whistle, was given only 29 minutes to try to rescue his side but in that time Tottenham lived up to considerably.

(Source: ESPN)

## Canizares criticised for his response to Reyes' death

The death of Jose Antonio Reyes caused immense sadness in the world of football on Saturday, yet Santiago Canizares was critical of the fact that one of the reported causes of the car accident was speeding.

While details remain unclear, it has been reported by some that Reyes was driving and his former Spain teammate was critical of this.

"To speed is something to be condemned," Canizares wrote on Twitter.

"There were other victims in the accident as well as the driver. Reyes doesn't deserve a tribute like a hero, although this doesn't mean it wasn't regrettable what happened and that I'll pray for his soul."

The response to Canizares' alternative take was mixed, with some criticism and others agreeing with him.

(Source: Marca)

## Madrid set to offer three players as part of Pogba deal

Zinedine Zidane has set his sights on Paul Pogba with the Manchester United player one of the key requests from the Madrid coach as he compiles his squad for the 2019-20 campaign. According to the Times (UK), Real Madrid are set to use Gareth Bale, Keylor Navas and James Rodriguez as part of the deal.

All three players have been singled by the French coach as surplus to requirements with the Welsh striker alone valued at 70 million euro by market specialist Transfermarkt. Colombian James Rodriguez returns on loan from his loan deal at Bayern Munich and has been advised by his parent club to listen to offers with Costa Rican stopper also having been informed by the French coach that Courtois will wear the number one shirt at the Bernabéu next season.

Keylor has been linked with a move to Old Trafford in the past when it appeared that David de Gea was set to move to the Spanish capital with the main source of current interest in the keeper coming from Portugal's "big two" in Benfica and Porto.

For Pogba, as revealed on March 20, that desire is to wear the white of Real Madrid, with a seemingly added bonus of doing so with one of his idols at the helm. To lift a Champions League is one of his absolute objectives and he is aware that the Spanish giants - certainly if they decide to throw their weight behind the squad rebuild, as is predicted - may be where his chances of doing so are greater. The Frenchman, still just 26, has a contract with United until June 2021 and his salary totals around 14 million euros net.

(Source: AS)

## Guardiola-Juve story won't go away

Reporters from financial newspapers in Italy, America and England continue to insist there is truth in Juventus links with Pep Guardiola.

While most football-based sources, including Sky Sport Italia, Sportitalia, La Gazzetta dello Sport and Tuttosport, continue to insist with absolute certainty that Maurizio Sarri will terminate his contract with Chelsea and be the next Juve Coach, some still stick to their guns.

Writers working for financial sources Il Sole 24 Ore and Bloomberg remain adamant that rumours of Guardiola in advanced negotiations with Juventus are credible, with help from sponsors Adidas.

The Corriere dello Sport imply there is a reason for this, suggesting in their editorial this morning that someone is leaking the information to bump up the Juventus share price on the stock exchange.

Others claim it is simply the Bianconeri covering their bases, as Guardiola would be the number one choice if he freed himself from Manchester City, with Mauricio Pochettino as Plan B from Tottenham and Sarri Plan C.

Considering it was Juve who sacked Max Allegri after he won a fifth consecutive Serie A title, it's obvious they must've had some idea of a replacement before making that decision.

(Source: Football Italia)

# Liverpool's Klopp era delivers its first, but surely not last, title



Liverpool's Juergen Klopp era delivered its first trophy with his side's 2-0 Champions League final victory over Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday but it is unlikely to be the last night of celebration the German coach provides.

Klopp's team's triumph at the Wanda Metropolitano was by no means one of their best performances of the season -- indeed it lacked so much of the verve and quality that has thrilled their supporters during the campaign.

Indeed, for such a highly anticipated clash, the final was a disappointment for the neutral -- the three-week break between the end of the domestic league season and this match, played in energy-sapping heat, leaving players lacking sharpness.

But for Liverpool, it was just reward for a campaign, in Europe and at home, that has highlighted why the recruitment of Klopp in 2015 was such a wise move by the American-owned club.

When Klopp was hired by Fenway Sports Group, he promised to deliver a 'title' within four years or, he joked, his next job might be in the relative obscurity of Swiss football.

The German is bang on schedule and, if there were any wild optimists at Young Boys Bern or Grasshoppers Zurich, they will have to wait a good while yet.

