



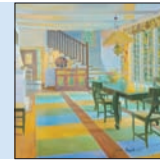
U.S. is serious threat to international stability 2



'Turkey's trade center in Iran completely active despite U.S. sanctions' 4



Iran among top 20 in FIFA ranking 15



Finnish artists Carin Bengts, Iina Heiskanen display works at Tehran gallery 16

Leader to Abe: Trump not worthy of exchanging messages with

Iran calls suspicious nature of attacks on oil tankers 'alarming'

TEHRAN — Tehran on Friday categorically rejected accusations by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that Iran was responsible for attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday morning. Just over 12 hours after reports broke in slumbering Washington about the new crisis in which two ships were left ablaze forcing their crews to abandon their posts, Pompeo appeared in the State Department Briefing Room to

significantly raise the stakes. "It is the assessment of the United States government that the Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible for the attacks that occurred in the Gulf of Oman today," Pompeo said. He cited intelligence, weapons used, the required expertise and sophistication of the assault and previous attacks to conclude it was the latest assault by Iran on "freedom-loving nations." →2



See page 2

Xi says China will promote steady ties with Iran

TEHRAN — Chinese President Xi Jinping told Iran's president on Friday that China will promote steady development of ties with Iran no matter how the situation changes, Chinese state media said. The official Xinhua news agency said Xi made the comment in a meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Xi said China is ready to expand cooperation with Iran in order to promote multilateralism. The Chinese leader also said Beijing is ready to promote cooperation with Iran in fighting "terrorism and organized crimes". The Chinese president also welcomed Iran's involvement in the new Silk Road project known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). →2

'War with Iran not in our strategic interest': U.S. military

The United States has "no interest in engaging in a new conflict in the Middle East", the U.S. military said on Thursday. The remarks were made by Lieutenant Colonel Earl Brown, a spokesman for the U.S. Central Command.

"We have no interest in engaging in a new conflict in the Middle East," Reuters quoted Brown as saying. He added, "We will defend our interests, but a war with Iran is not in our strategic interest, nor in the best interest of the international community."

EDITORIAL
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The White House promotional campaign against Iran is defeated

The United States Secretary of State, who is one of the symbols of assassination, violence, killing and disregard for international law, has accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of recent attacks in the Oman Sea. This charge comes from Mike Pompeo to Iran, the nature of the Trump government has long been outlined for the world's public opinion!

The reality is that the propaganda squad and the psychological warfare of U.S. officials against Iran will fail this time. Recent statements by Mike Pompeo show that the U.S. Secretary of State has been involved in a craft that he and other members of the White House have created.

"Taken as a whole, these unprovoked attacks present a clear threat to international peace and security, a blatant assault on the freedom of navigation, and an unacceptable campaign of escalating tension by Iran," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, vowing the U.S. would defend itself and its partners.

Interestingly, Mike Pompeo called for the cooperation of the members of the UN Security Council in negotiations with our country! This comment comes as the White House officials over the past two and a half years have not been essentially following multilateralism in the international system. When they left the nuclear deal with Iran and re-imposed unlawful and cruel sanctions against the Iranian people, they showed that they were not reliable at all. Also, actions such as the withdrawal from the Paris Pact by the Trump, or the violations of the NAFTA Treaty in North America, have shown that Washington is in delusion! The president of the United States thinks that it is the post-Cold War era, and that Washington is an absolute power in the world! However, recent Secretary of State remarks showed the White House is severely vulnerable. As time passes, Washington will be closer to the point of failure and collapse.

Ultimately, the Trump government will soon become one of the hallmarks of the United States' defeat in the world. Undoubtedly, the game of people like Mike Pompeo and John Bolton against Iran could not save the president of the United States from the current situation.

'Iran welcomes Japan's contribution to development of Chabahar Port'

TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani expressed satisfaction with Japan's willingness for expansion of banking and economic ties with Iran and welcomed the Asian country's contribution to the development of Iranian southeastern Chabahar Port.

"Iran welcomes Japan's cooperation and investment in Chabahar Port as well as the Makran region and is ready to attract Japanese investment," Rouhani said during a meeting on Wednesday attended by high-ranking officials from both sides.

In the meeting, the Iranian president underlined the significance of the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to Iran, saying

"Iran is keen on developing all-out relations with Japan, and we hope that this trip will be a turning point in the relationship between Tehran and Tokyo."

"We are interested in deep, friendly and long-term relations with Japan," he said, pointing to the concurrence of Abe's visit to Tehran and the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

"The relations between the two countries have been very strong in the past, and we have had lasting cooperation in areas such as dam construction, environment and energy," Rouhani added.

Japan's prime minister also expressed his

satisfaction with traveling to Tehran for the second time.

He mentioned the impact of U.S. sanctions on the financial and economic ties between the two countries, and said: "We have had serious negotiations with the U.S. in order to maintain economic relations with Iran, including the import of oil, and we will continue our efforts in this regard."

"We wish to maintain and expand our economic ties with Iran and to continue buying Iranian oil", he emphasized.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrived in Tehran on Wednesday afternoon for talks with top Iranian leaders.

Hamas official accuses Israel of fabricating excuses to escalate tension against Gaza

TEHRAN — A senior Hamas official, Basem Naim accused Israel of "fabricating vague excuses" to escalate against the Gaza Strip.

"The Israeli occupation bears responsibility for the consequences of evading and retreating from the implementation of the recent truce understandings in Gaza," Naim said in a statement.

He went on to add that Israel claims that fires in the vicinity of the Gaza Strip are caused by

incendiary balloons when, in reality, they are mostly caused by hot weather or some farmers who burn their crops due to financial reasons.

"We are aware that this behavior is a failed attempt to escape internal crises, especially the upcoming elections and the government formation, and export them at the expense of the Palestinian people, their freedom and life" he added.

Naim stressed that the Palestinian faction's de-

cision is to abide by the terms of the recent truce understandings "as long as the [Israeli] occupation is committed to them," adding that Hamas has no intention to escalate tensions, Middle East Monitor reported. "Therefore, we hold the [Israeli] occupation fully responsible for escalation and aggression on some areas in Gaza, and we call on it to retreat from its clumsy decisions, which will only increase the complexity and tension of the situation," he said.

Iran extend winning run to six in 2019 FIVB VNL

TEHRAN — Iran swept past Canada in straight sets (25-15, 26-24, 25-16) at the third competition week of the men's 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League in Urmia, West Azerbaijan province on Friday.

Team Melli will face Poland and Russia on Saturday and Sunday, respectively at the Ghadir Hall.

Igor Kolakovic's team have already seized

five wins against Italy, Germany, China, Argentina and Japan and lost to Brazil in the first two weeks.

The competition is being held between May and July 2019 and the final round will take place in the Credit Union 1 Arena, Chicago, United States.

Earlier on the day Russia defeated Poland 3-1. 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.



Rouhani, Putin hold talks on regional security

TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin met on Friday to discuss the volatile security situation in the Middle East region.

The top officials met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit hosted by Kyrgyzstan.

Rouhani and Putin attached great importance to continuation of Tehran-Moscow ties and also cooperation in line with establishing security in the region and fighting terrorism.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi, Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Hesamoddin Ashna, a senior advisor to the president, also attended the meeting.

PERSPECTIVE
Hanif Ghaffari
 Political analyst

Why should Europe get away from the White House?

Although less than a month has passed since the European Parliamentary elections, the traditional European parties are still in shock because of the failure of the election. The failure of the traditional European parties in three countries, Britain, Germany and France, shows that European authorities will have a difficult path to overcome social, political, economic and security crises.

On the other hand, if the Nationalist parties are more likely to be at the head of the political and executive equations of the European countries, the future of the European Union and the eurozone will face a crisis. In such a situation, European countries will have to change their approach and strategy. If this action is not taken, the collapse of the European Union and the euro zone will be quite possible.

One of the issues that has led to the frustration of European citizens from this collection is the European Union's dependence on the United States. While US National Security Advisor John Bolton and Trump have repeatedly expressed their opposition to the existence of the European Union and the Eurozone, Europe has not taken any steps towards independence from the United States. European officials have made mistakes in their calculations and attitudes toward the US government. This big mistake could lead to the loss of the European Union and the Eurozone. Undoubtedly, people like the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron need to realize their mistake will be too late. Can European authorities be able to understand this real danger?

Many analysts of international affairs have recently had a special focus on US-EU relations! Some signals and speeches by the President of the United States which are addressed to the European authorities indicate the full opposition of the White House to the European Union. Over the past few months, there has been news about the specific talks between the President of the United States and some of the European Union's member states. Trump called on French President "Emmanuel Macron" to leave the European Union and thus build wider bilateral relations with the United States!

Unilateral U.S. actions solely responsible for regional insecurity: Zarif

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that the U.S. unilateral actions and economic terrorism are solely responsible for insecurity in the region.

"Unilateral US actions—incl. its #EconomicTerrorism on Iran—are solely responsible for insecurity & renewed tension in our region," he tweeted on Friday.



He also said, "With Pres. @ HassanRouhani at #SCO in Kyrgyzstan. Important multilateral dialogue + fruitful bilateral talks incl. w/ President Xi & President Putin."

President Hassan Rouhani and Zarif were in Kyrgyzstan to attend summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Kyrgyzstan.

During a speech at the summit, Rouhani said, "The U.S. administration has used its economic and military capabilities and has adopted aggressive approach and has disrupted all the international structures and regulations and has turned into a serious threat against international stability."

During a meeting with German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on Monday, Rouhani said that the Europeans should resist the U.S. "economic terrorism" against Iran.

Zarif told ABC News in an interview published on June 2 that "there will be consequences" if the U.S. keeps up its economic pressure campaign against Iran's people.

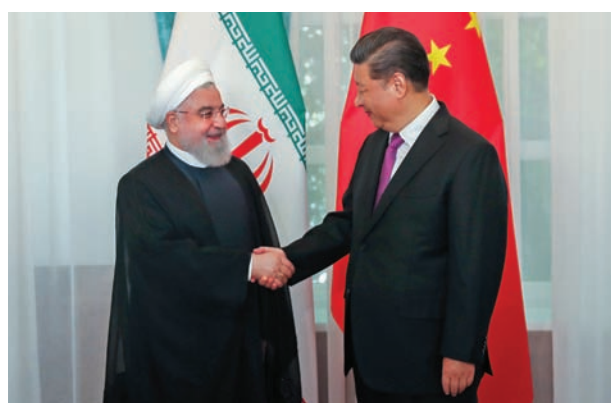
Zarif labeled the new U.S. sanctions as "economic terrorism" that "targets ordinary Iranian people" because even though food and medicine are exempted from the sanctions, the financial transactions associated with them are not.

Xi says China will promote steady ties with Iran

1 → Xi also condemned the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal as the main reason behind rising tensions in the region.

Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a statement on June 7 denouncing the unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S. against Iran.

■ Rouhani says Iran, China's resistance against U.S. unilateralism benefits world



Rouhani says Iran's relations with China are "strategic".

For his part, Rouhani said resistance demonstrated by Iran and China against the U.S. unilateralism is beneficial to the entire world.

Rouhani said, "The Iranian people have shown that they become more united and strong against the external pressure and they do not become weak."

He noted that the U.S. administration's pressure against Iran and China aimed at dominating the world.

Elsewhere, Rouhani said that Iran's relations with China are "strategic".

The two countries have many capacities to expand ties, he added.

The president said, "Iran is interested in continuing cooperation with China in spheres of energy, development of infrastructures for sustainable, strategic relations with China in providing China with energy."

Rouhani also said Iran welcomes "China's investment" in projects in "southern regions and ports".

Rouhani added given its exceptional geographical location, Iran is ready to play an important role in the BRI project.

Projects under the BRI project include a network of railways, highways, oil and gas pipelines, power grids, Internet networks, maritime and other infrastructure links across Central, West and South Asia to as far as Greece, Russia and Oman.

Trump says wants Iran 'back at the table'

(PRESS TV) — U.S. President Donald Trump has said that he wants Iran to get back at the table, following attacks on two oil tankers in the Sea of Oman which Washington has blamed on Tehran.

In an interview on Fox News pm Friday, Trump blamed Iran for the attack on oil tankers without providing evidence, as did his secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, on Thursday.

Hours after the incident, Iran warned the US to stop playing a blame game through "suspicious" attacks on oil tankers in the Middle East, describing the American behavior as "worrying".

Trump said on Friday that if Iran were to close the Strait of Hormuz, "it's not going to be closed for long," without elaborating how the United States would keep the international shipping route open.

"They're not going to be closing [the strait]," Trump said in response to a hypothetical question from Fox News.

"They know it, and they've been told in very strong terms. We want to get them back at the table, if they want to go back," he said.

"I'm ready when they are, but whenever they're ready, it's okay. And in the meantime, I'm in no rush. I'm in no rush," he added.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Thursday dismissed Trump as a person not worthy of a response or a message, stressing that negotiations with Washington cannot help solve any problem.

Rouhani says U.S. is serious threat to international stability

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Friday that the U.S. has adopted an "aggressive approach" and is a serious threat to the international stability.

"The U.S. administration has used its economic and military capabilities and has adopted aggressive approach and has disrupted all the international structures and regulations and has turned into a serious threat against international stability," he said during a speech at meeting of the Council of Heads of States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Kyrgyzstan.

He added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that today, the international community has been challenged by unilateralism more than ever. Problems and complexities such as terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking have made multilateralism more essential."

He said that the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is an important achievement of multilateral diplomacy which proved that if there is a political will, it will be possible to solve any problem through dialogue rather than sanctions and war.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has fulfilled all its obligations based on 15 reports issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency, but unfortunately, the United States unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA and threatens other parties and countries to violate the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, which calls for normal trade relations



with Iran," he said.

Rouhani urged the remaining parties to the JCPOA to fulfil their obligations as soon as possible to make sure that Iran enjoys

the economic benefits of the nuclear deal.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is a country with an exceptional geographic and strategic location that is very rich in energy and mineral

Rouhani urges the remaining parties to the JCPOA to fulfil their obligations as soon as possible to make sure that Iran enjoys the economic benefits of the deal.

Leader to Abe: Trump not worthy of exchanging messages with

Ayatollah Khamenei says Iran will not 'repeat the bitter experience' of dialogue with the U.S.

TEHRAN (Press TV) — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei dismisses U.S. President Donald Trump as a person not worthy of a response or a message, stressing that negotiations with Washington cannot help solve any problem.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a Thursday meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who told the Leader he was carrying a message from the U.S. president.

"We have no doubts about your (Japan's) goodwill and seriousness, but regarding what you quoted from the American president, I personally do not consider Trump worthy of exchanging any messages with, and do not have and will not have any response for him," the Leader told Abe.

The Leader said Iran has "no trust" in the United States and will not at all "repeat the bitter experience" it gained from the negotiations that led to the conclusion of a 2015 nuclear deal, which Washington

later ditched.

"Iran engaged in talks with America and the Europeans for some five or six years, and achieved a result. The Americans, however, breached a done deal," said the Leader, emphasizing that no wise man would enter talks with a country that has reneged on all agreements.

Ayatollah Khamenei further rejected as "a lie" Trump's claim that he was not after regime change in Iran, saying if the U.S. president were able to bring about such a change, he would definitely go for it.

The Leader dismissed Washington's claim of readiness for "honest negotiations" with Tehran, saying "honesty is highly scarce among American statesmen."

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to Trump's

talks with Abe on Iran in Tokyo ahead of the Japanese premier's trip to Tehran, saying "Right after returning home, he (the U.S. president) announced sanctions on Iran's petrochemical industry."

"Is that a message of honesty? Does that show that he (Trump) seeks honest talks?" the Leader asked.

"With the blessing of God, Iran will achieve progress without negotiations with America and under all the sanctions," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "Problems will not be solved through negotiations with the United States."

The Leader also reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's firm opposition to the development and use of nuclear weapons.

"I have issued a fatwa (religious decree)

prohibiting the production of nuclear weapons, but you need to know that if we were after building nuclear arms, the United States could not do anything about it," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

The Leader emphasized that Washington is in no position to decide which country can be in possession of nuclear arms while it is, itself, stockpiling several thousands of nuclear warheads.

Ayatollah Khamenei welcomed Abe's proposal for enhancing Tehran-Tokyo relations and said, "Japan is an important country in Asia and it should display a firm resolve for enhanced ties with Iran."

Following the meeting, Abe told reporters in Tehran that Ayatollah Khamenei had "made a comment that the country will not and should not make, hold or use nuclear weapons, and that it has no such intentions."

The Japanese prime minister also said that he regarded the Leader's belief in peace "as a major progress toward this region's peace and stability."

Ayatollah Khamenei says if Trump were able to bring about regime change, he would definitely go for it.

Iran calls suspicious nature of attacks on oil tankers 'alarming'

1 → Pompeo offered no evidence for his accusations. He did not allow questions so journalists could challenge his assertions. And his decision not to allow a few days to elapse for a full investigation left no doubt about U.S. intentions.

He left the room after warning the "United States will defend its forces, interests, and stand with our partners and allies to safeguard global commerce and regional stability."

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif took to the twitter shortly after to dismiss Pompeo's accusations.

"That the US immediately jumped to make allegations against Iran—w/o a shred of factual or circumstantial evidence—only makes it abundantly clear that the #B_Team is moving to a #PlanB: Sabotage diplomacy—including by @AbeShinzo—and cover up its #EconomicTerrorism against Iran," Zarif tweeted.

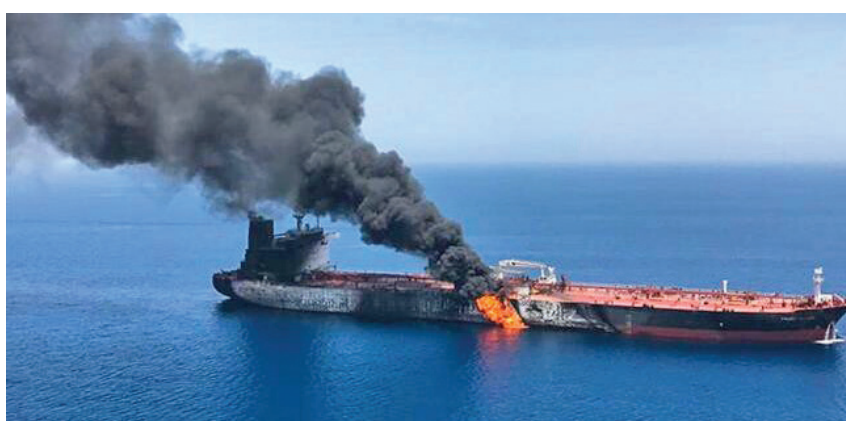
"B-team" is a coinage of Zarif and comprises of U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who pursue regime change in Iran.