The former Borussia Dortmund coach has delivered four years of progress, promise and gradual strengthening to get Liverpool

back to the pinnacle of European football for the first time in 14 years.

Klopp has taken the first step towards becoming one of the Liverpool legends and joining the pantheon of great managers at Anfield alongside Bill Shankly and Bob Paisley.

Of course, the German still has some way to go to match the achievements of those two greats and he will be expected to end the club's 29-year wait for an English league title.

But few of those heading for a night of

celebration in the Spanish capital doubt he will bring Premier League success too.

Liverpool's players certainly know the central role their coach played in their victory. "Without this manager this is impossible.

You go through tough times in a season, but what he has done since coming in is unbelievable," said captain Jordan Henderson.

"There's such a togetherness, he has created a special dressing room - all the praise goes to the manager," he said.

Having raised the European Cup, which

## Brazil football star Neymar denies alleged rape in Paris



Brazil football player Neymar has denied accusations of rape contained in a Sao Paulo police report seen by Reuters, saying he had been the victim of an extortion attempt by a lawyer claiming to represent the woman he is alleged to have assaulted.

The accusation was the latest blow for the Brazilian, who last month was stripped of the captaincy of the national team and has seen his international reputation suffer amid incidents of indiscipline.

The woman alleged that Neymar had drunkenly assaulted her this month at an upmarket hotel in the French capital, where he plays for the Paris St Germain club.

A statement issued by Neymar's management on his website (www.neymarofficial.com) said the 27-year-old forward completely repudiated the allegations.

"Although he was surprised by the news, the facts were already known to the player and his staff, considering that a few days ago he was the victim of an attempted extortion, practiced by a lawyer from Sao Paulo who said he represented the interests of the alleged victim," read the statement.

"The player's lawyers were immediately notified and have since taken all appropriate steps.

"We completely repudiate the unjust accusations and, above all, the exposure in the press of an extremely negative situation. "All evidence of attempted extortion and non-rape will be submitted to the police

authorities in a timely manner."

According to the police report, the unnamed woman told investigators in Sao Paulo that she met Neymar on Instagram and he suggested they meet in Paris.

Neymar's assistant sent her plane tickets and on May 15 she checked in to the Hotel Sofitel Paris Arc Du Triomphe, according to her account. The Sofitel hotel did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The woman told police that Neymar arrived at the hotel that night "apparently drunk," and that they talked and "caressed".

"However, at some point, Neymar became aggressive, and through violence, practiced sexual intercourse against the will of the victim," the police report says.

The woman told police she returned home to Brazil two days later without telling French police about the alleged rape because she was "emotionally shaken and afraid to register the facts in another country," according to the report.

Neymar's father, Neymar Sr., earlier told local TV in Brazil the accusations were a trap and that his son would publish social media conversations with his accuser, if necessary. The player is in Brazil, training with the national football team ahead of this month's Copa America. Late last month, the country's football federation replaced him as captain for the tournament with his club mate Dani Alves.

(Source: Reuters)

## Serena, Osaka exits open Paris boulevard for Halep



Simona Halep's path to a second successive French Open title cleared up in spectacular fashion on Saturday after 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams and world number one Naomi Osaka exited Roland Garros in the third round on Saturday.

Williams failed to recover from a woeful start against fellow American Sofia Kenin as the 20-year-old motored into the last 16 with a 6-2 7-5 win, putting the former world number one's quest for a record-equalling 24th singles major on hold.

Williams, who suffered her earliest Grand Slam exit since Wimbledon 2014, was given a standing ovation as she walked off Court Philippe Chatrier while sections of the crowd jeered her conqueror.

The 37-year-old Williams, seeded 10th, paid the price for her lack of match practice as she was playing in only her fifth tournament of the year, and her fightback in the middle of the second set was short-lived.

Osaka, just like Williams, was a possible semi-final opponent for third seed Halep, who is looking to become the first woman to retain the Suzanne Lenglen Cup since Justine Henin won a third consecutive title in 2007.

But the Japanese top seed, who had already been forced to go the distance in her first two rounds, was clueless in a 6-4 6-2 defeat to Czech Katerina Siniakova.

The loss snapped Osaka's 16-match winning streak in Grand Slams after she won the 2018 U.S. Open and this year's

the club has now won six times, the Liverpool players then lifted up the 51-year-old German, throwing him skywards in front of their celebrating supporters.

### Major trophy

Klopp is the first German manager to win a major trophy with an English club and in doing so he has also put to bed the questions over his ability to deliver in showpiece matches.

His last six finals in Germany, England and Europe had ended in defeat -- including two Champions League losses, the latter coming last year with Liverpool falling to Real Madrid in Kiev.

That record would have annoyed but not eaten away at him.

Klopp knows the small margins, the little pieces of luck, that can often determine the outcome of finals, as they did on Saturday where a debatable penalty, awarded in the opening minute, had given Liverpool the upper hand.

Victory was only confirmed when substitute Divock Origi drove in the second goal in the 87th, but while Liverpool needed their Brazilian keeper Alisson Becker's saves in the latter stages, they gained their glittering reward.

It was not the breathtaking Liverpool that has won so many admirers across the continent, but the disciplined, hard-working collective that is capable of grinding out wins when the clever passes and neat touches don't come off.

(Source: Reuters)

# Joshua beaten for first time in one boxing's biggest upsets



Andy Ruiz Jr produced one of the biggest shocks in the history of heavyweight boxing to rip Anthony Joshua's IBF, WBO and WBA world heavyweight titles from him and tear up the division's proposed plot lines.

In a truly remarkable fight at New York's Madison Square Garden, Ruiz floored Joshua four times en route to a seventh-round stoppage, which stunned this famous arena and handed the Briton his first defeat as a professional.

Joshua was a 1-25 favourite with bookmakers, with 22 wins - 21 by knockout - going into the fight. He will now join the likes of Lennox Lewis and Mike Tyson as dominant champions to suffer losses which brought the sport to a standstill.

"I got beaten by a good fighter," said 29-year-old Joshua on Sky Sports. "It will be interesting to see how far he goes, but this is all part of the journey."

"He's a champion for now, I shall return."

This was no fluke, no punch from the ages, it was the breakdown of a fighter who looked shattered from an early stage.

After flooring Ruiz with a left hook in the third round, Joshua hit the canvas when a right crashed against his temple. By the time a sensational three minutes was up he had been down again thanks to a flurry when cornered.

It created an electric buzz amongst the 19,000 or so in the arena. Just what was happening? Were they going to

see the unthinkable?

Ruiz, 29, was not even supposed to be here. He took the bout at six weeks' notice and tickets were being collected by fans 24 hours before the bout which still had the name of Jarrell Miller - Joshua's original opponent - printed on them.

By the seventh round, when Joshua touched down under a flurry of shots again, the game looked up. Seconds later he was down on all fours again and spat his gum shield out,

perhaps to buy time.

He simply did not have it. The bout was waved off and all that was planned for the glamour division was ripped up thanks to a man who had been dubbed unglamorous because of his rounded physique.

Ruiz, from appearance to pedigree, was an underdog in every sense of the word. When Britons woke up on Sunday morning, they will read of a truly iconic upset.

### Not the Joshua Britain knows

Ruiz, American born but with Mexican parents, becomes Mexico's first heavyweight world champion, just as he said he would.

When Joshua sat down with the media on Wednesday, virtually every question directed at him was about his future, not this bout.

He said he was "seeing the bigger picture" and maybe therein lies the problem.

After six fairly tentative minutes from both men he scored his knockdown from a crisp left hook as the pair boxed up close. Normal order appeared set to play out.

Moments later when he himself hit the deck, we were taken back to his titanic struggle with Wladimir Klitschko. The night was on a cliff edge, simply do not blink.

(Source: BBC)



# Iran overpower Germany at 2019 Volleyball National League

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran earned their third successive win in Pool 1 of the men's 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League week 1 at the Jiangmen Sports Center Gym in Jiangmen, China on Sunday.

Team Melli defeated Germany in straight sets (30-28, 29-27, 25-20).

Mohammad Mousavi top scored Iran with 13 points, while Germany's Simon Hirsch was the match top scorer with 17 points.

Iran started the campaign with a 3-1 win over Italy and then eased past China 3-0 in their second match.

Iran will play Japan, Argentina and Brazil in Week 2 in Tokyo.

Iran are certainly keen on performing at a higher level than last year and producing better results than their 10th place in the 2018 VNL and 13th place at the World Championship.

Experienced players like Mir Saeid Marouf, Amir Ghafour, Mohammad Mousavi and Farhad Ghaemi, have been training hard alongside a fresh flow of young athletes at the national team preparation camp, with more star volleyballers expected to join as their club season duties come to an end.