Zarif added, "I warned of exactly this scenario a few months ago, not because I'm clairvoyant, but because I recognize where the #B_Team is coming from."

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also issued a statement, where he said the suspicious nature of the attacks is not funny or ridiculous but "alarming".

The attacks on the two ships happened near the Strait of Hormuz, a major strategic waterway through which about one-fifth of global oil consumption passes on its way from Persian Gulf producers including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE and Kuwait as well as Iran.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible for ensuring the security of the Strait



of Hormuz, and we showed this by rushing to save the sailors of the incident-hit vessels in the shortest time possible," Foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in a statement.

"Pinning the blame on Iran for the suspicious and regrettable incident for the oil tankers seems to be the easiest and most simplistic thing Pompeo and other American statesmen could do," Mousavi said, the Foreign Ministry website reported.

"While the Japanese prime minister is meeting with Iran's top leader to discuss ways to ease regional tensions, which clandestine hands have been at work to undermine such efforts and who benefits from that?" the spokesman asked.

"Mr. Pompeo! The suspicious nature of

incidents for oil tankers is not a joke. It is not only not funny, but it is also worrying and alarming," Mousavi added.

Still on another front, Iran categorically rejected as "unfounded" U.S. claims that it is responsible for the attacks, warning of "another Iranophobic campaign" being waged by Washington and its allies.

"The inflammatory remarks by the U.S. representative against Iran at the UN Security Council on 13 June 2019 was another Iranophobic campaign. Iran categorically rejects the U.S. unfounded claim with regard to 13 June oil tanker incidents and condemns it in the strongest possible terms," said the Iranian mission to the UN in a statement on Thursday.

"Neither fabrications and disinformation

"While the Japanese prime minister is meeting with Iran's top leader to discuss ways to ease regional tensions, which clandestine hands have been at work to undermine such efforts and who benefits from that?" the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman asks.

campaigns nor shamelessly blaming others can change the realities. The U.S. and its regional allies must stop warmongering and put an end to mischievous plots as well as false flag operations in the region. Warning, once again, about all of the U.S. coercion, intimidation, and malign behavior, Iran expresses concern over suspicious incidents for the oil tankers that occurred today," the statement added, according to Press TV.

On Thursday morning, Iranian rescuers rushed to the assistance of the two oil tankers in the Sea of Oman, transferring all of their 44 crew members to Iran's southern shores.

Referring to Washington's sanctions against Tehran following the former's unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement with world powers, the statement said, "The U.S. economic war and terrorism against the Iranian people as well as its massive military presence in the region have been and continue to be the main sources of insecurity and instability in the wider Persian Gulf region and the most significant threat to its peace and security."

The statement also called on "the international community to live up to its responsibilities in preventing the reckless and dangerous policies and practices of the U.S. and its regional allies in heightening the tensions in the region."

It added that the recent developments in the region "serve as proof of the urgency" of engaging in "dialogue based on mutual respect" between "all regional countries... based on mutual respect, inclusivity and basic principles of international law."

"Reiterating its longstanding position on the need for promoting peace and security in the broader Persian Gulf region, the Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to play an active and constructive role in ensuring the security of strategic maritime passages as well as promoting peace, stability and security in the region," the statement said in conclusion.

Zarif says U.S. jumps to blame Iran for tanker incidents 'without a shred of factual evidence'

B-Team launching 'sabotage diplomacy' against Iran, Zarif warns

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Friday accused Washington of jumping "to make allegations against Iran without a shred of factual or circumstantial evidence" as two oil tankers were attacked in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday blamed Iran for the explosions on the oil tankers.

Two oil tankers — the Norwegian-owned Front Altair and the Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous — suffered significant damage after experiencing explosions while they were traveling near the Strait of Hormuz, the world's busiest sea lane for oil shipments. Crews were forced to abandon ship and leave the vessels adrift in waters between Arab states and Iran.

The attack took place exactly the day Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran.



Earlier, Iran's mission to the United Nations said in a statement: "Iran categorically rejects the U.S. unfounded claim with regard to 13 June oil tanker incidents and condemns

it in the strongest possible terms."

Writing on his Twitter page, Zarif said this time the "B-Team" has launched a "sabotage diplomacy" against Iran.

The so-called B-Team refers to a group that includes U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed.

Zarif had previously said the B-Team was trying to lure U.S. President Donald Trump into a war with Tehran.

Zarif said the B-Team is moving to sabotage diplomacy to cover up "economic terrorism" against Iran.

In an earlier Tweet on Thursday, Zarif had said attack on "Japan-related" tanker occurred while Abe was meeting with Ayatollah Khamenei "for extensive and friendly talks".

The chief diplomat added these incidents reinforce the need that "Iran's proposed Regional Dialogue Forum is imperative".

Advisor says U.S., Israel are main suspects for tanker incidents



POLITICAL TEHRAN — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, said on Friday that U.S. security services and Israel's Mossad are the "main suspects" for endangering the security of oil export in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

On Thursday morning, two commercial oil tankers were hit in the Gulf of Oman, prompting the evacuation and rescue of dozens of crew members.

Amir Abdollahian, who served as Iran's point man for Arab affairs for some years, said Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are adding fuel to the fire through their "stupidity".

"US security services & Mossad main suspects for insuring #PersianGulf/#OmanSea oil export. KSA, UAE, Bahrain stupidity fan the flame of violence in region," Amir Abdollahian tweeted.

He added, "Iran powerfully protects national interests and regional stability, disappoints regional security's enemies" and force the U.S. to leave the region.

Leader 'disarmed' U.S. by rejecting talks offer: top MP



POLITICAL TEHRAN — Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee says the remarks by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has "disarmed" the United States by firmly rejecting the notion of talks. In a meeting on Thursday with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Ayatollah Khamenei called U.S. President Donald Trump as a person not "worthy" of a response or a message, stressing that negotiations with Washington cannot help solve any problem.

"I believe that this straightforward message does not mean a death for diplomacy, but it means that diplomacy needs to become

more realistic and that the diplomacy between Iran and America must change from words into actions," Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh said, Mehr reported on Friday.

Falahatpisheh reiterated the Leader's remarks, saying the 2015 nuclear deal was first violated during the Obama administration but the violations reached their peak during the Trump administration.

"The Americans are only seeking nominal negotiations [with Iran]," he argued, adding that Iran does not trust the American rulers, especially after the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal, also known as the JCPOA, and introduced its policy of maximum pressure against the Islamic Republic.

Trump: Too early to think about making a deal with Iran



POLITICAL TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump says he thinks it is too soon to even think about making a deal with Iran.

Trump made the remarks after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to Tehran for talks with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani.

"While I very much appreciate P.M. Abe going to Iran to meet with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, I personally feel that it is too soon to even think about making a deal," Trump tweeted on Thursday.

"They are not ready, and neither are

we!" he added.

Earlier, the Leader had dismisses Trump as a person not worthy of exchanging messages with.

"We have no doubts about your (Japan's) goodwill and seriousness, but regarding what you quoted from the U.S. president, I personally do not consider Trump worthy of exchanging any messages with, and do not have and will not have any response for him," the Leader told Abe.

Abe held talks with Rouhani on Wednesday. He also met with the Leader on Thursday. He was carrying a message from Trump to Ayatollah Khamenei.

Trump knows he cannot fight Iran: cleric

POLITICAL TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump knows that he cannot "fight" Iran, interim Friday prayer leader Ahmad Khatami told worshippers in Tehran.

Pointing to U.S. President Donald Trump's recent remarks that he does not seek regime change in Iran, Khatami said, "Trump surely knows that he cannot fight the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Praising anti-American remarks by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a Thursday meeting with the visiting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Khatami said, "Those were the words of a prudent, shrewd, and vigilant leader and we are proud for having such a leader."

In his meeting with Abe, Ayatollah Khamenei said Trump is not worthy of a response or a message, stressing that negotiations with Washington cannot help solve any problem.

Khatami hailed the Leader's strong tone, saying, "This is the style the Prophet has ordered, to show arrogance when you see an arrogant person, to humiliate them."

The cleric added Trump is seeking to win votes in the 2020 presidential elections by offering talks with Iran.

"Trump is trying to raise votes, and to do that he needs to bring Iran to the negotiation table. But he will take that wish to the grave."

Iran urges U.S., allies to stop 'false flag operations' in region

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Iranian mission to the UN has called on the United States and its regional allies to stop their false flag operations in the region, according to Press TV.

"The inflammatory remarks by the U.S. representative against Iran at the UN Security Council on 13 June 2019 was another Iranophobic campaign. Iran categorically rejects the U.S.' unfounded claim with regard to 13 June oil tanker incidents and condemns it in the strongest possible terms," the mission said in a statement on Thursday.

"Neither fabrications and disinformation campaigns nor shamelessly blaming others can change the realities. The U.S. and its regional allies must stop warmongering and put an end to mischievous plots as well as false flag operations in the region.



Warning, once again, about all of the U.S. coercion, intimidation, and malign behavior, Iran expresses concern over suspicious incidents for the oil tankers that occurred today," the statement added.

Pointing to Washington's sanctions against Tehran following the former's unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement, the statement said, "The U.S. economic war and terrorism against

the Iranian people as well as its massive military presence in the region have been and continue to be the main sources of insecurity and instability in the wider Persian Gulf region and the most significant threat to its peace and security."

Two commercial oil tankers were hit in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday morning, prompting the evacuation and rescue of dozens of crew members.

Following the attack, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused Iran of carrying out the attacks without providing any evidence to back up his accusation.

"It is the assessment of the United States government that the Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible for the attacks that occurred in the Gulf of Oman today," Pompeo told reporters in a brief appearance at the State Department in Washington, DC.

U.S. bullying has brought Iran, China, Russia closer together: Rouhani aide

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Hesamoddin Ashna, a senior advisor to President Hassan Rouhani, believes that the bullying approach by the United States has brought Iran, China and Russia closer together more than ever.

"America's maximum pressure [policy] has changed the strategic analyses of China and Russia about the near future," Ashna said on his Twitter account on Friday.

Ashna, who was accompanying Rouhani to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

summit in Bishkek on Thursday Friday where leaders of China and Russia were present, described U.S. sanctions and pressures as a "paper tiger" which will not withstand against "common resistance" of the three countries.

"If anyone had intended to strengthen this axis, they should be regarded as close to their success," the advisor added.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview published on Thursday that the current U.S. administration had imposed dozens of sanctions on Russia,

and contrasted Moscow's troubled relationship with Washington with what he described as its blossoming ties with China.

The Trump administration, which abandoned the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran last year, has also reimposed sanctions on Tehran, putting enormous new pressure on Iran's economy.

In the meantime, the U.S. and China have been in a trade war since last year when Trump began imposing tariffs on billions of dollars worth of Chinese goods.



Japan says not doing shuttle diplomacy between Tehran and Washington



POLITICAL TEHRAN — The Japanese Foreign Ministry press secretary has said his country is not involved in a "shuttle diplomacy or mediation" between Iran and the U.S.

Speaking to journalists in Tehran on Thursday, Takeshi Osuga said Prime Minister Abe's meeting with Ayatollah Khamenei was held in a warm atmosphere and lasted for 50 minutes, Tasnim reported.

He made the remarks while the Japanese premier paid a historic visit to Iran to meet with top Iranian figures, including Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani.

The Japanese premier has made it clear that nobody wants a military confrontation, and has voiced concern about the current tensions in the Persian Gulf region, he stated.

Abe positively evaluates that Iran continues its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and expects that Tehran will continue to implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Osuga added.

According to the press secretary, the Japanese prime minister has quoted U.S. President Donald Trump as saying that Washington does not want to see an escalation.

Abe told the Japanese reporters on Thursday that he has had exchanges of views with Trump and that he has told Ayatollah Khamenei about his "own views" on the intentions of Trump, Osuga added.

The Japanese leader has also noted that the road to deescalating tensions is fraught with difficulties, but he will continue to make efforts, the press secretary stated.

Abe said that although there might be complex national sentiments in all sides, it is important for top leaders of the countries to share the aim to ease the tensions, Osuga added.

Iran, Switzerland ink deal on protection of Iran's interests in Canada

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Top officials from Iran and Switzerland have signed an agreement on protection of Tehran's interests in Canada.

The agreement was reached in Bern on Thursday between Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and Switzerland's State Secretary of Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Pascale Baeriswyl.

During the meeting, Araqchi and Baeriswyl expressed satisfaction on the achievements made through bilateral cooperation over the last three years in the context of the road map adopted in 2016, Tasnim reported.

The two sides underlined the need for expediting the process of the full implementation of the road map.

They also discussed a wide range of topics on the agenda of Iran and Switzerland, including cooperation in various areas of science, health, water resource management, intellectual property right, agriculture, medicine, tourism, and disaster management.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	233352.8
IFX	2956.96

Sources: tse.ir, ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,429 rials
GBP	53,286 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$61.23/b
WTI	\$52.09/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.01/b
Gold	\$1,353.55/oz
Silver	\$15.05/oz
Platinum	\$815.55/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Finance ministers press Italy to stick to EU fiscal rules

By Jorge Valero

EU finance ministers told the Italian government on Thursday (13 June) to meet its fiscal obligations in order to reduce its high debt, with the European Commission insisting on "substantial corrections" to rein in public spending.

Italian Finance Minister Giovanni Tria insisted however that new measures will not be needed, saying fresh data for the first half of the year will show that the situation of Italy's public accounts is better than predicted by the Commission.

Italy was not officially on the agenda of 12 June meeting of eurozone finance ministers (Eurogroup). But the renewed tensions between Iran's populist government and the Commission is worrying European partners at a time when the trade war with the US risks worsening, and uncertainties accumulate regarding the UK's departure from the EU.

Against this backdrop, ministers supported the Commission, and asked Italy to adopt fresh measures to reduce its huge volume of public debt, which currently exceeds 132% of the country's GDP.

Further adjustments
Further adjustments before the next finance ministers' meeting on 9 July would help to avoid a new excessive deficit procedure that could lead to a €3.5 billion fine (0.2% of Italian GDP).

EU moves closer to debt action as Italy angles for compromise
The European Union moved closer on Tuesday (11 June) to taking disciplinary action over Italy's growing debt, as authorities in Rome made tentative steps to avert a procedure that could saddle the country with large fines and alienate investors.



Italy's PM Giuseppe Conte and his two deputies are facing pressure from Brussels.

"In the end, the rules are something that are not only on paper, they exist for a reason," said German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz on his way into the Eurogroup.

"Italy should take the Commission's helping hand" and adopt the "appropriate measures," added his French counterpart, Bruno Maire.

Spain's Economy minister, Nadia Calviño, asked Italian authorities to act "in a responsible and constructive manner" to channel the process and avoid "any episode of market turbulence."

Italy's populist Deputy Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio on Wednesday (5 June) dismissed Brussels' formal warning over the country's excessive public spending as "too easy".

Tria repeated the same message that Rome has stressed over the past days since Brussels initiated a sanction procedure against Italy: no additional measures will be necessary as the fiscal situation has improved since December.

Substantial corrections
The Commission vice president for the euro, Valdis Dombrovskis, insisted however that "substantial corrections" are needed, a message he conveyed to Tria during a meeting on Thursday.

Tria was to meet on Friday with the EU's Commissioner for Economic Affairs, Pierre Moscovici, in Luxembourg, where the Ecofin Council is taking place.

Italian officials told euractiv.com that the ultimate goal is to avoid an infringement procedure, admitting that Rome will have to pay a "price" for that. But "It's about not paying a very high price," the official added as talks with the Commission got underway.

The European Commission is preparing to launch a new excessive deficit procedure against Italy as a response to the government's lack of efforts to control public spending in the highly indebted EU country.

Apart from the Italian case, the big issue on the Eurogroup's agenda was the new budgetary instrument to protect the euro in times of economic shock.

Ministers were discussing on Friday in the early morning the financing and functionality of the new fiscal instrument to support reforms and investment. According to some reports, its firepower could reach around €17 billion.

(Source: euractiv.com)

Italy among Iran's top priorities in economic relations with Europe: ICCIMA

ECONOMY TEHRAN - Head desk of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) said on Wednesday that Italy is one of the major trade partners of Iran in the European Union and expansion of trade ties with Italy is a priority for Iran.

Gholam-Hossein Shafeie made the remarks in a meeting with Italian Ambassador to Iran Mauro Conciatori, the ICCIMA portal reported.

In the meeting, Shafeie stressed the fact that Iran and Italy are currently cooperating in almost all economic areas, adding "the future of our economic cooperation is bright and prosperous."

He expressed his appreciation for Conciatori's efforts in boosting the all-out ties between the two countries and said, "Even though both Iran and Italy



ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (middle) met with Italian Ambassador to Iran Mauro Conciatori (left) on Wednesday in Tehran.

is facing U.S. sanctions constraints, but the efforts of the Iran-Italy joint chamber of commerce along with the Italian embassy led to the current developments in the economic ties."

Conciatori for his part emphasized that the cooperation between Iran and Italy will be maintained at all levels.

Mentioning the growth of trade turnover between Iran and Italy in recent years and the interest of Italian businessmen and entrepreneurs in investing in Iran, he stressed, "We should not worry about the future of Iran-Italy economic relations."

"Despite U.S. sanctions, the two countries trade turnover is currently more than 4 billion euros" Conciatori said.

"We are currently in the process of "contemplating" to plan better future relations, and I'm sure we will have a bigger jump forward after this era", he added.

'Forex market under CBI's control, passing temporary turbulence'

ECONOMY TEHRAN—Foreign currency exchange market is under the control of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the temporary turbulence will pass, Tasnim news agency reported on Thursday quoting CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati as saying.

Referring to the impact of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's trip to Iran on Wednesday on forex market inside the country, the official said: "It is unfortunate that there are always some people who apply political means for creating instability in the forex market. I should here emphasize that none of the basic economic factors that set the foreign currency exchange rate has been changed in the market and the CBI

is dominating the forex market."