The competition will be held between May and July 2019 and the final round will take place in the Credit Union 1 Arena, Chicago, United States.

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

The 16 teams compete in a round-robin format with every core team hosting a pool at least once. The teams are divided into four pools of four teams at each week and compete five weeks long, for 120 matches. The top five teams after the preliminary round join the hosts of the final round to compete in



the final round.

The relegation takes into consideration only the four challenger teams. The last ranked challenger team will be excluded from the 2020 Nations League. The winners of the Challenger Cup will qualify for the next edition as a challenger team.

The six qualified teams play in 2 pools of 3 teams in round-robin. The top two teams of each pool qualify for the semifinals. The pool winners play against the runners-up in this round. The semifinals winners advance to compete for the Nations League title. The losers face each other in the third place match.

## Iran played far beyond expectations: Igor Kolakovic



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national volleyball team coach Igor Kolakovic says his team played far beyond his expectations in Week 1 of the men's 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League.

Team Melli, who had started the campaign with two wins over Italy and China 3-0, defeated Germany in straight sets (30-28, 29-27, 25-20) on Sunday.

Mohammad Mousavi top scored Iran with 13 points, while Germany's Simon Hirsch was the match top scorer with 17 points.

"We earned three successive win and just lost one set. Honestly, I expected good performance from my team but Team Melli played far beyond my expectations," Kolakovic said at the post-match news conference.

"Germany were a tough opponent since they are strong in reception but we defeated team with our good serves. I think we made some mistakes in attacking but we will be better in the next matches. I hope the Iranian people enjoyed a beautiful match because this is the most important thing for us," he added.

"We fight for every match. We won our third match and I am sure we will be better in the coming matches," Kolakovic concluded.

Iran will play Japan, Argentina and Brazil in Week 2 in Tokyo.

The Persians will face Brazil on Thursday and play Argentina and Japan in the following days.

## Sports unite Iranian people: Hassan Rouhani



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Stating that athletes bring pride and liveliness to the country alongside medals, President Hassan Rouhani stressed that the arena of sport must be the arena of unity in the entire Iran and the entire nation need to be united in sports and not let competitions bring about division.

Speaking on Saturday evening in a cordial meeting with athletes, the President said, "Paralyzed athletes bring us a lot of national pride and are the symbol of the victory of will power".

"Sport means that people's voice, from Maku to Chabahar, and from Sarakhs to Khorramshahr, must be united," he continued.

Rouhani added, "We have to rely on whatever strengthens hope, spirits and will

power in people. If we stand up to the United States with hope, we will win the war".

Stating that sport can bring health to the young generation, he said that the arena of sports has to be the arena of unity and solidarity, calling on all related authorities not to let divisions enter competitions, president.ir reported.

He went on to refer to paralyzed athletes and their hard work, saying, "They can create whatever they want through their will power and practice, not only for themselves and their family, but also for the entire nation".

"We will be victorious in the arena of competition and resistance against enemies through unity and solidarity," added the President.

## Asia's assistant referees ready for France 2019

With less than a week to go before the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup kicks off, the-AFC.com profiles the Asian match officials who will be on duty in France.

Twelve match officials will represent the Continent and we kick off the series by profiling the assistant referees who will be on duty in France 2019.

### ■ Makoto Bozono (JPN)

Tokyo-born Bozono started her career in 2015 and has overseen AFC and International tournaments. She assisted compatriots Yoshimi Yamashita and Naomi Teshirogi to officiate the AFC Cup match between Myanmar's Yangon United FC and Naga World, the first time an all-female team took charge of an AFC Cup tie.

"I'm very honoured at being selected for the World Cup. This being my first appointment for the World Cup, I'm very happy and will do my best with my team to have a successful tournament."

### ■ Fang Yan (CHN)

The 40-year-old assistant referee from China PR will be making her second appearance in the FIFA Women's World Cup and has been a mainstay in AFC tournaments since 2013. Among the tournaments she had officiated are the AFC Women's Asian Cup, the AFC U-16 and U-19 Women's Championships.

"I'm very happy. The World Cup is our dream, I'm very happy for that. We have more games and we're more experienced and now with the VAR technology, we will make correct decisions on the field."



### ■ Maiko Hagio (JPN)

Hagio began her career in 2015 and has officiated in numerous AFC age-group tournaments as well as the AFC Women's Asian Cup and the Women's Olympic 2020 qualifying.

"It's very inspiring to be selected for the World Cup. We have a dream, and it can be challenging but as a team, we will work together. Every match is very important for us and we will focus on one match at a time."

### ■ Hong Kum-nyo (PRK)

Kum-nyo will take part in her third Women's World Cup. The assistant referee from DPR Korea began her career in 2006 and has overseen several tournaments in the AFC as well as the Women's Olympic Football Tournament.

"This is very exciting and I will try to do my best. Since this is my third Women's World Cup, I feel more excited and don't feel the pressure. I've prepared physically, mentally and technically. I've been focusing on my physical because I'm older now so I've been training very often. I will treat every match in this World Cup as a final match."

### ■ Kim Kyoung-min (KOR)

Korea Republic's Kim Kyoung-min will be making her fourth appearance in the Women's World Cup. The 39-year-old has overseen four AFC Women's Asian Cup since 2008.

"My first World Cup was in 2007 and I was nervous but now I'm more experienced and I know how to prepare. This year they will introduce the VAR and in the beginning I was a little bit confused but

after going through training, I understand it better now.

"It is good that we have VAR because teams and fans can see why and how the important decisions are decided."

### ■ Lee Seul-gi (KOR)

Seul-gi began her refereeing career in 2005 and the 39-year-old will be making her Women's World Cup bow in France. Seul-gi, alongside compatriot Kim Kyoung-min, recently officiated the 2019 AFC Cup match between Ceres Negros and Becamex Binh Duong.

"I'm very glad to see my name on the selection list. More importantly, now I feel like I'm an ambassador for referees in Korea Republic so I feel very proud. This is the result of all my hard work. My family was very happy for me because they saw how much effort and stress I've gone through. I'm lucky to have such strong family support."

### ■ Naomi Teshirogi (JPN)

Teshirogi was part of the trio of Japanese referees alongside Yoshimi Yamashita and Makoto Bozono to officiate the 2019 AFC Cup match between Yangon United FC and Naga World. She will be making her second World Cup appearance in France.

"My first time at the World Cup was very stressful but now I feel relieved that I've been selected again. I have more experience now so that will be very useful in France. In the past, I felt nervous about VAR but I've gone through seminars to learn more about VAR and now I believe it is a good thing for referees."

(Source: the-afc)

## Iran to participate in Granatkin Memorial International Tournament

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran will participate at the in 2019 Granatkin Memorial International Tournament in St. Petersburg.

The tournament, which was introduced by then FIFA president Joao Havelange in the memory of FIFA's first vice-president Valentin Granatkin, will be held at the Pet-



rovsky Stadium from June 4 to 14.

The tournament will bring as many as 12 teams together in this year's competition.

Iran have been drawn in Group B along with Russia "B", Argentina and Armenia.

Russia are pitted against India, Bulgaria, and Moldova in Group A.

Turkey, Greece, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan are in Group C.

Sirous Pourmousavi's team will open the tournament with a match against Russia "B" on Tuesday.

## Shoja Khalilzadeh's goal named ACL 2019 Group Stage best goal

Persepolis defender Shoja Khalilzadeh's goal was named as the best goal of the 2019 AFC Champions League group stage by the fans.

Iranian champion Persepolis was scoreless with Al Ahli on Matchday Three when Khalilzadeh showed superb agility to adjust his body and acrobatically scissor-kick home the opening goal from just inside the area in a 2-0 win.

Khalilzadeh's goal got 42 percent of the votes.

Persepolis midfielder Mehdi Torabi, who scored from 30 yards in a 2-0 win against Al Sadd, came second in the poll.

Kim Dae-won (Daegu FC vs Melbourne Victory), Sebastian Giovinco (Al Hilal vs Esteghlal), Alaa Abbas (Al Zawraa vs Al Wasl) and Islom Tukhtakhodjaev (Lokomotiv vs Al Wahda) were competing for the award.

(Source: the-afc)

## Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers win Ljubomir Ivanovic Gedza Memorial

**MNA** — Iranian junior Greco-Roman wrestlers earned a total of seven medals to be crowned at the 2019 edition of Ljubomir Ivanovic Gedza Memorial in Serbia.

The Iranian federation had dispatched a junior team to the senior event. Vahid Dadkhah in 97kg and Ali Akbar Yousefi in 130kg stanchied two gold medals for Iran. Two silvers were gained by Mohammad Reza Naghousi in 77kg and Abolfazl Mahdavi in 97kg while Milad Rezanezhad in 60kg, Mohammad Reza Mokhtari in 67kg and Hassan Foruzandeh in 87kg received bronze medals.