"We will pass all problems created by the U.S. sanctions through the strategies and approaches we have initiated for the non-oil exports and re-injection of the foreign currency earnings from such exports to the domestic economic cycle", Hemmati further noted.

Last week, Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Head Mohammadreza Modoudi announced that since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), nearly \$4 billion has been re-injected into the country's Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA).

The official praised the CBI's efforts

for managing the foreign currency market and noted that since CBI's foreign currency reform, over \$18 billion of foreign currency has been re-injected into NIMA by exporters.

In late May, CBI unveiled a directive package which provided the country's exporters with guidelines about how they should re-inject their foreign currency incomes into the country's economy.

In the same month, Hemmati said the country's exporters have re-injected 60 percent of their total exports revenues in the form of foreign currency into the country's financial system.

The Iranian government provides the country's exporters with foreign currency at



a low exchange rate in order to encourage foreign trade, however the exporters are expected to return part of their revenues in form of foreign currency.

'Turkey's trade center in Iran completely active despite U.S. sanctions'

ECONOMY TEHRAN - Head desk of Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce said Turkey's trade center in Tehran is completely active and the trade is going smoothly between the two countries.

"Although there are small problems with money transactions but still we manage and the trade is going smoothly," Reza Kami told ILNA.

Kami noted that Turkish companies are willing to contribute to the reconstruction projects in the flood-stricken regions, saying "Turkish companies have a good history in manufacturing prefabricated houses, and in recent years we have seen that a few Turkish companies were active in Mehr Housing Projects."

He further mentioned establishment of an Iran-Turkey special economic zone, noting that the two sides are determined in this regard but there are still some issues that should be discussed and resolved.

Mentioning the impact of sanctions on trade between the two countries, Kami said: "The Turkish authorities have repeatedly stated that they are not going to comply



with the U.S. sanctions, but obviously the sanctions have created some problems regarding banking relations, and it should be also borne in mind that the entire region's economy is in recession."

Earlier this month, Iran's Ambassador to Turkey Mohammad Farazmand announced that Iran and Turkey are working on a financial mechanism channel to bypass the U.S. unilateral sanctions.

The ambassador said that such mechanism is aimed at preventing bilateral trade from falling victim to trans-regional players.

In late May, Turkish Ambassador to Iran Derya Ors said his country wants the barriers in the way of trade with Iran to be removed.

Planning underway to launch new automobile platform in 3 years

ECONOMY TEHRAN - Deputy head of Iran's Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) said the planning is underway for establishing a new platform for manufacturing passenger cars in three years, IRNA reported.

Behzad E'temadi noted that the organization had it on the agenda to produce 650,000 new cars by 2020, however the negative impacts of the U.S. sanctions has imposed some changes on IDRO's strategies and planning.

"Now, our mid-term goal is to raise the quantity and quality of our current vehicles, so that we could be able to maintain the exports to the neighboring countries," he said.

According to the data released by Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, Iranian carmakers manufactured 42,623 vehicles during the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 20, 2019).

The ministry's data showed that car manufacturing in Iran fell 47.2 percent in the first month of this year from 80,794 cars manufactured in the same month of the previous year.

Iran's imports of passenger cars also



fell 67 percent during Farvardin of this year compared to the same month of the previous year.

Earlier in May, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said the policy of domestic manufacturing of auto parts should be seriously followed up.

The minister also stressed that in this due the capable manufacturers should be seriously supported, IRNA reported.

Given that 1.25 million vehicles are anticipated to be manufactured in the country during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020), the part manufacturers will need 150 trillion rials of working capital (about \$3.571 billion) for the purchase of raw materials and other required items.

China tariffs: 661 companies warn Trump trade war will damage U.S. economy

By Arthur Villasanta

A total of 661 American companies and industry trade associations wrote to President Donald Trump on Thursday, urging him to lift his tariffs on China and end his trade war that will eventually add \$2,000 to the expenses borne by each American family and cut U.S. GDP by 1.0 percent.

Among the big name signatories of the letter, whose firms employ more than a million people, are Walmart, Costco, Target, and Foot Locker.

This terse, one-page letter is the latest of many sent to Trump by Tariffs Hurt the Heartland, a national campaign against tariffs supported by more than 150 trade groups representing agriculture, manufacturing,

retail and the technology industries.

In its letter dated June 13, the signatories expressed their deep concern about the escalation of tit-for-tat tariffs.

"We know firsthand that the additional tariffs will have a significant, negative and long-term impact on American businesses, farmers, families and the U.S. economy," said the letter. "Broadly applied tariffs are not an effective tool to change China's unfair trade practices. Tariffs are taxes paid directly by U.S. companies, including those listed below -- not China."

Get back to negotiating table

"We urge your administration to get back to the negotiating table while working with our allies to develop global, enforceable

solutions. An escalated trade war is not in the country's best interest, and both sides will lose."

Imposing new tariffs on an additional \$300 billion in goods plus those impacted from previously implemented tariffs and retaliation will result in the loss of more than 2 million U.S. jobs, add more than \$2,000 in costs for the average American family of four, and reduce the value of U.S. GDP by 1.0 percent, according to data from Trade Partnership Worldwide LLC, an international trade and economic consulting firm cited by the letter.

The signatories said they agree U.S. trading partners must abide by global trade rules, "and we support the administration's

efforts to address unfair trading practices, including intellectual property violations, forced technology transfer and more."

But the signatories encourage the Trump administration to negotiate a strong deal with China that addresses longstanding structural issues, improves U.S. global competitiveness and eliminates tariffs.

"We believe this goal can be achieved without taxing Americans," said the signatories.

They said they're counting on Trump to force a positive resolution that removes the current tariffs, fosters American competitiveness, grows the economy and protects U.S. workers and customers.

(Source: ibtimes.com)

German economic institutes expect economy to grow slowly

Three major economic research institutes are expecting the German economy to grow slowly between 0.5 and 0.9 percent, according to the institutes' economic growth forecasts for 2019 published on Thursday.

According to xinhuanet.com, the German Halle Institute for Economic Research (IWH) in Berlin did not change its forecast and is expecting Germany's gross domestic product (GDP) to grow by 0.5 percent in 2019.

The Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IFW) said on Thursday that the "German economy falters" but was slightly more positive in its forecast which it lowered from 1.0 percent to 0.6 percent.

Out of the three institutes that published their numbers on Thursday, the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) was most optimistic and is expecting the German economy to "defy an uncertain environment".

However, the DIW also lowered its GDP forecast, decreasing from 1.0 to 0.9 percent.



The three economic research institutes all saw a significant risk in the ongoing international trade conflicts, especially for Germany's export-oriented economy.

A "further intensification of the trade conflict between the United States and China or an expansion to trade relations with the European Union pose a significant downside risk for the global economy and also for Germany," said Stefan Kooths, head of the IFW's forecasting center.

In addition to ongoing international trade conflicts, the "weakness of world trade is weighing particularly heavily on Germany's internationally oriented manufacturing sector," said Oliver Holtemoeller, vice president of IWH.

Production in Germany's industrial sector was still increasing in February and March, but has started to decline, according to the German statistical office (Destatis). In April, production of Germany's industrial sector went down by 1.9 percent.

The "significant decline" in industrial production in Germany in April would indicate that the "unexpectedly strong first quarter in 2019" was mainly attributable to "temporary factors", IWH warned.

'Iran's hydropower output to reach 10.5 GW by March 2020'

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Iran's hydroelectric power plants are expected to produce 10,500 megawatts (10.5 gigawatts) of electricity in the current Iranian calendar year (March 2019-March 2020), IRIB reported, quoting the director of Iran's Hydroelectric Power Plants Management Center.

According to Farbod Estiri, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), over 10.8 billion kilowatt hour (KWh) of electricity has been produced by the country's hydroelectric plants.

The figure was reported to be 1.8 billion KWh in the last year's same time span.

In late April, Deputy Distribution Coordinator of Iran's Power Generation and Distribution Company (known as TAVANIR), Mahmoud Reza Haqifam, announced that recent heavy rainfalls in Iran has increased the electricity output of the country's hydropower plants by up to 5,000 megawatts.

According to Haqifam, in the peak consumption hours of the day, between 9,500 MW and 10,000 MW of electricity is charged to the network by hydropower plants.



Iran's current power generation capacity stands at about 81 GW of which the share of hydroelectric power stands at 19.87 percent. In May, the Energy Ministry announced that it plans to inaugurate 22 new units with

a total capacity of 3,933 MW in the current [Iranian calendar] year along with upgrading and increasing the efficiency of existing power plants to add another 461 MW of new capacity.

Fire at South Pars SPD9 platform contained

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — The fire that broke out on the SPD9 platform of the phases 7, 8 and 9 of South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf has been contained on Wednesday.

According to Shana, the wells of the mentioned phases are in good conditions and no fatalities were reported.

"No one was reportedly killed by the fire at platform SPD9," the head of the Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) Mohammad Meshkinfam said, adding that all staff had been evacuated before the fire took hold. South Pars field, the world's largest gas field which



Iran shares with Qatar, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters.

The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

South Pars is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Wind energy industry increasingly moving offshore

The UK turned on the first part of what will be the world's largest and furthest offshore wind farm this week, forging its way further into the forefront of the offshore wind industry.

As per indianenvironmentalreporter.org, about 75 miles off the east coast of Grimsby, UK, is the Hornsea One wind farm, which is partially operational. Next year when it's entirely online, it will have a generating capacity of 1.2 gigawatts, enough electricity to power a million homes. For now, it's capable of powering approximately 287,000 homes.

With plans to construct a twin farm nearby, the UK is evidence that offshore wind development is growing quickly. As the industry grows, experts are forging new paths to find the best way to manage these wind farms.

"Operating a wind farm this far offshore is unprecedented," David Cousins, the deputy operating manager for the wind farm, told the Offshore Wind. "We've had to think creatively and come up with new ways of working to overcome the logistical and technical challenges of operating a massive power station 120 km from the shore."



The UK leads Europe in offshore wind generation, with a total capacity of 8.2 gigawatts. This puts countries like the U.S. to shame, with only about 0.03 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity.

Though offshore wind farms are a growing phenomenon, many of the world's largest wind farms are still on dry land. This includes the world's seventh largest wind farm, Meadow Lake Wind Farm in Chalmers, Indiana.

However, Indiana wind energy may be at risk as local city governments are putting the matter to a vote. The industry lost the battle in Tippecanoe County when commissioners voted to ban large turbines and commercial wind farms from rural land around Lafayette and West Lafayette.

Renewable energy brings 11 million jobs, says agency

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) eleven million people were employed in renewable energy worldwide in 2018. This compares with 10.3 million in 2017.

According to oedigital.com, as more and more countries manufacture, trade and install renewable energy technologies, the latest Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review finds that renewables jobs grew to their highest level despite slower growth in key renewable energy markets including China.

The diversification of the renewable energy supply chain is changing the sector's geographic footprint. Until now, renewable energy industries have remained relatively concentrated in a handful of major markets, such as China, the United States and the European Union.

Increasingly, however, East and Southeast Asian countries have emerged alongside China as key exporters of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. Countries including Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam were responsible for a greater share of growth in renewables jobs last year, which allowed Asia to maintain a 60 percent share of renewable energy jobs worldwide.

"Beyond climate goals, governments are prioritizing renewables as a driver of low-carbon economic growth in recognition of the



numerous employment opportunities created by the transition to renewables," said Francesco La Camera, Director-General of IRENA.

"Renewables deliver on all main pillars of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social. As the global energy transformation gains momentum, this employment dimension reinforces the social aspect of sustainable development and provides yet another reason for countries to commit to renewables," Francesco added.

Solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind remain the most dynamic of all renewable energy industries. Accounting for one-third of the total renewable energy workflow, solar PV retains the top spot in 2018, ahead of liquid biofuels, hydropower, and wind power. Geographically, Asia hosts over three million PV jobs, nearly nine-tenths of the global total.

Is now a good time to buy energy stocks?

By Robert Rapier

It was only a month ago that I began advising investors to ease up on certain energy stocks, following 20 percent-30 percent gains since the beginning of the year. But a brutal May and a weak start to June have sent oil prices — and some energy companies — back into bear market territory.

The front-month West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude contract ended May over 16 percent lower, which marked the first monthly loss of the year. What has happened, and is this now a buying opportunity for energy stocks?

There are two bearish factors weighing down oil prices. The first is that it is becoming apparent that the trade war with China will be lengthy. There are fears that this will impact oil demand there as well as here.

Add last Friday's announcement by the Trump administration of plans to impose a 5 percent tax on all goods imported from Mexico unless the "illegal migration crisis is alleviated." These tariffs would potentially rise to 25 percent by October. This sent a chill through the stock markets and the oil markets, with WTI losing more than 5 percent on the day.

The global oil demand picture has been mixed in recent months. The International Energy Agency (IEA) reported that oil demand numbers for the January-February period in China grew by 410,000 barrels per day (BPD) year-over-year. India's demand grew by 300,000 BPD, and U.S. demand was close behind with 295,000 BPD of growth.

U.S.-China trade war

But oil prices impact demand, and they have risen sharply since January. This,



along with the trade war, may explain more recent reports that overall oil demand in China had declined by 0.3 percent year-over-year in the first quarter.

That brings me to the second factor that I believe is impacting the oil markets. Every time demand in China slows down, there's a rush to push the narrative that it's because electric vehicles (EVs) are finally starting to take a bite out of oil demand.

This explanation promotes the fear that crude oil will soon end up like coal, which in turn helps push oil prices lower than they should be. Bloomberg recently projected that oil demand in China will peak in 2025 as a result of EVs.

Thus, there is a fear premium in that investors don't want to be left holding a worthless commodity. I think such fears are premature. In fact, the current weakness in oil prices is totally out of sync with geopolitical factors in Venezuela and Iran.

Let's consider a few things. First, Bloomberg also recently reported that energy stocks now account for only 5.02 percent of the S&P 500, which is less even than in early 1999. Notably, at that time

oil prices had collapsed to \$10/bbl and the tech bubble was depressing the share of all other sectors.

Consequently, a 5 percent energy share today is a significant historical disconnect. In other words, energy stocks are again undervalued relative to history (except those who believe we are now at the end of the oil age).

Second, we should consider the different segments of the energy sector. When oil prices fall, typically oil producers get hit the hardest. Pipeline companies usually take a milder hit, and refiners often benefit because their margins expand.

That hasn't been the case this time. At least not entirely. Two top oil producers, ConocoPhillips and EOG Resources saw declines in May of 3.8 percent and 8.2 percent. That's especially modest considering the double-digit drop in oil prices.

Midstream companies held their ground. Enterprise Products Partners fell by 2.5 percent in May. Magellan Midstream Partners was one of the few energy companies that rose during the month (+1.1 percent).

The two supermajors

The supermajors Chevron and Exxon-Mobil saw respective declines of 2.2 percent and 8.4 percent. Incidentally, this puts Chevron's yield above 4 percent, which has historically nearly always been a good buy indicator.

But the big story is the refiners. The nation's two biggest refiners, Marathon Petroleum Corp and Valero saw shares decline by 21.6 percent and 20.2 percent respectively. Valero's yield has risen to a whopping 5.1 percent.

Refiners often trade out of sync with oil prices, but this time the concerns about overall demand, and higher-priced oil from Mexico as a result of tariffs, hit the refiners hard. Trade tariffs on Mexico could be a double-whammy if the country retaliates, because U.S. refiners send large volumes of finished products back to Mexico.

Most segments of the energy sector are relatively more expensive than they were a month ago, considering the large drop in the price of oil. If the price remains in the current range for very long, oil producers and integrated oil companies will likely see larger declines.

The midstreams started the year undervalued, but after a large run-up many of them had reached fair value. Magellan Midstream was an exception, because it hadn't gained as much as many of its peers. The stock was overdue; it's May gain went against the rest of the energy sector.

All things considered, refiners are unlikely to suffer as much as the market fears. Further, lower oil prices will help lift gasoline demand, and that should help prop up margins. Refiners are the only sector that appear to have become bigger bargains following the oil price decline.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Oil prices ease, but tanker attacks support

Oil fell on Friday after sharp gains in the previous session when prices were boosted after attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman stoked concerns of reduced crude flows through one of the world's key shipping routes.

As per reuters.com, the attacks near Iran and the Strait of Hormuz countered concerns about global demand that had hammered prices in recent weeks, analysts said.

It was the second time in a month tankers have been attacked in the world's most important zone for oil supplies, amid rising tensions between the United States and Iran. Washington quickly blamed Iran for Thursday's attacks, but Tehran bluntly denied the allegation.

Brent crude futures were down 17 cents, or 0.3%, at \$61.14 a barrel by 0041 GMT. They settled up 2.23% on Thursday, at \$61.31, having risen as much as 4.5%.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures were down 39 cents, or 0.8%, at \$51.89 a barrel. They closed 2.23% higher at \$52.28 a barrel in the previous session, having also risen as much as 4.5%.

The "drums of war are beating and driving asset prices," Greg McKenna, strategist at McKenna Macro said in a morning note.

Tensions in the Middle East have escalated since U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from a 2015 multinational nuclear pact with Iran and reimposed sanctions, especially targeting Tehran's oil exports.

Iran, which has distanced itself from the previous attacks, has said it would not be cowed by what it called psychological warfare.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the United States has assessed Iran was behind the attacks on Thursday, and arrived at its conclusion based on intelligence, weapons used and the level of expertise needed.

Iran "categorically rejects the U.S. unfounded claim with regard to 13 June oil tanker incidents and condemns it in the strongest possible terms," the Iranian mission to the United Nations said in a statement on Thursday evening.



Solar company says UK needs new policies to meet 2050 carbon target

By Matthew Green

Solar power could help Britain achieve its new climate goal more efficiently than many politicians realize if the government adopts policies to unlock faster growth, a leading solar company said on Thursday, citing new research.

Britain this week became the first G7 country to adopt a legally binding commitment to become carbon neutral by 2050 – a move that implies a radical rebalancing of the world's fifth-largest economy in response to the climate crisis.

Frans van den Heuvel, chief executive of Solar Century, which has built some of the largest solar farms in Britain, Spain, the Netherlands, Kenya and Mexico, urged the government to slash fossil fuel subsidies and harness the sector to meet its goal.

"We have everything in place, we just need a stable policy," van den Heuvel told Reuters. "We need a level playing field with other energy sources."

Privately-owned Solar Century and other providers will need to convince policymakers that they can overcome solar's main challenge: providing a steady supply of electricity in a country with short winter days and frequently dreary skies.

Nevertheless, the company hopes to bolster its case with the results of an analysis it carried out in collaboration with Energy Watch Group, a non-profit network of scientists and parliamentarians, and LUT University in Finland.

The findings suggest that technology is advancing so fast that solar could surge from generating 4% of Britain's electricity today to at least 20% within the next decade, creating 200,000 jobs, Solar Century said.

Six-fold increase

That growth would reflect a more than six-fold increase in installed capacity from 13 gigawatts today to 80 gigawatts by 2030 – starkly higher than current forecasts.

The National Grid has projected that solar could account for 33 gigawatts in that time frame, and the opposition Labour Party has committed to delivering a similar amount.

"It's a paradigm shift – it is about looking at the new reality and forgetting about what was yesterday," van den Heuvel said. "There's so much we can do right away – there's no excuse for waiting."

Divisions in government over the transformational change in the economy needed to fight climate change were laid bare last week, when finance minister Philip Hammond wrote to outgoing Prime Minister Theresa May to warn that it would cost comfortably more than 1 trillion pounds to meet the new net zero target.

The claim was widely criticized within the renewable industry, which sees the shift to a low-carbon economy as an opportunity to drive investment, job creation and innovation.

Britain's growing array of solar, wind and other renewable energy sources has helped wean the country off its dependence on coal-fired power stations in line with its commitment to support global climate goals in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Support for solar

Nevertheless, the solar sector suffered a severe blow in 2016, when the government cut subsidies, causing some firms to close. The government has since focused much of its support for renewables on offshore wind, keen to boost domestic manufacturing and help regenerate neglected coastal communities.

The Renewable Energy Association said solar providers hope the government's new carbon net zero target will prompt it to adopt a competitive floor price for solar-generated power to give investors greater confidence.

The sector also wants the government to make better use of data to support solar deployment, support research into batteries and cancel a proposal to raise taxes on most new home solar-with-battery kits from 5% to 20%, the association said.

The "solar industry isn't calling for the government to sort out every problem. But there is definitely a great leadership role for them to play in creating investor confidence," said Daniel Brown, the Renewable Energy Association's policy manager.

(Source: euronews.com)

WHO sanitizes Israeli responsibility for Gaza killings



By Maureen Clare Murphy

THE ELECTRONIC INTIFADA — There were nearly 7,000 gunshot wounds among Gaza's population of two million in the duration of a year. Many of those injured have extensive and in some cases irreversible damage to their bones, neurovascular structures and soft tissue.

Among them, hundreds face amputations if they cannot access specialized tertiary treatment for their catastrophic wounds. Three health workers have been killed and more than 700 others injured. Thousands of elective surgeries were postponed as a health system already in crisis took in wave after wave of emergency casualties.

Cases of gender-based violence seen by service providers doubled as families struggled to cope with additional economic pressures and trauma. These disturbing facts come from the World Health Organization's review of trauma data related to the Great March of Return protests in Gaza which began in March 2018.

The data provided by WHO make for harrowing reading. But the report sanitizes the fact that this body-breaking and traumatizing violence is by Israeli policy and design.

Any effective treatment must correctly diagnose the cause and not just the symptoms.

In the year following the launch of the Great March of Return, more than 28,000 Palestinians in Gaza were injured and 277 killed, including 52 children, most of them slain during unarmed, mass protests along Gaza's eastern and northern perimeter.

Despite the civilian nature of the protests, as was affirmed by a panel of UN investigators, WHO says the deaths and injuries happened "as a result of clashes with Israeli security forces."

That is a gross mischaracterization of Israel's use of force against peaceful and unarmed protesters, officially sanctioned by shoot-to-kill or maim orders against civilians who pose no plausible threat, even when they are children. The killing of some 60 Palestinians during protests on 14 May 2018 was a massacre. That day, Israeli occupation forces shot almost one person per minute during protests east of Gaza City between 9:30 in the morning and 5:30 in the afternoon, according to the UN commission of inquiry.

Some protesters attempted to breach the boundary fence, or threw stones or spent gas grenades fired by Israel back in the soldiers' direction. But these were not confrontations between two armed groups as the use of "clashes" by WHO would suggest. Doctors who treated those wounded that day said, as summarized in the UN commission report, "the injuries resembled those that would typically be seen during a war."

Hospital doctors told investigators that "one horrific injury after another" arrived at their facilities, the patients presenting massive open wounds to their lower limbs, their "skin and underlying tissue ... blown out with the force of the bullet."

In their report, the UN investigators state that during the months of protests, nearly 1,600 people "were wounded by bullet or bone shrapnel that resulted from ricochets, bullet fragmentation and shots going through one body into another — clearly illustrating the danger of firing high-velocity live ammunition into a crowd of demonstrators."

The staggering number of casualties is not "a result of clashes with Israeli security forces," it's the illegal use of lethal force against unprotected persons by an occupying power that desires the full capitulation of the population under its control. "Serious human rights violations were committed which may amount to crimes against humanity," the UN investigators say.

WHO's report does note that the protests take place in the context of a 12-year siege on Gaza, yet doesn't explicitly state that the blockade is imposed by Israel.

Gaza's health system was "already under-resourced and chronically challenged," WHO states. Half of all medicines in Gaza had reached zero stock — less than a one-month supply — during the first month of Great March of Return protests.

A bitter political impasse among the Palestinian political leadership, resulting in staff at government-run hospitals receiving only a fraction of their salaries, has also "reduced the capacity of local institutions in Gaza to deliver basic services."

"In 2018 alone, 84 doctors left Gaza," WHO states. And despite all this, as the report notes, thousands of volunteer medics in Gaza have kept the health system resilient and have saved lives. Only two patients out of nearly 6,000 who were wounded by high-velocity bullets to the limbs during the protests bled to death, because of the presence of trained community volunteers.

A trauma referral pathway, from first-aid at the point of injury to hospital and postoperative and rehabilitative care, saved hundreds of lives, according to WHO.

Three life-saving medics, two of them volunteers, were amongst those killed during the protests. Yet Israel's responsibility for their deaths is obscured in WHO's report. WHO states that "there was a surge in violent incidents involving health care" during the year of protests, with 446 incidents in Gaza in 2018 versus 24 reported the previous year.

In addition to the health workers killed, 730 were injured and more than 100 ambulances and other health vehicles were damaged. But the report doesn't identify the party responsible: Israel. Contrast this with the unequivocal findings of the UN investigators, who state:

"Based on numerous interviews with victims and witnesses and corroboration of video footage in a number of instances, the Commission found reasonable grounds to believe that Israeli snipers intentionally shot health workers, despite seeing that they were clearly marked as such."

Like the deaths and injuries of protesters, the killing and maiming of medical workers is a direct result of Israel's open fire orders — not the "result of clashes."

The probability of defeat of Trump in the upcoming presidential election

Controversial president in deadlock!

By Saeed Sobhani

Recent polls in the United States show that Donald Trump's defeat in presidential elections next year is likely. These polls are published while Trump in the field of foreign policy is extremely confused and incapacitated. He has practically lost the game against Iran, China and Venezuela. Looking at the results of recent polls and analyzing Western media from the latest trump status, we can help us understand the current political situation in the United States:

Trump's big problem is that he's unpopular. Matthew Yglesias wrote in Vox that if you look at Donald Trump's polling lately, it sure looks like he's in trouble for reelection. A June 11 Quinnipiac poll showed Trump losing 40-53 to Joe Biden. He's also down 51-42 to Bernie Sanders, 41-49 to Kamala Harris, 42-49 to Elizabeth Warren, 42-47 to Pete Buttigieg, and 42-47 to Cory Booker.

All plausible contenders at this moment can take heart in the fact that just 40 to 42 percent of the population feels like voting for Trump's reelection. The public is mostly saying they want to vote for any Democrat, and the strongest pattern so far indicates better-known Democrats do better than the more obscure ones. None of this means that Trump is a sure bet to lose the election in 2020 — public opinion can change fast and there's nothing particularly predictive about polling this far out — but it's a pretty clear snapshot of public opinion right now.

Trump, for now, is unpopular. FiveThirtyEight's polling average shows Trump currently has a 42 percent approval rating. He's unpopular and losing despite the huge field arrayed against him; he's unpopular and losing despite Democrats' confused message on impeachment; and he's unpopular and losing despite some very real continued ability to successfully manipulate the media.

The head-to-head polling doesn't really tell us much about events 18 months in the future, but it does tell us there's no counter-intuitive process whereby Trump secures the votes of tons of people who say he's doing a bad job as president. He is getting the votes of basically the exact same share of the population as thinks he's doing a good job. And as of now, that doesn't look like it's nearly enough people to win.

Democrats are very anti-clampency after being taken by surprise in 2016. Ben LaBolt, a former Barack Obama spokesperson who now works at a communications consulting firm, set a lot of heads on fire over the weekend with an Atlantic article charging that Democrats were blowing 2020 already. Trump is spending a ton of money on reelection ads. LaBolt argued, and Democrats aren't running their anti-Trump ads yet. Obviously, consultants would love it if rich Democrats would turn their anti-Trump fervor into early ad spending, but whatever Trump is doing right now clearly isn't working. Saving resources for the future when he may hit upon something that does work and needs to be countered seems perfectly sensible.

Rather than being either complacent or paralyzed by fear, Democrats should probably take a modest amount of reassurance from Trump's bad polls and try worrying about everything else for a minute.



There are some things to worry about! Democrats have done pretty well in 2019 special elections, for example, but considerably worse than they did in 2017 and 2018. Their special surge in 2017 represented a huge increase in grassroots activism and energy in response to Trump's win. The 2019 backslide seems to reflect a post-midterms diminishment of that intensity. Yet in state elections this year in Virginia, Kentucky, and Louisiana, Medicaid expansion — and with it health care for tens of thousands of people — will be on the line. These are tough elections about which available public polling has little to say and where time, energy, and money are likely to be extremely valuable.

Then there's the 2020 Senate map. To govern in 2021, Democrats will need to win a long-shot Senate race or two as well as winning two races in Arizona and Colorado, which are by no means gimmes. The real question is will whoever winds up running in Montana, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Texas, and elsewhere have an energized and determined group of people behind them. Democrats have struggled to secure the party establishment's most favored recruits in several of these races, though there are limits to the central party's recruiting wisdom.

There are no guarantees of anything in politics, but it's as close to a sure thing as you'll find that these important, down-ballot elections are going to be tougher races than the presidential election.

Trump lashes out at polls that show 2020 re-election bid in trouble

Guardian reported that Donald Trump on Wednesday lashed out at new polling results showing the president in deep trouble as he mounts his 2020 re-election bid. A day after a survey found at least six Democratic presidential candidates would defeat Trump in a head-to-head election matchup, the president revived his attacks on the media while dismissing the numbers as, in his view, "fake polling".

"The Fake News has never been more dishonest than it is today. Thank goodness we can fight back on Social Media," Trump tweeted. "Their new weapon of choice is Fake Polling, sometimes referred to as Suppression Polls (they suppress the numbers). Had it in 2016, but this is worse..."

Trump went on to deny a report in the New York Times that his campaign's own internal polling found him in a weak position across 17 states. "The Fake (Corrupt) News Media

said they had a leak into polling done by my campaign which, by the way and despite the phony and never ending Witch Hunt, are the best numbers WE have ever had," Trump wrote. "They reported Fake numbers that they made up & don't even exist. WE WILL WIN AGAIN!"

The pair of tweets followed a devastating poll released on Tuesday by Quinnipiac University, which showed Trump trailing six Democratic contenders by between five and 13 points among 1,214 registered voters polled nationwide.

Former vice-president Joe Biden held the strongest advantage over Trump, polling at 13 points above him, followed by the Vermont senator Bernie Sanders at nine points. Senators Kamala Harris and Elizabeth Warren led Trump by seven and eight points respectively, and even the South Bend mayor, Pete Buttigieg, and the New Jersey senator Cory Booker — both of whom rank among the lesser-known Democratic candidates — each came in five points ahead of Trump.

The results echoed other national and swing state polls spelling difficulty for Trump as he builds his case for a second term before the American public. Pollsters warn that it is far too early to draw any sweeping conclusions from the findings at this stage. Although the surveys are designed to reflect the temperature of the electorate in this moment, the mood can quickly change. Most Americans are not yet tuned into the 2020 election, and they are only just getting to know some of the candidates in the Democratic field.

Pollsters were also rattled by the 2016 election, when surveys consistently favored Hillary Clinton in key battleground states. Despite Clinton's lead over Trump in most pre-election polls, voters previously regarded as undecided turned out in droves and swung for Trump in the final days. Their turnout was higher than projected and some had not told pollsters they supported the controversial candidate.

The Quinnipiac poll suggested Trump could stand to benefit from 70% of Americans saying the economy is "excellent" or "good".

"The Trump bump to 42% job approval is nothing to sniff at. It's one point shy of the best Quinnipiac University survey number ever for President Trump," said Tim Malloy, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University poll.

Trump and Biden are engaged in an es-

calating war of words, offering a preview of a hypothetical general election contest if Biden wins the nomination next year. Trump has publicly questioned Biden's mental fitness and reportedly instructed his aides to deny that his campaign's internal polling showed him trailing Biden in many must-win states.

Trump nonetheless insisted he was not concerned, telling reporters on Tuesday: "I think he's the weakest mentally ... The others have much more energy. I'd rather run against, I think, Biden than anybody."

Millionaires say they are more likely to vote for Joe Biden over Donald Trump in 2020 elections

Robert Frank wrote in Cnbc that American millionaires would elect Joe Biden over President Donald Trump if the former vice president becomes the Democratic nominee, according to a new survey.

The CNBC Millionaire survey asked millionaires who they would choose for president if Trump runs against various opponents in 2020. Biden and Pete Buttigieg are the only Democratic nominees who beat Trump among the top Democratic candidates in a head-to-head race.

Fully 53% of millionaire respondents said they would vote for Biden, compared with 39% for Trump, while 9% would be undecided. In a race between Trump and Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, Indiana, wins 43% to Trump's 42%. Against Sen. Bernie Sanders, Trump wins 46% to 40%. Trump beats Sen. Kamala Harris among millionaires 45% to 42%, while he beats Sen. Elizabeth Warren 47% to 40%.

Of course, millionaire voters aren't reliable predictors of election results. Millionaires backed former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton by a comfortable margin over Trump before the 2016 election, 44% to 31%, according to the CNBC Millionaire Survey.

And being favored by millionaires could be a negative for Democratic candidates, who are running on populist, antiwealth platforms. Biden is already being attacked by his opponents for being too cozy with wealthy donors and corporate lobbyists.

Yet given how much wealthy investors have prospered under the Trump presidency — from lower taxes and surging stock prices and cash buybacks — millionaire support for Biden suggests that economic issues may not be their primary concern.

"I think what it tells us is that millionaires think that Biden is better against Trump than the other candidates," said George Walper, president of Spectrem Group, which conducts the survey. To be included in the poll, respondents had to have investable assets of \$1 million or more. Of the 750 respondents, 261 were Republicans, 218 were Democrats and 261 identified as Independent. Walper said that just as in 2016, millionaire voters may be underreporting their support for Trump. "People's underlying opinions may not be expressed here," he said. "When it comes down to who they actually vote for, that gap may narrow."

Wealthy voters are also large donors, which could help Biden. Nearly half of Democratic millionaires plan to donate to the 2020 campaign or have already donated, according to the survey, that compares with less than a third of Republicans.

U.S., not Iran, needs to act 'like a normal nation': American analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — An American political analyst said it is the US that needs to act "like a normal nation", not Iran, adding that US President Donald Trump, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Adviser John Bolton are doing Israel's bidding and have no concerns about international p

June, 07, 2019 - 12:36 World Comments
US, Not Iran, Needs to Act 'Like A Normal Nation': American Analyst

"Secretary Pompeo's various statements on Iran are both hypocritical and intellectually dishonest. The fact is it's the United States that is not acting like a "normal Nation" nor has it since it launched the Spanish-American War in an effort to become a global power and expand its power and hegemony around the globe," Rodney Martin told Tasnim.

He added, "Iran cannot negotiate with officials who do not negotiate in good faith and this is certainly the case with the Trump administration. Additionally, the Trump administration has other motives, specifically, Trump, Pompeo, and Bolton are doing the bidding of Tel Aviv and do not have the concerns of international peace and goodwill in mind."

Rodney Martin is a retired Judge and a former Congressional Staffer. He was a Harry S. Trauma Scholar and Lyndon B. Johnson Congressional Fellow. Based in Scottsdale, Arizona, Martin has held several US Federal, State and Local positions.

Following is the full text of the interview.

■ US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has expressed Washington's willingness to talk with Tehran with 'no preconditions' if Iran behaves like a "normal" nation, backing off



from a 12-point list of "basic requirements" he had already put forth as a prerequisite for a new deal with Iran. What is your take on this?

A: Secretary Pompeo's various statements on Iran are both hypocritical and intellectually dishonest. The fact is it's the United States that is not acting like a "normal Nation" nor has it since it launched the Spanish-American War in an effort to become a global power and expand its power and hegemony around the globe. The United States agrees to and signs agreements, as they did with Native Americans, then violates them, then spins narratives it has done so in "self-defense" while demonizing the other Party. The United States attacks on Iran are reflective of its history. One reason Iran makes the United States so "sore" is because Iran threw the United States out of Iran and regained control of its natural resources and exposed the United States espionage

activities and interference in its internal affairs.

■ Recently, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei ruled out the possibility of negotiations with the United States, noting that it is more of a tactic that Americans would use to back their pressure campaign strategy against Iran. What are your thoughts on this?

A: The Leader is correct. Iran cannot negotiate with officials who do not negotiate in good faith and this is certainly the case with the Trump administration. Additionally, the Trump administration has other motives, specifically Trump, Pompeo and Bolton are doing the bidding of Tel Aviv and do not have the concerns of international peace and goodwill in mind.

Perhaps if there is significant political change in the United States after the 2020 elections, an opportunity may lend itself for honest negotiations.