The team coach, Hamid Bavafa, has also been named as the best coach of the tournament.

The 2019 edition of Ljubomir Ivanovic Gedza Memorial was held on Saturday in Mladenovac, Serbia.

## Tractor Sazi terminates Kevin Constant contract

**MNA** — Iran's Tractor Sazi FC terminated the contract of Kevin Constant due to his failure to pass the club's medical tests.

The Iranian club signed a 3.5 contract with the French-Guinea national in early January; however, the 31-year-old defensive midfielder didn't play even a minute for the team.

In a Sunday's statement, the club said that the result of medical tests reveal that Constant is suffering from a disease which cannot be healed in the short term so his contract has been terminated.

The French-Guinea national began representing the French U-17 squad in 2004 but in 2007, played for the senior football team of Guinea. He has scored five international goals for Guinea, one of which was against Team Melli where the African team defeated the Iranian side 2-1 in a friendly match in March 2014.

In his club career, Constant has played for Toulouse, Châteauroux, Chievo, Genoa, AC Milan, Trabzonspor, and Bologna.

## Mehdi Tartar parts company with Pars Jonoubi

**TASNIM** — Mehdi Tartar on Sunday announced that he is no longer Pars Jonoubi coach.

Pars Jonoubi won a promotion to Iran Professional League (IPL) in 2016 under coaching of Mehdi Tartar.

The former Persepolis midfielder parted company with the Iranian top-flight football team after three years.

The Jam-based football team finished in 12th place in the table.

Iranian media reports suggest that Tartar is among the candidates to take charge of Iran U-23 football team as a replacement for Zlatko Kranjcar.



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Relief is granted by God in proportion to one’s need.

Imam Ali (AS)

“Life Again” to compete in Shanghai festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — “Life Again” by Iranian director Reza Fahimi, will go on screen at the 22nd edition of the Shanghai International Film Festival, producer Hossein Purmohammadi announced in a press release on Saturday.



Golab Adineh (L) and Mohammad Shams Langerudi act in a scene from Iranian director Reza Fahimi's drama “Life Again”.

Starring Golab Adineh and Mohammad Shams Langerudi, the film is about an old couple who decide to go to a nursing home but they face several obstacles. The 22nd Shanghai International Film Festival will be held in the Chinese city from June 15 to 24.

“Delirium” to compete in Bucheon Intl. Fantastic Film Festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — “Delirium”, co-directed by Vahid and Navid Hosseini-nami, will compete in the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival taking place in the South Korean city from June 30 to July 7, the organizers have announced.



A scene from “Delirium” co-directed by Vahid and Navid Hosseini-Nami.

The story is about a city where the smallest punishment for anyone who opposes the dictatorship is to have an ear cut off. On a rainy night, a man finds an ear on the ground. The short film had its premiere at the 37th Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran during April.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Pop singer  
Amir-Abbas  
Golab recording  
music videos  
in India

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iranian pop singer Amir-Abbas Golab is in India recording two music videos. Golab is accompanied by director Mehdi Falakband and hang drummer Erfan Qaviqalb, the singer has announced in a post on his Instagram. The singer recorded the music video “King of My Heart” in Turkey last year. He is planning to begin a concert tour in Iran soon.

European film festival to open in Tehran Saturday

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — A festival of movies from European filmmakers will open in Tehran on Saturday, the organizers have announced.

“The Dark Valley”, a 2014 Austrian-German western drama directed by Andreas Prochaska, and “The Silent Army”, Dutch director Jean van de Velde’s 2008 drama about the hardships of child soldiers in Africa, will be screened during an opening ceremony at the Iranian Artists Forum.

Kish Island and the cities of Shiraz, Babol, Isfahan, Kerman, Mashhad and Tabriz will host the festival simultaneously until June 17.

The festival titled “European Film Week” will also screen movies from Bulgaria, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Slovenia, Finland, Denmark and England.

A number of Iranian and European filmmakers, cultural figures and diplomats have been invited to attend the opening ceremony.