■ As you know, President Trump failed to reach a deal with North Korea in Vietnam. Do you believe that he is seeking to strike a new one with Iran instead in a bid to use it as an achievement and get reelected in 2020?

A: Donald Trump has proved he is completely outclassed on the world stage. His Neocon Zionist officials are so singularly focused that they are unable to negotiate in good faith. Trump only creates the illusion for his extreme political base. He is seeking "deals" then when he fails, he blames the other Party. His base is so extreme and dedicated to the Trump Personality Cult, they buy the Trump Lie. With regard to Iran, Trump is playing to Israel, AIPAC and Neocon-Zionist Evangelicals. Trump does not care about reaching a deal, only creating an illusion he is "doing something" and "talking tough".

Kushner being able to create true peace plan a 'Tragic Farce': U.S. activist

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A peace activist and journalist based in the US state of Virginia described US President Donald Trump's son-in-law as "a privileged Zionist" who is behind the so-called deal of the century, saying the idea that he could create a true Middle East peace plan is "a tragic farce".

June, 09, 2019 - 16:58 World Comments
Kushner Being Able to Create True ME Peace Plan A 'Tragic Farce': US Activist

"I have no doubt the 'deal of the century' will be a good deal only for Israel and for the many (Persian) Gulf states that are under submission to the US and UK and therefore under submission to Israel as well," Janice Kortkamp from Leesburg, Virginia, said in an interview with the Tasnim News Agency.

"It is an impossible-to-believe scenario: that a privileged Zionist, Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of Donald Trump who knows nothing of the region other than 5-star hotels, red carpets, and grand palaces, could create a true 'peace plan' is a tragic farce," she added.

Janice Kortkamp became an independent, completely self-funded, journalist after "seeing Western media bias regarding Syria and how that bias was promoting war and destabilization in Syria and all the Levant". She has researched the current crisis for six years, putting in over 7,000 hours of study. She has visited Syria five times over the past three years, spending months traveling around the major population areas and the outskirts of Damascus, Homs, Latakia (including Kessab), Hama, Palmyra, Deir Ezzor and Aleppo. She has also gone to Germany, Lebanon, and Kuwait to meet with Syrian refugees and emigrants. Through friends and contacts in Syria as well as reports from genuine news sources around the world, she tracks the situation on the ground in Syria on an hourly basis.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ Israeli soldiers recently shot and wounded at least 16 unarmed Palestinian protesters, including a volunteer and medic, according to Gaza Health Ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qidra. As you know, Palestinians have staged the weekly anti-Israeli protests dubbed the "Great March of Return" along the Gaza border for more than a year. According to media reports, more than 270 people, including 52 children, have been killed since the demonstrations began in March 2018. Most of the dead and the thousands wounded were unarmed civilians against whom Israel was using excessive force. What do you think about the Israeli regime's crimes?

A: What do I think of the Zionist regime's crimes? I think the term 'crime' is too small to describe the multi-dimensional atrocities that have been committed on a routine basis as they have been for over 70 long years. The Zionist gangs who brought urban terrorism to the region were never held responsible for their deeds; in fact, they set the standard by which modern Israel has typically operated not only in Palestine but in the region and



in incidents around the world.

Not only have thousands of Palestinians been killed in their own homeland but heritage, history, futures, and dreams have also been targeted for extinction. Millions are living in perpetual exile, driven from their ancestral homes, prohibited from returning. Almost 2,000,000 in Gaza are living under siege - 2,000,000 human beings who have never been on trial yet are condemned, imprisoned, sentenced and continually punished, simply for being Palestinian by blood. In the West Bank, the people suffer from an unfair, punitive military occupation where their villages, homes, and farms are stolen or destroyed. Schools are razed to the ground. Lands belonging to churches and mosques are confiscated. Settlers' violence and murder against Palestinians is often celebrated by Israelis and on the occasion where there is punishment, it is usually nothing more than a slap on the wrist with a wink by the regime that says silently, "well done."

In addition to all of those outrages is the aggressive expansionism beyond Palestine that is a driving ambition for most Israeli leaders. The "Greater Israel" scheme has resulted in several invasions of southern Lebanon; the theft of Syria's Golan; and the support of terrorist gangs in Syria; the incessant lies and accusations against Iran; the deceptions and assassinations by the Mossad; the massacre of the men aboard the USS Liberty; the theft of weapons-grade uranium and other acts of espionage against the US; and was the driving force behind the US coalition's disastrous invasion of Iraq. This is just the short list of the crimes committed by the Zionist entity against humanity.

■ Khalil al-Hayya, a Hamas leader, recently said Palestinians have united to re-

ject the so-called "deal of the century" plan initiated by the US government, saying there is a consensus among them to restore the Palestinians' rights. He also said the Palestinian people are unified to boycott an upcoming US-Israeli conference in Bahrain. What is your opinion about the remarks and the upcoming conference in Manama? How do you predict the future developments?

A: I have no doubt the "deal of the century" will be a good deal only for Israel and for the many (Persian) Gulf states that are under submission to the US and UK and therefore under submission to Israel as well. It is an impossible-to-believe scenario: that a privileged Zionist, Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of Donald Trump who knows nothing of the region other than 5-star hotels, red carpets, and grand palaces, could create a true "peace plan" is a tragic farce.

Whether boycotting the gathering is a good idea or not is first and foremost, of course, up to the people of Palestine, however in my opinion, it may be a mistake. It may be more effective (if these things are permitted) to send a wide-spectrum delegation that represents the richness and diversity of Palestine, people who can articulate the message in powerful and creative ways in order for media to be forced to hear and report on them. For example, the delegation might include students - not just those who have lost their schools, not just the victims of the Zionist violence and persecution, but those students who have persevered through it all to pursue their education with commitment and passion and what they've achieved because of it. Promoting the many positive aspects of Palestinian history and culture is essential in my opinion and could perhaps be presented as cultural events during the conference. Or,

if the boycott is supported by the majority of Palestinians, perhaps holding an alternative event elsewhere may be in Lebanon, for example, again highlighting the positive aspects of Palestinian culture and history as well as the struggle of the resistance and the victims of the violence may provide a lot of new ways for all of us, activists both in Palestine and outside of Palestine for getting the message out to new audiences.

As for future developments, I haven't the ability to see; these are precarious and complicated times. The region at this moment is a potential powder keg that could ignite a global firestorm. The people of the Middle East must not give in to the pressure being exerted against it to be divided against each other in my opinion. Violent religious extremism that has been nurtured by external powers and used by them to create chaos must be minimized for example by the people themselves. Dialogue and negotiations among all nations in the region are critical, and incorruptible leaders with a true vision and genuine motivation to help all the people need to be encouraged, raised up and supported. I believe the Middle East of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Iran - that part of the region that is the birthplace of so much of civilization - has an opportunity in this age to again be a light in the world, however, the challenges are truly great.

■ As you know, on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan each year, Muslims and anti-Israeli activists hold worldwide demonstrations to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people and condemn the Israeli regime's continued inhumane acts against the defenseless people. This year, Muslims around the world marked the International Quds Day on May 31. What do you think about the importance of the day? Why has the international community, particularly the Western mainstream media, made a muted response to the Tel Aviv regime's human rights violations against Palestinians so far?

A: Well, as I was thinking through these questions and writing out my responses in order to provide succinct answers on this video, I did so on al-Quds Day and so this is a particularly appropriate and poignant time to honor the martyrs of Palestine and mourn with their families. I feel it's also a good time to be bluntly honest. Most of us know that Western governments and media are dominated by pro-Israeli individuals and groups, therefore, it is alternative media that we must rely on for any truth and as a means of spreading it. We must create a tsunami of truth-tellers to share the reality of the massive human rights violations and crimes by Israel and those advancing Israeli interests. At the same time, we must hold ourselves and each other accountable to do this with integrity without exaggeration as the reality is so horrific exaggeration is needless and without false stories. All of those who de-legitimize our cause.

World extends far beyond the U.S. and West

GLOBALTIMES — Chinese President Xi Jinping just finished an official visit to Russia and left for Central Asia on Wednesday to make state visits to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Xi will attend the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The intensive interactions between leaders have significant meaning to the whole region and set an example for the world of a new type of international relations.

Central Asia is the place of origin of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the SCO. Both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are founding members of the SCO and were the first countries to support and join the BRI. Tajikistan was the first to sign a cooperation MOU with China on the Silk Road Economic Belt. Xi's visit to the two countries will not only improve China-Kyrgyzstan relations and China-Tajikistan relations, but will also greatly promote BRI construction and development of the SCO.

People can easily see that the US has not joined the BRI or SCO. Washington even resists them. Although other Western countries also have some doubts, the BRI and SCO have still made world-renowned achievements in just a few years, reflecting their strong vitality and development potential. Their success provides historical inspiration for international politics.

First, the US and the West are not the only parts of our huge world. The non-Western world's development has been lagging behind that of the West. Non-Western countries are dominated in the international system. Consequently, the West tends to ignore these countries' interests, demands and even existence.

The BRI and SCO show the world that in addition to the West, there is a huge stage that is full of vitality and possibilities. As the China-US trade war attracts the world's attention and concern, we need to be more visionary to break out of the limitations brought on by a narrow-minded US.

Second, a new model of international relations, which is full of oriental wisdom, is around the corner. Countries both big and small can relate to each other on an equal footing and share mutual respect and benefits. Countries with different values and political systems can build partnerships rather than alliances.

A community with a shared future for mankind is not just a slogan, it can also be practiced in reality. Guided by such philosophy, China-Kyrgyzstan relations and China-Tajikistan relations have peaked in history. The BRI and SCO keep moving forward despite the US and other Western countries' cold shoulder.

Third, neither the BRI nor the SCO is exclusive. They are open and friendly to the US and the West. Washington is vigilant against them, and the main reason is its geopolitical competition mindset. If the US cannot change that mindset, the country will only regard small countries like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as pawns. It will assume that China has the same mindset as well. Many current conflicts in the world are rooted in different strategic thinking.

The BRI and SCO were proposed by China. This is China's important contribution to world governance, and the contribution is shared by the world. As trade protectionism and unilateralism are bringing unprecedented impacts to free trade and multilateralism, the BRI and the SCO show their outstanding value. One day in the future, the world will sincerely appreciate China's efforts.

Pompeo an obstacle to Washington's diplomacy

GLOBALTIMES — US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has become one of the most antagonistic figures toward China in the current US administration. His tendency to breathe fire against China goes against his stature as secretary of state. The US State Department is the largest executive branch of US diplomacy and the protagonist of the design of American foreign policy. Its mission should be to build relationships, not tear them apart. But Pompeo's role in ties with China has upturned this conventional wisdom.

The nature of China-US relations will largely determine the direction of US diplomacy and international relations as a whole. Pompeo's efforts to freeze US-China relations suggest he is heralding the arrival of "winter" of global diplomacy.

Pompeo, who spent more than a year as CIA director before heading the State Department, has been repeatedly accused of using CIA thinking to steer the ship of US diplomacy. The diplomat reportedly said at a rally in April this year, "I was the CIA director. We lied, we cheated, we stole. We had entire training courses. It reminds you of the glory of the American experiment." It is a sad time for the world to deal with such a US secretary of state.

Pompeo is also a member of the American "Tea Party." The Tea Party represents the right wing in America. It has a strong sense of racial superiority filled with hatred. With that kind of political tendency and ambition, Pompeo came to being the secretary of state. His mind was not at all focused on instilling professionalism into America's top diplomatic position. Instead, it is about venting political ire while paving the way for one's larger political ambitions.

Diplomacy is governed by international conventions, which require all countries to observe basic norms. Pompeo behaves like a gangster. He is abandoning the traditional US major-power diplomacy and defying the gentle style of diplomats.

Pompeo constricted the space of diplomatic flexibility, and turned diplomacy into a nasty collision.

So far this year, North Korea, one of US President Donald Trump's top diplomatic priorities, has been the first to effectively declare Pompeo "persona non grata." North Korea has said publicly that if Pompeo remains at the talks, there will be chaos at the negotiating table again, so it wants a more cautious and mature replacement.

It is believed there are many other countries that don't like the top US diplomat very much, and find it tiring to deal with him — unable to communicate on a professional basis. Pompeo is becoming an obstacle to Washington's breakthroughs in some important areas of diplomacy.

Pompeo needs to figure out what the responsibilities of a diplomat are. As a top US diplomat, he is responsible for international peace and stability. He cannot violate important diplomatic rules and ties wantonly, or for personal gain and ambition. He should know that history will not forgive him if he goes against diplomatic ethics.

U.S. using smoke and mirrors in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (FNA) — The endless wars that the War Party has waged since 2001 have nearly bankrupted America and rendered impossible the other vitally needed infrastructure and research projects, including international aid and peace-keeping missions.

For all the money the US has wasted on these endless wars, it could have built a new home for every family in Afghanistan. It could have built schools and hospitals and roads. In short, it could have initiated a program of investments in peace.

Instead, the War Party has rained ruin on vast stretches of the world, killing and impoverishing tens of millions of innocent people. In terms of financial cost, the numbers are staggering. Afghanistan alone has cost a trillion dollars. Just think what the US government might have accomplished at home if that money had been spent on education, job training, medical research, infrastructure improvements, water purification and sanitation.

However, just like his predecessor, President Donald Trump is also using smoke and mirrors in Afghanistan. While sending more troops to the war-torn country, his administration is seeking to convince the world that there will be an eventual drawdown of US and NATO forces. A closer look at US imperialism's strategic goals of a "pivot to Asia" reveals that the endless war's goals include obtaining an economic foothold in Central Asia, where Afghanistan borders Iran, Pakistan, China, and the rich oil and gas resources of the former Soviet republics in Central Asia.

This geopolitical strategy is consistent with the so-called New Silk Road Policy announced by the Obama administration with the object of gaining economic hegemony over Russia, China and Iran. The US occupation of Afghanistan has always been a profit-driven war of economic conquest and plunder. This was never about fighting terrorists.

As such, US foreign policy is still aimed at regime change in this region to bring in governments subservient to US interests. By passing the "Authorization for Use of Military Force" resolution soon after the Sept. 11 events, Congress allowed the president to bypass congressional authorization for declaring war. This facilitated US interventions throughout the region against any government it deemed an obstacle to imperialist interests.

This has cost the working class in the US trillions of dollars of this unjust and criminal occupation of Afghanistan.



Now the Trump administration officials and Pentagon accountants say Afghanistan still needs US support at the same level and would need it for years. They have even increased ground troops and drone attacks in Afghanistan — despite talks with Taliban.

The enormous waste of human lives, especially among Afghan civilians, is the price paid for continuing this illegal war. Overall, the number of civilian deaths and casualties has reached a staggering and numbing amount: from 2001, the beginning of the US invasion, to the present, the number of civilians killed has been on the rise. Overall, the wars of aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan have killed approximately 210,000 civilians, according to the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University, while other sources estimate this number as being much higher, especially with regard to the casualties in Iraq.

Despite the continuation of a US presence, Washington has been losing out in Afghanistan. Units from both the Afghan army and police forces are defecting to the

insurgents and some have been turning their weapons on their officers and on US instructors.

In the middle of all this, Trump thinks he will win despite evidence to the contrary based on the bitter experience of the last 18 years of war. Trump says the US should forget about "nation building". Instead, he says, they should follow what he calls "principled realism": stay on the attack, don't reveal how many troops we are adding, and go harder after our ally, Pakistan, who harbors criminals and terrorists".

Trump says the US must stay in Afghanistan to avoid creating a "vacuum of power" that will be filled by terrorists. And he says the US must continue the mission to honor those who have already died. Continuing this ill-fated mission just increases the death and does nothing to build peace.

It is past time for the Empire of Chaos to get out of Afghanistan and past time to put up with more prevarication and fake news from the Trump administration on this endless war

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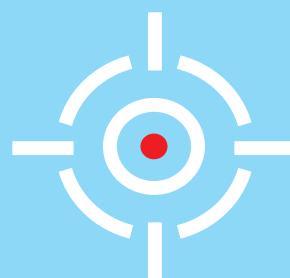
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Huge 'superflare' could be hurled out of the sun and threaten earth, scientists warn

The sun could hurl out a powerful "superflare" that would disrupt civilisation on Earth, scientists have warned.

Every so often, stars throw out huge bursts of energy that can be seen right across galaxies, from hundreds of light years away.

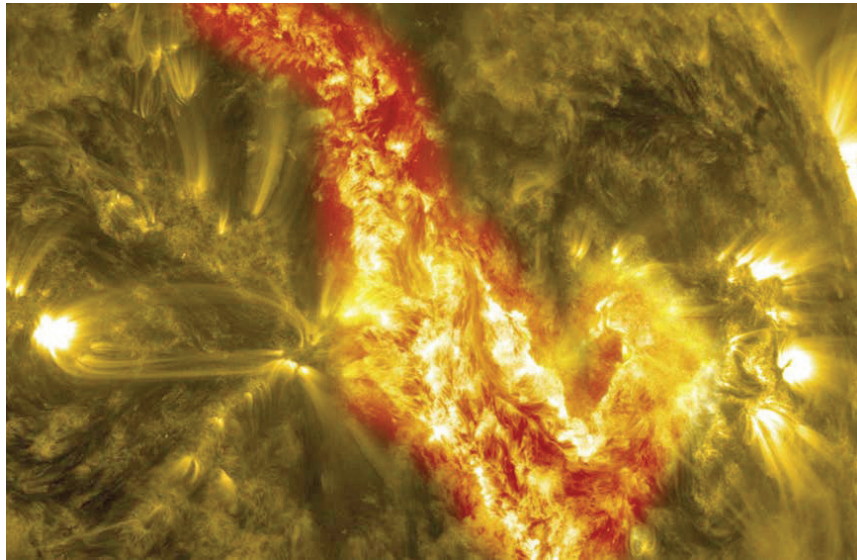
Scientists had believed Earth might be safe, because such events largely happen on younger and more active stars. But new discoveries suggest that more mature stars like our own sun could also throw out the destructive blasts.

If such a flare were to hit, it could cause damage to electronics across the globe. That in turn would bring widespread blackouts and the destruction of communications satellites that orbit above our heads.

Such an event is more rare on older and more quiet stars like ours, they say. But they are more confident than ever that they can happen, and that they should be expected once in every few thousand years.

The researchers behind the discovery called on authorities to respond to the danger and make sure that Earth is safe.

"Our study shows that superflares are rare events," said Yuta Notsu, lead author of a new study presented at the annual meeting of the



American Astronomical Society. "But there is some possibility that we could experience such an event in the next 100 years or so."

The phenomenon was first spotted by the Kepler Space Telescope. It spends its time

looking out at stars to try and spot Earth-sized planets orbiting around them – but it noticed that sometimes the stars themselves seemed to get very suddenly bright.

Those quick and vast blasts of energy have

been named superflares, and now look to threaten life on Earth.

They become less common as a star ages, they found in a new study that looked at data from the European Space Agency's Gaia spacecraft and from the Apache Point Observatory in New Mexico. Researchers watched for superflares on 43 stars like our own, and examined data that showed how old they might be and how given to throwing out the flares they are.

"Young stars have superflares once every week or so," Notsu said. "For the sun, it's once every few thousand years on average."

Scientists can't say for sure when or how such a superflare would arrive. But it will eventually come, they say – and scientists should start to prepare now, if they want to depend on the vast array of electronics and advanced technology that humanity relies on now.

"If a superflare occurred 1,000 years ago, it was probably no big problem. People may have seen a large aurora," Notsu said. "Now, it's a much bigger problem because of our electronics."

(Source: *The Independent*)

Chinese tombs yield earliest evidence of cannabis use

Researchers have uncovered the earliest known evidence of cannabis use, from tombs in western China.

The study suggests cannabis was being smoked at least 2,500 years ago, and that it may have been associated with ritual or religious activities.

Traces of the drug were identified in wooden burners from the burials.

The cannabis had high levels of the psychoactive compound THC, suggesting people at the time were well aware of its effects.

Cannabis plants have been cultivated in East Asia for their oily seeds and fiber from at least 4,000 BC.

But the early cultivated varieties of cannabis, as well as most wild populations, had low levels of THC and other psychoactive compounds. The burners, or braziers, were found at Jirzankal Cemetery, high up in the Pamir Mountains.

The scientists think ancient people put cannabis leaves and hot stones in the braziers and inhaled the resulting smoke.

It's possible the high altitude environment caused the cannabis plants in this region to naturally produce higher levels of THC. There's evidence this can happen in response to low temperatures, low nutrient levels and other conditions



associated with high elevations.

But people could have deliberately bred plants with higher levels of THC than wild varieties.

It's the earliest clear evidence of cannabis being used for its psychoactive properties. The plants appear to have been burnt as part of funerary rituals.

The scientists used a method called gas chromatography-mass spectrometry to isolate and identify compounds preserved in the burners.

To their surprise, the chemical signature of the isolated compounds was an exact match to the chemical signature of cannabis.

The findings tally with other early evidence for the presence of cannabis from burials further north, in the Xinjiang region of China and in the Altai Mountains of Russia.

(Source: *BBC*)

Mountain on dwarf planet Ceres is made of volcanic mud

Ahuna Mons, the tallest mountain on the dwarf planet Ceres, is made of volcanic mud, according to new analysis of data collected by the spacecraft Dawn.

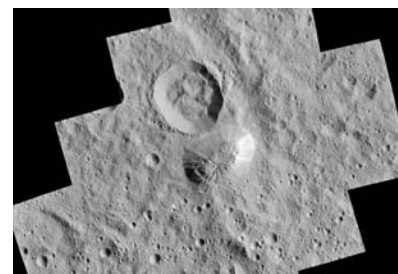
As observations by NASA's Dawn spacecraft first revealed in 2015, Ahuna Mons looks a lot like a volcano. Its shape recalls a mini volcanic dome, and the bright, salty streaks running down its slopes look a lot like the streaks of magma that flow down the sides of volcanoes on Earth.

Despite the visual evidence, scientists were skeptical of Ceres' volcanism. Dwarf planets like Ceres cooled relatively quickly after their formation. And because they're so small and cold, scientists thought their formation process left little room in the interior for volcanic activity.

But new analysis of Dawn data has confirmed scientists' suspicions that Ceres is an anomaly.

First, the mountain's slopes feature relatively few craters. Though scientists estimate Ceres is at least 4.5 billion years old, the dome's smooth surface suggests Ahuna Mons is only a few million years old.

When researchers took a fresh look at gravity data collected by Dawn, they found evidence of a plume running beneath Ahuna Mons. The new findings -- published this week in the journal *Nature Geoscience* --



suggest the plume contains a slushy like mixture of salty brine and solid particles.

"This structure is the probable source of fluids forming Ahuna Mons," researchers wrote in their new paper. "We propose that the properties of such a solid-liquid mixture can explain the viscous relaxation and the mineralogy of the dome."

According to the authors of the new paper -- a mix of planetary scientists from the United States and Europe -- the plume and resulting dome is unlike any documented so far in the solar system.

"The inferred slurry extrusion on Ceres differs from the water-dominated cryovolcanism of icy satellites, and so reveals compositional and rheological diversity in extrusive phenomena on planetary surfaces," researchers wrote.

(Source: *UPI*)

Frozen wolf's head found in Siberia is 40,000 years old

The severed head of a wolf that died about 40,000 years ago has been found in Siberia, and because of the freezing conditions, the remains are so well preserved that the fur, teeth, brain and facial tissue are largely intact.

Pavel Yefimov, a local resident, discovered the head last summer on the banks of the Tirektyakh river close to the Arctic Circle in the region of Yakutia, according to the *Siberian Times*.

The head was handed to the Science Academy of Yakutia. Researchers there sent samples and measurement data abroad and with help from colleagues in Japan and Sweden determined its age as approximately 40,000 years, the news



outlet said.

Footage provided to Reuters TV by the academy shows the head of an animal, visibly bigger than that of a modern wolf, covered with fur and with teeth visible. Its eyes are missing.

The head is to undergo plastination, a technique of replacing water and fat with plastics that prevents decay and preserves tissue for scientific purposes.

"This is a fixation by chemical means, so that the fur would not come off and so that we could keep it unfrozen," Valery Plotnikov, one of academy scientists, said in the footage.

(Source: *The Guardian*)

Bees can link symbols to numbers, study finds

We've learned bees can understand zero and do basic math, and now a new study shows their tiny insect brains may be capable of connecting symbols to numbers.

Researchers have trained honeybees to match a character to a specific quantity, revealing they are able to learn that a symbol represents a numerical amount.

It's a finding that sheds new light on how numerical abilities may have evolved over millennia and even opens new possibilities for communication between humans and other species.

The discovery, from the same Australian-French team that found bees get the concept of zero and can do simple arithmetic, also points to new approaches for bio-inspired computing that can replicate the brain's highly efficient approach to processing.

The RMIT University-led study is published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

Associate Professor Adrian Dyer said while humans were the only species to have developed systems to represent numbers, like the Arabic numerals we use each day, the research shows the concept can be grasped by brains far smaller than ours.

"We take it for granted once we've learned our numbers as children, but being able to recognise what '4' represents actually requires a sophisticated level of

cognitive ability," Dyer said.

"Studies have shown primates and birds can also learn to link symbols with numbers, but this is the first time we've seen this in insects.

"Humans have over 86 billion neurons in our brains, bees have less than a million, and we're separated by over 600 million years of evolution.

"But if bees have the capacity to learn something as complex as a human-made symbolic language, this opens up exciting new pathways for future communication across species."

Mini brains, maximum potential: what the bees learned

Studies have shown that a number of non-human animals have been able to learn that symbols can represent numbers, including pigeons, parrots, chimpanzees and monkeys.

Some of their feats have been impressive -- chimpanzees were taught Arabic numbers and could order them correctly, while an African grey parrot called Alex was able to learn the names of numbers and could sum the quantities.

The new study for the first time shows that this complex cognitive capacity is not restricted to vertebrates.

The bee experiment was conducted by Dr Scarlett Howard, formerly a PhD researcher in the Bio Inspired Digital

Sensing-Lab (BIDS-Lab) at RMIT and now a fellow at the Research Center on Animal Cognition, University of Toulouse III -- Paul Sabatier, CNRS.

In a Y-shaped maze, individual bees were trained to correctly match a character with a number of elements.

They were then tested on whether they could apply their new knowledge to match the character to various elements of the same quantity (in the same way that '2' can represent two bananas, two trees or two hats).

A second group was trained in the opposite approach, matching a number of elements with a character.

While both could grasp their specific training, the different groups were unable to reverse the association and work out what to do when tested with the opposite (character-to-number or number-to-character).

"This suggests that number processing and understanding of symbols happens in different regions in bee brains, similar to the way separate processing happens in the human brain," Howard said.

"Our results show honeybees are not at the same level as the animals that have been able to learn symbols as numbers and perform complex tasks.

"But the results have implications for what we know about learning,



reversing tasks, and how the brain creates connections and associations between concepts.

"Discovering how such complex numerical skills can be grasped by miniature brains will help us understand how mathematical and cultural thinking evolved in humans, and possibly, other animals."

Studying insect brains offers intriguing possibilities for the future design of highly efficient computing systems, Dyer said.

"When we're looking for solutions to complex problems, we often find that nature has already done the job far more elegantly and efficiently," he said.

"Understanding how tiny bee brains manage information opens paths to bio-inspired solutions that use a fraction of the power of conventional processing systems."

(Source: *sciencedaily.com*)

Earth's heavy metals result of supernova explosion, research reveals

That gold on your ring finger is stellar -- and not just in a complimentary way.

In a finding that may overthrow our understanding of where Earth's heavy elements such as gold and platinum come from, new research by a University of Guelph physicist suggests that most of them were spewed from a largely overlooked kind of star explosion far away in space and time from our planet.

Some 80 per cent of the heavy elements in the universe likely formed in collapsars, a rare but heavy element-rich form of supernova explosion from the gravitational collapse of old, massive stars typically 30 times as weighty as our sun, said physics professor Daniel Siegel.

That finding overturns the widely held belief that these elements mostly come from collisions between neutron stars or between a neutron star and a black hole, said Siegel.

Using supercomputers, the trio simulated the dynamics of collapsars, or old stars whose gravity causes them to implode and form black holes.

Under their model, massive, rapidly spinning collapsars eject heavy elements whose amounts and distribution are "astoundingly similar to what we observe in our solar system," said Siegel. He joined U of G this month and is also appointed to the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, in Waterloo, Ont.

Most of the elements found in nature were created in nuclear reactions in stars and ultimately expelled in huge stellar explosions.

Heavy elements found on Earth and elsewhere in the universe from long-ago explosions range from gold and platinum, to uranium and plutonium used in nuclear reactors, to more exotic chemical elements such as neodymium found in consumer items such as electronics.

Until now, scientists thought that these elements were cooked up mostly in stellar smashups involving neutron stars or black holes, as in a collision of two neutron stars observed by Earth-bound detectors that made headlines in 2017.

Ironically, said Siegel, his team began working to understand the physics of that merger before their simulations pointed toward collapsars as a heavy element birth chamber. "Our research on neutron star mergers has led us to believe that the birth of black holes in a very different type of stellar explosion might produce even more gold than neutron star mergers."

What collapsars lack in frequency, they make up for in generation of heavy elements, said Siegel. Collapsars also produce intense flashes of gamma rays.

"Eighty per cent of these heavy elements we see should come from collapsars. Collapsars are fairly rare in occurrences of supernovae, even more rare than neutron star mergers -- but the amount of material that they eject into space is much higher than that from neutron star mergers."

The team now hopes to see its theoretical model validated by observations. Siegel said infrared instruments such as those on the James Webb Space Telescope, set for launch in 2021, should be able to detect telltale radiation pointing to heavy elements from a collapsar in a far-distant galaxy.

"That would be a clear signature," he said, adding that astronomers might also detect evidence of collapsars by looking at amounts and distribution of heavy elements in other stars across our Milky Way galaxy.

Siegel said this research may yield clues about how our galaxy began.

"Trying to nail down where heavy elements come from may help us understand how the galaxy was chemically assembled and how the galaxy formed. This may actually help solve some big questions in cosmology as heavy elements are a nice tracer."

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Dmitri Mendeleev's creation of the periodic table of the chemical elements. Since then, scientists have added many more elements to the periodic table, a staple of science textbooks and classrooms worldwide.

Referring to the Russian chemist, Siegel said, "We know many more elements that he didn't. What's fascinating and surprising is that, after 150 years of studying the fundamental building blocks of nature, we still don't quite understand how the universe creates a big fraction of the elements in the periodic table."

(Source: *Science Daily*)

Stressed out? Your dog may feel it too, study suggests

When dog owners go through a stressful period, they're not alone in feeling the pressure -- their dogs feel it too, a new study suggests.

Dog owners experiencing long bouts of stress can transfer it to their dogs, scientists report in a study published Thursday in *Scientific Reports*.

The Swedish researchers focused on 58 people who own border collies or Shetland sheepdogs. They examined hair from the dog owners and their dogs, looking at the concentrations of a hormone called cortisol, a chemical released into the bloodstream and absorbed by hair follicles in response to stress.

Depression, excessive physical exercise and unemployment are just a few examples of stress that can influence the amount of cortisol found in your hair, said Lina Roth of Linköping University in Sweden. Roth and her team found that the patterns of cortisol levels in the hair of dog owners closely matched that found in their dogs in both winter and summer months, indicating their stress levels were in sync.

She thinks the owners are influencing the dogs rather than the other way around because several human personality traits appear to affect canine cortisol levels.

The researchers don't know what causes the synchronization in cortisol levels between humans and their pups. But a hint might lie in the fact that the link is stronger with competitive dogs than in pet pooches.

The bond formed between owner and competitive dogs during training may increase the canines' emotional reliance on their owners, she said. That in turn could increase the degree of synchronization.

But why do people influence their dogs rather than vice versa? Perhaps people are "a more central part of the dog's life, whereas we humans also have other social networks," Roth said in an email.

The study results are no surprise, said Alicia Buttner, director of animal behavior with the Nebraska Humane Society in Omaha. "New evidence is continually emerging, showing that people and their dogs have incredibly close bonds that resemble the ones that parents share with their children," she said in an email.

But she said there isn't enough evidence to assume that the influence goes only one way; it may go both ways.

"It's not just as simple as owner gets stressed, dog gets stressed," she said.

(Source: *AP News*)

Iran, Austria explore ways to expand tourism ties

TOURISM TEHRAN — Delegations of Iranian and Australian officials as well as experts exchanged views on how to broaden tourism ties in a three-day meeting held in Vienna.

The second meeting of Iran-Austria Working Group on Tourism, which came to end on Friday, aimed to implement previously signed memorandum of understanding between the two countries, Mehr reported.



According to the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, the agreement is part of a roadmap for cooperation between the two countries which was signed back in March 2016 in Vienna.

The first meeting of working group was held in Tehran in 2017, hosted by Iran's Trade Promotion Organization.

Iran expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots, including 22 ones that have been placed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The country has launched extensive plans to bolster its tourism sector. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, it aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Meybod hosting regional handicrafts exhibit

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iran's Meybod, which is a world city of handicrafts, is hosting a crafts exhibition in which craftspeople from ten provinces are participating.



Some sixty stalls have been set for the sales exhibition, which will be running through June 17, IRNA reported.

Last February, Meybod celebrated becoming a world city for Zilou, a traditional type of floor covering commonly woven across the central Iranian city and its outskirts.

Handicrafts exports from the Islamic Republic reached \$289 million in the past Persian calendar year 1397 (ended March 20), showing three percent growth year on year,

according to official data announced by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

ROUND THE GLOBE

Australian Convict Sites

Australian Convict Sites, which is an integrated UNESCO World Heritage, consist of eleven complementary sites.

The properties constitute an outstanding and large-scale example of the forced migration of convicts, who were condemned to transportation to distant colonies of the British Empire; the same method was also used by other colonial states.



The sites illustrate the different types of convict settlement organized to serve the colonial development project by means of buildings, ports, infrastructure, the extraction of resources, etc. They illustrate the living conditions of the convicts, who were condemned to transportation far from their homes, deprived of freedom, and subjected to forced labor.

This transportation and associated forced labor was implemented on a large scale, both for criminals and for people convicted for relatively minor offences, as well as for expressing certain opinions or being political opponents. The penalty of transportation to Australia also applied to women and children from the age of nine. The convict stations are testimony to a legal form of punishment that dominated in the 18th and 19th centuries in the large European colonial states, at the same time as and after the abolition of slavery.

The property shows the various forms that the convict settlements took, closely reflecting the discussions and beliefs about the punishment of crime in 18th and 19th century Europe, both in terms of its exemplarity and the harshness of the punishment used as a deterrent, and of the aim of social rehabilitation through labor and discipline. They influenced the emergence of a penal model in Europe and America.

(Source: UNESCO)

World Crafts Council assessing registration of historic marketplace in Qazvin

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR) is assessing possible registration of the 19th-century Sa'd al-Saltaneh marketplace, which is located adjacent to a historical caravanserai of the same name in Iran's Qazvin province.

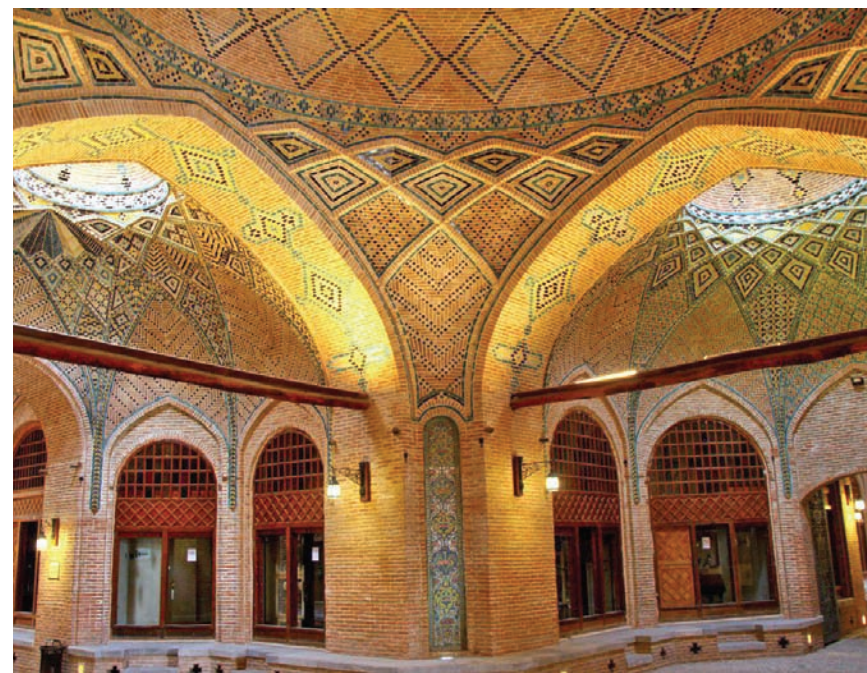
WCC-APR Director Ghada Hijavi paid a visit to the marketplace on Thursday, IRNA reported.