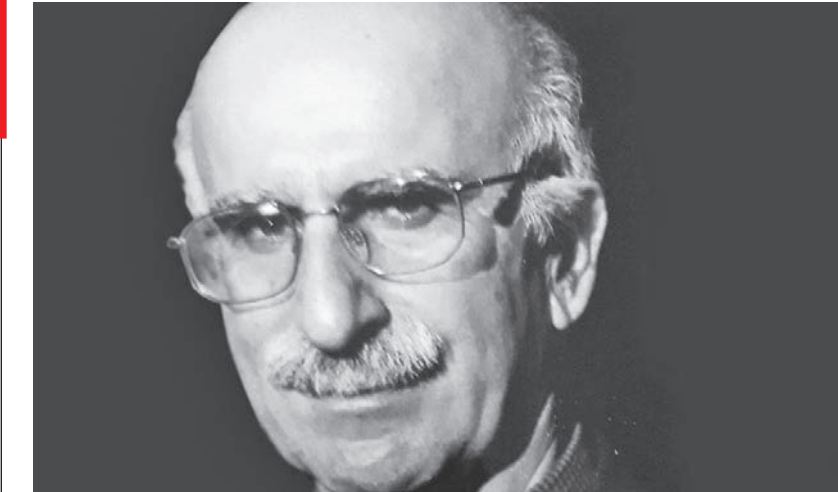
The European Film Week will be organized as a collaborative effort between Iran’s Art and Experience Cinema and the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC).

The two institutions have previously organized the festival in Iran in 2017 and 2018.



A poster for “The Dark Valley”, a 2014 Austrian-German western drama directed by Andreas Prochaska, which will open the European Film Week in Tehran.

Translator Morteza Kalantarian dies after falling from his building



Morteza Kalantarian in an undated photo.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Morteza Kalantarian, the Persian translator of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s “The Social Contract” and Italo Svevo’s “Zeno’s Conscience”, died on Sunday after falling from a building in Tehran where he lived. He was 87.

A number of Persian news media suspected that he committed suicide, but his son, Maziar, denied the reports in his interview with Tasnim News Agency.

A close relative also told the Persian service of IRNA that Kalantarian was not suffering from any special disease, however,

he was too weak to sit and do his work.

Kalantarian was born in the northern Iranian city of Tonekabon. He was a graduate of law from a Paris university. When he returned back home, he began to work as a judge, however, after retirement, he continued the translation of literary works.

He was the translator of Heinrich Böll’s “Group Portrait with Lady”, Antonis Samarakis’s “The Flaw”, Muriel Barbery’s “The Elegance of the Hedgehog”, Sorj Chalandon’s “Return to Killybegs” and dozens of books from world-renowned writers.

“Jack and the Beanstalk” to go on stage in Tehran

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Ahmad Teimuri plans to stage the old English fairy tale “Jack and the Beanstalk” at Tehran’s Arasbaran Cultural Center on June 9.

The play is about Jack, a poor, young boy living with his widowed mother and a dairy cow. The cow’s milk is their only source of income and when the cow stops giving milk, they decide to sell it.

On the way to market, Jack meets a bean dealer who offers magic beans in exchange for the cow. When

Jack returns home with the beans, his angry mother throws the beans on the ground, where they grow to a gigantic beanstalk.

Jack climbs the beanstalk and finds an enormous castle full of treasures. He steals a bag of gold coins, a goose that lays golden eggs and a magic harp that plays by itself and runs from the castle’s owner, a giant.

Alireza Zokai, Hossein Khamseh, Sepideh Zeinali and Paria Yazdanzu are the main members of the cast for the play, which will be running for one month.

Swiss court blocks Italy’s bid for possible da Vinci portrait

**ZURICH (Reuters)** — Switzerland’s highest court has rejected Italy’s request for the return of an oil painting attributed by some to Leonardo Da Vinci, ruling no Swiss laws were broken when the work was brought over the border.

Titled “Portrait of Isabella d’Este” and dated to the 16th century, the painting became the subject of an international tug-of-war after an Italian woman, Emidia Cecchini, sought to sell it in 2013.

Police were alerted to its existence when an Italian lawyer surfaced with a mandate to sell it for no less than 95 million euros (\$106 million). Art experts have yet to agree on whether it really is by the Renaissance master.

An Italian investigation into possible

tax crimes and insurance fraud uncovered evidence that led police in 2015 to the painting in a vault in the Swiss town of Lugano, a lakeside banking center in the Italian-speaking south where many Italians have crossed the border to deposit assets.