Sa'd al-Saltaneh handicrafts market can represent Iranians of [the whole] Iran and its various tribes and by the means of better planning, it can attract many tourists from many parts of the

world, she said.

Hijavi proposed establishing of a museum dedicated to handicrafts from all over the globe in or next to the marketplace, adding such a museum along with offering handicrafts in appropriate packages are among necessities for the global registration of this place, as the first ever Iranian handicrafts market.

The vast, beautifully restored Qajar-era caravanserai and its neighboring marketplace exhibits exquisitely crafted wares such as traditional personal ornamentations, paintings, ceramics, carpets and potteries across its long, vaulted passageways and arcades. The vast monument



also houses various galleries, workshops as well as coffee shops and restaurants, where visitors hangout.

The capital city of Qazvin was once the capital of the Persian Empire under Safavids from 1548-98.

So far, the WCC-APR has designated seven Iranian cities and villages as world

crafts hubs, which are lately planned to be new destinations for sightseeing tours, according to the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

According to data compiled by the Organization, over two million artisans are currently working in various fields of handicrafts across the ancient country.

Tehran seminar explores Sadi, Iqbal poetries

HERITAGE TEHRAN — On Wednesday, the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran hosted a seminar to discuss affinities between Persian poet Sadi (c. 1213-1291) and leading Pakistani poet and philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877 - 1938), with sharpening the focus on Iqbal's Asrar-e-Khudi ("The Secrets of the Self").

Tens of prominent Iranian and Pakistani scholars, poets, academia and students attended the event, which was held in close collaboration with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Cultural Institute (ECI). Pakistani Ambassador Riffat Masood, ECI President Muhammad Mehdi Mazaheri and Chairman of the Islamabad-based Allama Iqbal Council, Zulfiqar Cheema were amongst the attendees as well.

In her introductory remarks, the Pakistani envoy appreciated researches being done by Iranians on the philosophy of Iqbal.

The poetry of Iqbal was more or less under the influence of legendary Persian poets Sadi and Hafez, she stated.

"Both Iqbal and Sadi worked for the awakening of society in their own styles leading ultimate to Sufism. Their poetry has no precedent in the world," the envoy said, according to a press release from the Embassy.

Addressing the seminar, Mazaheri paid rich tributes to Iqbal and Sadi, saying that poetry and philosophy

of Iqbal and Sadi are still a great source of guidance for the whole world. He also called Iqbal as the "poet of future".

Scholar Qasim Safi briefed the concept of Khudi poems of Iqbal and said that the philosophy of Iqbal is "very imperative" for the Muslim world.

Zulfiqar Cheema said that Iqbal was well aware of the challenges being faced by the Muslim world and through his poetry and philosophy he gave a divine message of unity and Khudi to the Muslims of the world.

Calling Iqbal as "Hakim ul Ummat", Cheema said that Iqbal believed in action and struggle and urged Muslims to follow his message as prescription for the unity of Muslims around the globe.

He stated that Iqbal's message of Khudi is the need of hour for the present Muslim world.

Pakistani scholar Rashid Naqvi and Yousef Razaiaref, a student from Urdu Department of the University of Tehran, recited poems by Iqbal and Sadi, as they received appreciation from the audience.

A documentary on the poetry of Iqbal and Sadi was also screened while Iranian artists played a musical performance of Iqbal and Sadi's songs.

Published in 1915, Asrar-e-Khudi emphasizes the spirit and self from a religious and spiritual perspective. Many critics have called it Iqbal's finest poetic work.

Japanese prime minister visits National Museum of Iran



HERITAGE TEHRAN — During his landmark visit to Iran, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe toured the National Museum of Iran on Thursday.

He visited various sections of the museum including the ones dedicated to prehistoric, ancient, and Islamic-era Iran as well as countless archaeological objects that chronicle the country's juicy history.

Tokyo's Ambassador to Tehran Mitsuo Saito and his Iranian counterpart Morteza Rahmani-Movahed accompanied the prime minister, CHTN reported.

Jebreil Nokandeh, director of the National Museum of Iran, and Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, a deputy for the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, presented the necessary explanations to the visitors, the reported said.

Abe signed the memorial book of the museum as well.

The prime minister arrived in Tehran Wednesday afternoon for talks with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani in an attempt to cool U.S.-Iran tensions.



Welcome's new app will do your travel planning for you

Welcome is a new app that CEO Matthew Rosenberg said is designed for a more spontaneous approach to traveling.

"What we're going after is these millennials [and] Gen Z travelers who feel comfortable going in the moment," Rosenberg told me. "Eighty-five percent of people aren't even looking at activities before they arrive."

So instead of asking travelers to create their own itineraries by browsing through a list of recommendations and reviews, Welcome builds the itinerary for them. When you're planning to visit a destination, or when you've arrived and you're wondering what to do, you can open Welcome and browse through a list of potential locations and activities, indicating which ones interest you. You also can browse recommendations from local experts, or ask for tips from your friends.

Welcome then uses your responses to create a schedule for you, consisting both of places you've explicitly said you want to visit and of things that would probably be of interest. The itineraries are also based on location, with different travel options like taking an Uber or Lyft, mass transit or walking.

Most intriguingly, the itineraries adjust in real time — if one of the items on the list doesn't interest you, you can swipe to skip it, and Welcome will automatically fill in the gap with new activities. Or if you find a great



spot where you want to spend the whole afternoon, the app will once again adjust. Rosenberg said it's even pulling in weather data, so "if we were going to send you to a park in the afternoon, and at lunch it starts raining, we can replace it with a museum."

He acknowledged that this approach might be less suited for travelers who like to plan everything in advance — but even then, he noted, "The truth is, for all the planning that happens, most people's plans tend to fall apart in the moment. Something always changes, some alley you want to go down, some boat you want to take, some sort of adventure that if you

didn't take it, you'd regret. That's what we've really tried to embrace."

Rosenberg added that the app could eventually introduce new ways for users to more explicitly filter the results based on their preferences — say, if they're particularly interested in theater or museums, or if they're on a tight budget.

Welcome says it already offers recommendations in more than 250 cities worldwide.

It's a free app, and Rosenberg said the focus is on growth, not monetization. While he plans to make money by driving purchases and transactions, he said Welcome will never be advertising-driven. "Everything we show you is authentic. No one's paying us to send you to some mediocre restaurant."

The startup was founded by Rosenberg (who previously founded video app Cameo) and Peter Gerard, and has raised \$1.2 million in seed funding led by 3 Rodeo.

"What we use today in travel is rooted in this old-school style of thinking," Rosenberg said. "What I mean by that is, most travel sites put a bunch of pins on a map, but it's still up to you to look around and figure out what to do. I don't think anyone's really thought: How can we take advantage not only of the mobile device, but really the data that's out there right now ... No one's really built tools for our generation." (Source: techcrunch.com)

Safe blood for all: A component of achieving universal health coverage

HEALTH TEHRAN — The theme of this year's campaign of World Blood Donor Day, which is annually celebrated on June 14, is blood donation and universal access to safe blood transfusion, as a component of achieving universal health coverage.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed the slogan "Safe blood for all" to raise awareness of the universal need for safe blood in the delivery of health care and the crucial roles that voluntary donations play in achieving the goal of universal health coverage.

The theme strongly encourages more people all over the world to become blood donors and donate blood regularly — actions which are key to building a strong foundation of sustainable national blood supplies that are sufficient to meeting the needs of all patients requiring transfusion.

The day and the theme is also a call to action to all governments, national health authorities and national blood services to provide adequate resources and put in place systems and infrastructures to increase collection of blood from voluntary, regular unpaid blood donors; to provide quality donor care; to promote and implement appropriate clinical use of blood, and to set up systems for the oversight and surveillance on the whole chain of blood transfusion.

The campaign aims to celebrate and thank individuals who donate blood and to encourage those who have not yet donated blood to start donating, to highlight the need for committed, year-round blood donation, to maintain adequate supplies and achieve universal and timely access to safe blood transfusion, to focus attention on donor health and the quality of donor care as critical factors in building donor commitment and a willingness to donate regularly, to demonstrate the need for universal access to safe blood transfusion and provide advocacy on its role in the provision of effective health care and in achieving the goal of universal health coverage and to mobilize support at national, regional and global levels among governments and development partners to invest in, strengthen and sustain national blood programs.

Iran and blood donation

According to the 2016 global status report on blood safety and availability, 64 countries (Europe 21, Americas 22, Africa four, Western Pacific four, and Eastern Mediterranean three) reported a total of



101,994 autologous donations in 2013. Italy reported the largest absolute number of autologous donations.

Iran pioneers in donor deferral rate in countries by the WHO region, following by Egypt and Morocco.

In units of fresh frozen plasma transfused per 1000 population in countries by WHO region in East Mediterranean countries, Iran ranks fourth after Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

According to the report, the whole blood donations collected (excluding autologous donation) in 2013, the number of voluntary non remunerated donors (VNRD) are 2,001,791, out of which 450,100 are first time donor and 6,9100 repeat donor.

Iran and Tunisia are the only countries in the region producing plasma-derived medicinal products (PDMP), Hajjibeigi noted.

In February 2018, admiring the attempts of Iran in blood supply, the official site of WHO has mentioned to the "success story" of the country. Part of this report comments that "The Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization has reduced the risk of transfusion-transmitted infections drastically in recent decades thanks to improved donor selection, better tests and new methods of

screening. All donated blood is tested for HIV, hepatitis B and C and Human T-lymphotropic virus."

Some facts on blood safety and availability

According to WHO, of the 117.4 million blood donations collected globally, 42% of these are collected in high-income countries, home to 16% of the world's population.

In low-income countries, up to 52% of blood transfusions are given to children under 5 years of age; whereas in high-income countries, the most frequently transfused patient group is over 65 years of age, accounting for up to 75% of all transfusions.

An increase of 11.6 million blood donations from voluntary unpaid donors has been reported from 2008 to 2015. In total, 78 countries collect over 90% of their blood supply from voluntary unpaid blood donors; however, 58 countries collect more than 50% of their blood supply from family/replacement or paid donors.

Only 50 of 173 reporting countries produce plasma-derived medicinal products (PDMP) through the fractionation of plasma collected in the reporting country. A total of 83 countries reported that all PDMP are imported, 24 countries reported that

no PDMP were used during the reporting period, and 16 countries did not respond to the question.

National blood policy and organization

Blood transfusion saves lives and improves health, but many patients requiring transfusion do not have timely access to safe blood. Providing safe and adequate blood should be an integral part of every country's national health care policy and infrastructure.

WHO recommends that all activities related to blood collection, testing, processing, storage and distribution be coordinated at the national level through effective organization and integrated blood supply networks. The national blood system should be governed by national blood policy and legislative framework to promote uniform implementation of standards and consistency in the quality and safety of blood and blood products.

Blood supply

About 117.4 million blood donations are collected worldwide. 42% of these are collected in high-income countries, home to 16% of the world's population.

About 12,700 blood centers in 170 countries report collecting a total of 100 million donations. Collections at blood centers vary according to income group. The median annual donations per blood center is 1,300 in the low-income countries, 4,100 in lower-middle-income countries and 8,500 in upper-middle-income countries, as compared to 23,000 in the high-income countries.

There is a marked difference in the level of access to blood between low- and high-income countries. The whole blood donation rate is an indicator for the general availability of blood in a country. The median blood donation rate in high-income countries is 32.6 donations per 1000 people.

This compares with 15.1 donations per 1000 people in upper-middle-income countries, 8.1 donations per 1000 people in lower-middle-income countries, and 4.4 donations per 1000 people in low-income countries.

According to World Health Organization, the safest blood donors are voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors from low-risk populations. The World Health Organization's goal is for all countries to obtain all their blood supplies through voluntary unpaid donors, in accordance with World Health Assembly resolution 28.72, which was adopted back in 1975.

World's most rapid Brucellosis test designed in Iran

HEALTH TEHRAN — an Iranian knowledge-based company produced kits that can detect Brucellosis disease in the shortest time possible in the world, the managing director of the company has said.

According to World Health Organization, Brucellosis is a bacterial disease caused by various Brucella species, which mainly infect cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs. Humans generally acquire the disease through direct contact with infected animals, by eating or drinking contaminated animal products, or by inhaling airborne agents.

The company's managing director Morteza Shoja-Ruz said the former diagnostic kits could detect the disease after 48 hours, but the new test kits designed in Zistgostaran Company can show the results after only 20 minutes, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

"This product is the first of its kind in the world and has no equivalent in terms of both the diagnostic techniques used and the time required to process the data," said Shoja-Ruz.

"This new kit also gives more accurate results compared to similar products that were previously used."

"This new diagnostic kit has now come



on Iran's market," he added.

According to Shoja-Ruz, before this, older designs of Brucellosis test kits, both the Iranian and foreign versions, have been available in Iran's market.

"Our aim for this new kit is to be largely exported, the first batch has already been sent to Azerbaijan and we intend to start exporting it to other neighboring countries, such as Iraq," he said.

According to Shoja-Ruz, the firm has also designed a rapid kit for diagnosing Brucellosis in animals and have received the necessary permits to produce it.

Homegrown 3-D printed prostheses successfully used in surgeries

HEALTH TEHRAN — 3-D printed prostheses produced for jaw, face and skull by an Iranian knowledge-based company were used successfully in 100 surgeries, said the company's production manager.

The prosthesis was produced by DanaWell Biomechanical group which is part of the Exceptional Talents Development Center of Tehran University of Medical Sciences and has started working on designing prostheses since 2016.

These 3-D printed prostheses can help people whose jaw, face or skull are damaged or disfigured due to birth defects, accidents or some brain tumor surgeries that affect the facial bone structure, Ramin Hosseini told IRNA on Tuesday.

"The prostheses are customized because they are produced based on each person's individual physical features. Before this, patients had to send their information to some European countries so that they can receive their custom-made prostheses," said Hosseini.

According to Hosseini, the foreign version of this product is made with titanium, but DanaWell Group used bone cement in their design; that was a novel idea and was registered as a patent.

According to U.S. Food and Drug



Administration, 3D printers are used to manufacture a variety of medical devices, including those with complex geometry or features that match a patient's unique anatomy.

Commercially available 3D printed medical devices include: instrumentation (e.g., guides to assist with proper surgical placement of a device), implants (e.g., cranial plates or hip joints), and external prostheses (e.g., hands).

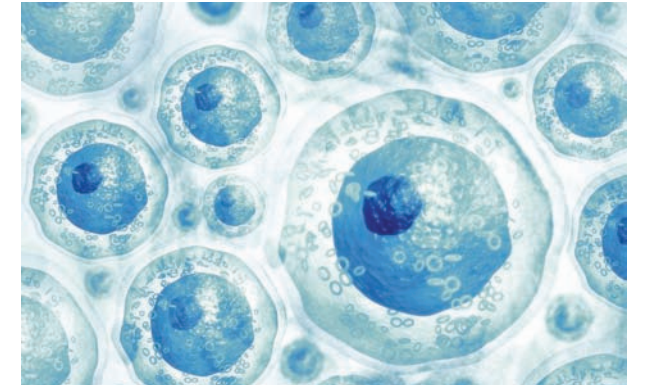
Scientists are researching how to use the 3D printing process to manufacture living organs such as a heart or liver, but this research is in early stages of development.

Iran now derive masses of MSCs from umbilical cord

HEALTH TEHRAN — Mesenchymal stem cells derived from umbilical cord is now produced in large scales, said an expert of research and development in Royan Research Institute.

Mesenchymal stem cells (MSC) are multipotent stromal cells that can differentiate into a variety of cell types, including osteoblasts (bone cells), chondrocytes (cartilage cells), myocytes (muscle cells) and adipocytes (fat cells which give rise to marrow adipose tissue).

This mass production of MSCs was achieved by a cooperation between Royan Research Institute and Celltech Pharmed-Stem Cell, Leila Qaderi told IRNA on Tuesday.



According to Qaderi, Mesenchymal stem cells are used for treatment of nervous system diseases such as brain paralysis, autism, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson and spine injuries.

"MSCs are usually derived from bone marrow, fat tissues and dental pulp, but we have derived them from umbilical cord tissues that were previously thrown away."

The advantages of this procedure is that it is non-invasive, there is a lower risk of contamination and the donors are very young, she said.

According to Qaderi, Royan institute will also soon start a research project about using MSCs for treating arthritis.

She added that similar projects are underway; including extracting stem cells from dental pulp and using stem cells for treating people with arthritis.

Anxiety drugs widely prescribed in the UK linked to 26% rise in suicide risk, study shows

People taking a widely used class of medication prescribed for anxiety, nerve pain or epilepsy are up to 26 per cent more likely to die by suicide, a study has warned.

British researchers, led by Oxford University, have called for a review on the use of gabapentinoid drugs in treating young people after finding risks were particularly high among 15- to 24-year-olds.

In addition to suicidal behaviors, rates of being involved in a car crash or traffic offence, of sustaining a physical injury and of accidental overdose were all raised when people were being treated with gabapentinoids, the study found.

Gabapentinoid prescriptions have trebled in the UK since 2007 — with around 3 per cent of the population having been put on the drugs over the past decade. There are currently 10 million prescriptions being dispensed in England and Wales alone. All of which contribute towards gabapentinoids being among the top 15 most valuable drugs to the global pharmaceutical industry.

However, growing concern about their potential for harm and abuse saw the most commonly prescribed gabapentinoids, pregabalin (dubbed the "new valium") and gabapentin, reclassified as a class C-controlled drug in April 2019.