Cecchini, who Swiss court documents said was convicted in Italy with two others for their role in exporting the picture, has always maintained the painting had been in Switzerland for a century, taken there by her relatives who at one time lived in the country, Swiss and Italian media have reported.

The Swiss verdict clears the way for the work’s return to Cecchini, from Pesaro. Cecchini’s attorney did not respond to email and telephone requests for comment on

Wednesday. Italy’s Justice Ministry declined to comment.

Italy demanded its seizure on grounds it had been trafficked out of the country illegally to Switzerland.

In a decision published on Wednesday, the Swiss Federal Tribunal declined Italy’s request for the painting’s return, ruling its export to Switzerland was not liable to prosecution.

“Subject to any other international agreements, no state is required to apply foreign public law within its borders,” the Federal Tribunal said in a statement.

Under Swiss law regulating international cultural property transfers, people may face prosecution for illegally transporting

objects of unique value if they are listed in a Swiss federal registry or, in this case, in a corresponding Italian inventory.

For this painting, however, that was not the case, the Swiss court wrote.

The portrait, a 24-inch by 18-inch oil-on-canvas of a noblewoman, resembles a charcoal study by da Vinci that hangs in Paris’s Louvre museum.

There is discussion among art experts about whether it is really a da Vinci. Carlo Pedretti, a da Vinci expert and professor at the University of California Los Angeles before he died last year, told media in 2015 its origins merited more study but could not confirm whether da Vinci was involved in painting it.

Tehran to host 2nd Teer Art fair



A poster for the 2nd edition of the Teer Art fair.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — The 2nd edition of the Teer Art, an art fair co-founded by the Dastan Basement Gallery and Asar Gallery, will be held at Tehran’s Charsu Cineplex from June 25 to 28.

Eighteen galleries from Tehran and other Iranian cities, including Isfahan and Shiraz, will attend the art fair.

“These galleries have been chosen by our selection committee composed of Negar Azimi, the senior editor of the New York-based art magazine Bidoun, Art Dubai director Myrna Ayad and Italian

gallery director Daniele Balice.” Teer Art director Maryam Majd told the Persian service of ISNA on Sunday.

The director of Tehran’s Tarrahan Azad Gallery, Rozita Sharafjahan, and graphic designer Behzad Hatam are other members of the selection committee.

The art fair aims to encourage more dialogue among gallery owners, art experts and artists, and to develop a good relationship between art and everyday life.

Several panel discussions on various topics will also be organized on the sidelines of the fair.



A poster for the play “Jack and the Beanstalk”, which will be directed by Ahmad Teimuri at Tehran’s Arasbaran Cultural Center.

Pioneering psychedelic rocker Roky Erickson dies at 71

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Roky Erickson, the blue-eyed, dark-haired Texan who headed the Austin-based 13th Floor Elevators, a pioneering psychedelic rock band in the 1960s that scored with “You’re Gonna Miss Me,” has died. He was 71.

Erickson’s sinuous lead guitar and wailing vocals didn’t turn him into a chart topper, but they cemented his role as a musician’s musician. Fans included everyone from Lenny Kaye and the Swedish metal group Ghost — who covered his “If You Have Ghosts” — to ZZ Top’s Billy Gibbons.

A 1990 tribute album to Erickson, “Where the Pyramid Meets the Eye,” attracted the likes of R.E.M., T-Bone Burnett,

The Jesus and Mary Chain, Julian Cope, The Mighty Lemon Drops, Primal Scream and ZZ Top.

Erickson’s death on Friday was announced by his brother, Mikel Erickson, on Facebook and confirmed by his agent, Dave Kaplan. The cause and location of death were not revealed.

“It’s almost unfathomable to contemplate a world without Roky Erickson. He created his own musical galaxy and early on was a true inspiration,” Gibbons said in a statement.

After the trippy 13th Floor Elevators dissolved in the face of drug arrests and instability, Erickson in the early ‘70s entered an insanity plea to a marijuana possession

charge and ended up spending some time in an institution.

A short-lived effort to reunite the Elevators followed. Erickson put out a book of poetry — “Openers” — and continued making music, including the songs “Two Headed Dog” and the LP “The Evil One.”

In 1986, he released the album “Don’t Slander Me,” and a 2005 documentary by Keven McAlester about him was called “You’re Gonna Miss Me.” His later albums include the mid-1990s effort, “All That May Do My Rhyme,” and a 2010 collaboration with Okkervil River, “True Love Cast Out All Evil.”