The latest study, published in The BMJ, used health and criminal records from 192,000 Swedish citizens between 2006 and 2013 who were treated with pregabalin or gabapentin. Around 10,000 participants (5 per cent) were treated for suicidal behavior, or died by suicide during this time, while 17,000 (9 per cent) unintended overdoses were recorded.

Suicidal behavior and deaths rose by a quarter while people were taking a prescribed gabapentinoid, while unintentional overdoses were 24 per cent higher, head and body injuries were 22 per cent higher, and traffic incidents and offences were 13 per cent higher. Older age groups showed higher risks for some of these factors, but among younger people the risks were raised across all potential harms and were particularly high for suicidal behavior and unintended overdose.

The Oxford University researchers said this may be because they are more likely to combine their prescription with alcohol and illegal substances. There is also some suggestion they may be more vulnerable to emotional and psychological side effects which can be part of withdrawal symptoms.

"This is the biggest study in the real world of the pattern of gabapentinoid use," Professor Seena Fazel, a forensic psychiatrist at Oxford University and lead author of the study, told The Independent. "The main thing is to look at guidelines now and see if they're consistent with the evidence [of these risks]." If not then they may need to be reviewed to protect these high-risk groups, he added.

The findings come as experts called for ministers to declare opioid overdose deaths a "public health crisis", and gabapentinoids may be one of the factors behind the increase.

Dr Derek Tracey, a consultant psychiatrist at Queen Mary's Hospital in London, said the reclassification of gabapentinoids as restricted drugs may make GPs more reluctant to prescribe them.

"Despite reasonable concerns, gabapentinoids remain a valued therapeutic option for many people," he said in The BMJ. "Medicines can harm as well as heal, and the best treatment decisions are made in full partnership with patients, after consideration of all available evidence on both."

(Source: The Independent)

World Blood Donor Day 2019: save lives by donating blood regularly

On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day 2019, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari emphasized that everyone in the world had the right to access safe blood transfusion, when and where it was needed. Access to safe blood and blood products is essential for universal health coverage (UHC) and a key component of effective health systems.

Blood transfusion saves millions of lives every year. It can help in the proper management of women experiencing bleeding associated with pregnancy and childbirth, children with severe anaemia, patients with inherited disorders such as thalassemia, and victims of trauma, emergencies, disasters and accidents.

This year's campaign focuses on blood donation and universal access to blood and blood products under the slogan "Safe blood for all". "Our aim is to raise awareness of the need for regular blood donations to ensure that all individuals and communities have access to affordable and timely supplies of safe and quality-assured blood and blood products. This is an integral part of countries' progress to-



wards UHC and to enhance health systems. Both go in line with our regional vision 2023," Dr Al-Mandhari said.

Although the need for blood is universal, many countries

in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region face the challenge of making sufficient blood available, while also ensuring its quality and safety, especially in humanitarian emergencies. "An adequate and safe blood supply that meets the needs of patients at all times can only be ensured through regular donations by voluntary, unpaid blood donors," Dr Al-Mandhari stated in his message on World Blood Donor Day 2019.

World Blood Donor Day serves to thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gift of blood and to raise awareness of the universal need for safe blood in the delivery of health care and the crucial roles that regular, voluntary donations play in achieving the goal of UHC.

On this occasion, WHO is also calling on all countries to celebrate and thank individuals who donate blood and to encourage those who have not previously donated blood to start donating.

"Everyone who can donate blood should consider making regular donations, so that all countries have adequate blood supplies to help those in need," the Regional Director added.

(Source: WHO)

Relief foundation invests \$155m in setting up solar plants nationwide

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has made an investment of 6.5 trillion rials (nearly \$155 million) last year (March 2018-March 2019) in setting up solar plants for the underprivileged families under its assistance, the foundation's director has said.



Parviz Fattah made the remarks over a ceremony for inauguration of 520 solar plants for deprived families in southeastern province of Kerman, Mehr news agency reported on Thursday. Last year, Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation built 1,800 solar plants nationwide of which 700 were set up in Kerman province, Fattah explained.

This year (started on March 21) 600 solar plants will be established in northern parts of Kerman province and 400 plants will be built in southern parts he added.

Fattah went on to say that Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation is now granting loans of 500 million rials (nearly \$12,000) for setting up new businesses.

Commenting on capacity-building and financial stability as the two main objectives of the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation he stated that last year some 1.13 trillion rials (nearly \$27,000) was allocated to the province of Kerman as business loans, saying that the amount increased to 2.65 trillion rials (nearly \$63,000) this year.

Moreover, he added, in collaboration with Budget and Planning Organization the foundation will construct 10,000 housing units in Kerman province.

So far the foundation has implemented 650,000 job plans nationwide and last year 37,000 families became financially independent with the support of the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, he highlighted.

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation is a charitable organization, founded in March 1979, after the Islamic Revolution, to provide support for families who are struggling financially. The aim is to help such families regain financial stability. Boosting job creation is one of the primary objectives of the foundation.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Changes in the global market economy

(July 20, 2000)
According to a survey by the business consultancy firm Interbrand, the multinational giant Coca Cola is losing its position as the most profitable company in the world. BBC Economics reporter Andrew Walker reported.

In this survey Coca Cola has just held on to its top spot. Last year it was way ahead of the others. But if the trends of the last year continue, it will lose it soon. In a year its **brand** has lost thirteen per cent of its value, while Microsoft's has climbed by twenty four per cent despite the distractions of a massive **anti-monopoly** court case in the United States. The general pattern is one of rising values for new technology brands. But internet companies are not strongly represented - they've not yet had time to **establish a brand name** and very few of them make a **profit**.

Nonetheless, Yahoo, the internet search engine and the retailer Amazon.com managed some very strong rises in their **brand values**. In addition to Coca Cola a number of other so-called **old economy brands** lost value; for example, Kodak the photographic film maker and the sportswear supplier Nike. Interbrand's survey looks at the future earnings potential of the companies concerned and tries to **assess** how much of that can be attributed to the brands they own. Interbrand says that for many companies, their brands are their single most important **asset**. For many businesses the estimated value of their brand is more than half their total **stock market** value.

Words trends: a trend is a change or development towards something new or different

brand: a brand of a product is the version made by one particular manufacturer

anti-monopoly: a monopoly is the total control or possession of a particular thing by only one person or group, here an anti-monopoly court case is one to assess and prevent total control

establish a brand name: the process of making a brand well-known and profitable through marketing and advertising

profit: a profit is an amount of money that you gain when you are paid more for something than it cost you

nonetheless: a formal way of saying in spite of what has just been said

brand values: the profitability and value of a particular version of a product

old economy brands: companies that trade in traditional products rather than the newer internet and IT firms

assess: when you assess a person, feeling, or situation, you consider them and make a judgment about them

asset: an asset is someone or something that is considered to be useful or helpful to a person or a group; the assets of a company or a person are all the things that they own

stock market: the stock market is all the organizations and the activity involved in buying and selling stocks and shares

(Source: BBC)

IMO director among members of WMO's Executive Council

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran's Meteorological Organization (IMO) director Sahar Tajbakhsh was elected as one of the members of the World Meteorological Congress Executive Council, IMO announced in a press release.

The 193-Member World Meteorological Congress has elected its Executive Council, which comprises World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) President and Vice-Presidents, Presidents of WMO's 6 Regional Associations and 27 directors of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services.

The World Meteorological Congress is the supreme body of WMO. The Executive Council implements its decisions, while six Regional Associations are responsible for the coordination of meteorological, hydrological and related activities within their respective Regions. In addition, eight Technical Commissions establish methodologies and procedures and make recommendations to the Executive Council and the Congress.

World Meteorological Congress assembles delegates of Members once every four years to determine general policies for the fulfillment of the purposes of the Organization; to consider membership of the Organization; to determine the General, Technical, Financial and Staff Regulations; to establish and coordinate the activities of constituent bodies of the Organization; to approve long-term plans and budget for the following financial period; to elect the President and Vice-Presidents of the Organization and members of



Sahar Tajbakhsh

the Executive Council; and to appoint the Secretary-General.

WMO's 6 Regional Associations include Regional Association I (Africa), Regional Association II (Asia), Regional Association III (South America), Regional Association IV (North America, Central America, and the Caribbean), Regional Association V (South-West Pacific), and Regional Association VI (Europe)

According to IMO's press release, Iran is a member of Regional Association II (Asia) a region with six seats in the Executive Council.

World Meteorological Congress elected directors of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services from India, South Korea, Japan, China and Iran. United Arab Emirates is the president of the Regional Association II.

The World Meteorological Congress elected Gerhard Adrian of Germany as President of the World Meteorological Organization for a four-year term in office, WMO website announced on Thursday.

Adrian will preside over sessions of the Congress and the Executive Council held

during his term of office and guide and coordinate WMO activities, and issue directives to the Secretary-General with respect to the fulfilment of the latter's duties.

"The WMO sets the framework for the successful cooperation of its Member States to accomplish their tasks for the well-being of societies. Fulfilling this important duty is based on the global meteorological infrastructure coordinated by WMO," said Adrian.

Celeste Saulo, Director of the Argentinean National Meteorological Service (SMN), was elected First Vice-President. Albert Martis, Director, Meteorological Department of Curaçao, was elected Second Vice-President. Agnes Lawrence Kijazi, Director General, Tanzania Meteorological Agency, was elected Third Vice-President. Petteri Taalas of Finland was re-appointed WMO Secretary-General for a further four-year-term. He has been WMO Secretary-General since 2016 and is a United Nations Climate Principal.

World Meteorological Congress 2019

The World Meteorological Congress met from 3 to 14 June to agree on future strategy and tools to help countries increase resilience to extreme weather, water, climate and other environmental shocks, to strengthen scientific observations and predictions and to close capacity gap.

The Congress takes place every four years and decides on the strategy, policies, standards, budget and office holders of the 193-member World Meteorological.

'Dam construction in Afghanistan will possibly leave Hamoun wetland dried'

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Dam construction projects on Helmand River in Afghanistan can possibly result in total dryness of Hamoun wetland in the future, southeastern Iran, deputy environment chief Masoud Tajrishi has said.

The Hamouns are transboundary wetlands on the Iran-Afghan border made up of three lakes: Hamoun-e Helmand, which is entirely in Iran, Hamoun-e Sabari on the border, and Hamoun-e Puzak, almost entirely inside Afghanistan. The three lakes are linked and fed by water from the Helmand River which starts in the Hindu Kush Mountains in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan should provide Hamoun wetland with its water right which amounts to an annual 820 million cubic meters of water, YJC quoted Tajrishi as saying on Friday.

Iran should urge Afghanistan to construct water transfer facilities to provide the wetlands with its annual water right or the wetland will face total drainage in the future, he warned.

Iran's Ministry of Energy should follow up on the issue and negotiate with the Afghan government to resolve the



problem, he concluded.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times in October 2017, Afghanistan's Ambassador to Iran Nasir Ahmad Nour explained that Afghanistan has always adhered to the agreements stating the water right of the two

countries and that four decades of conflicts and wars in the country have forced many farmers to leave their lands and no projects have got off the ground over these years.

All these times the water have been flowing into Iran and the fact that Hamoun is still dry has nothing to do with Afghanistan and Iran must look into the problem and find the reasons for the lake dryness inside the country, the ambassador said.

Based on the data published on Monday by National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization the province of Sistan-Baluchestan received 107.5 millimeters of rain in from September to April which indicates 386 percent rise compared to last water year and a 5.8 percent increase compared to the long-term averages.

And now with Hamoun and Helmand springing back to life again agriculture will be revived in the region once again.

However, it is crystal clear that without proper wetland management plans and with temperature rise during summer and decreased precipitation amounts the wetland will gain face dryness in near future.

Zero carbon 2050 pledge is too slow to address catastrophic climate change, campaigners warn

The government's pledge to reach "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050 is not drastic enough, according to environmental campaigners.

The UK is set to become the first major economy to commit to completely avoiding emissions from homes, transport, farming and industry or offsetting them by planting trees and sucking carbon dioxide (CO2) out of the atmosphere.

The amendment to the Climate Change Act has been widely welcomed as a significant milestone.

However, some environmental groups are concerned that even this pledge does not go far enough and they have raised concerns about the UK using international carbon credits to shift the burden of carbon cutting to other nations.

Craig Bennett, UK chief executive of Friends of the Earth, warned it was "still too slow to address catastrophic climate change".

He said the next prime minister must put carbon-cutting "at the center of policy-making and pull the plug on plans for more roads, runways and fracking".

Legislating for international carbon credits means the UK could pay for other countries to cut their carbon instead of reducing domestic emissions. Critics said this showed the government is not taking the issue seriously enough and could mean it shirks environmental obligations.

"It is disappointing that the government has ignored its climate advisers' recommendation to exclude carbon offsets," Mr Bennett said.

He added: "Having declared a climate emergency, parliament must act to close these loopholes."

Doug Parr, Greenpeace UK's chief scientist, also said it was a "big moment" for the climate, but added there were "questions to be asked about (the) offsetting loophole",

which has a history of failure.

"As the birthplace of the industrial revolution, it is right that the UK is the world's first major economy to commit to completely end its contribution to climate change, but trying to shift the burden to developing nations through International Carbon Credits undermines that commitment," he said.

Professor Mark Maslin, professor of climatology at University College London (UCL), said Britain should adopt a 2030 zero carbon target. He said that if there was any chance of keeping the planet from warming more than 2C, the whole world must hit zero carbon emissions by 2050.

"Britain is one of the leading countries in the fight against climate change and we must adopt a 2030 zero carbon target," he said. "This will give us 10 years to put in place win-win solutions that reduce carbon emissions, save money and make Britain a better, cleaner place to live."

Climate change activists Extinction Rebellion, who staged demonstrations in a number of British cities earlier this year, blocking parts of central London for days, were most scathing about the 2050 target, describing it as a "death sentence".

Number 10 said the move would boost public health, air quality and nature and will make the UK a leader on climate action. But it said it was "imperative" other countries follow suit.

The government will review the pledge within five years to ensure other nations are taking similarly ambitious action and that British industries are not facing unfair competition.

Lord Deben, chairman of the government's advisory Committee on Climate Change, praised the "major commitment" and said he was looking forward to cross-party consensus on the issue.

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

\$3.5m earmarked for two flood-affected provinces

The government has allocated 151 billion rials (nearly \$3.5 million) to compensate for flood damages in the two provinces of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari and Ardebil, Seyed Salman Samani, spokesman of the Interior Ministry has said.

A budget of 114 billion rials (around \$2.7 million) have been provided to renovate and reconstruct flood-stricken housing units in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, he stated, ISNA reported on Monday.

Ardebil province also received a total budget of 37 billion rials (nearly \$900,000) from the government to compensate for the losses resulting from floods and rehabilitating houses and other necessary infrastructures, he added.

تخصیص ۱۵۱ میلیارد ریال برای جبران خسارت سیل به دو استان

سید سلمان سامانی سخنگوی وزارت کشور از تخصیص ۱۵۱ میلیارد ریال بر اساس تصویب هیات وزیران برای جبران خسارت سیل به دو استان چهارمحال و بختیاری و اردبیل خبر داد. به گزارش روز دوشنبه ایسنا سامانی از اختصاص بیش از ۱۱۴ میلیارد ریال به استان چهارمحال و بختیاری به منظور جبران خسارت و بازسازی واحدهای مسکونی خسارت دیده ناشی از سیل خبر داد.

سخنگوی وزارت کشور همچنین از تصویب دیگر پیشنهاد وزارت کشور مبنی بر اختصاص ۳۷ میلیارد ریال به استان اردبیل برای جبران خسارت و بازسازی ساختمان‌ها و تاسیسات زیربنایی خسارت دیده ناشی از وقوع سیلاب‌های فصلی خبر داد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"-emia, -aemia, -hemia, -haemia"

■ **Meaning:** blood

■ **For example:** The build-up of recessive genes increases the incidence of genetically determined diseases, such as sickle cell **anemia** in humans.

PHRASAL VERB

Hear somebody out

■ **Meaning:** to listen to all of what someone wants to tell you without interrupting them

■ **For example:** Just hear me out, will you?

IDIOM

Take the bull by the horns

■ **Explanation:** to bravely or confidently deal with a difficult, dangerous, or unpleasant problem

■ **For example:** Nora decided to take the bull by the horns and organize things for herself.



Every action has a reaction. We have one planet; one chance.

Russia, Syria bomb gathering of Jabhat al-Nusra ringleaders

TEHRAN — Syrian and Russian warplanes have jointly carried out precision attacks against the positions of Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist group, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, in the northwestern province of Idlib.

A gathering of the terrorist group's ringleaders at Taftanaz military airbase in Idlib was pounded three times by Syrian and Russian aircraft on Thursday night as part of a joint operation, Sputnik news agency reported.

The report said the terrorists' hideouts in the southern areas of Khan Shaykhun, Sufuhon, Kafr Nabl, and Hass in the province were also targeted by the warplanes.

According to Press TV, the strikes came after the militants refused to honor a full ceasefire agreement brokered between Russia and Turkey late Wednesday with the aim of halting clashes between Syrian forces and militants in the area.

That agreement put on hold a Syrian government offensive to liberate Idlib, where between 10,000 and 15,000 militants are estimated to be holed up.

Militants have persisted in their stay in the



zone and refused to leave the area, launching instead numerous attacks on the outposts of the Syrian army and Russian forces. Russia and Turkey gave sharply conflict-

ing accounts on Thursday of an attack on a Turkish military outpost.

Turkey claimed one of its observation posts in Idlib province had come under deliberate attack from Syrian forces, in which three Turkish soldiers were allegedly wounded.

Moscow said the attack was carried out not by the Syrian troops, but by militants.

Russia says it is Turkey's duty to rein in the armed groups and help separate them from the Takfiri outfits, which form the backbone of the militant presence in Idlib.

Idlib remains the only large area in the hands of anti-Damascus militants after government forces managed to undo militant gains across the country and bring back almost all of the Syrian soil under government control.

In recent weeks, Syrian armed forces have been conducting counter-terrorism operations in areas surrounding Idlib.

The Syrian army has warned civilians to leave Idlib amid preparations for a final military campaign to flush terrorists out of the region.

Yemen drones target Saudi's Abha airport for second time in a week

TEHRAN — Yemen's armed forces have carried out retaliatory drone attacks on an airport in southwestern Saudi Arabia for the second time in a week.

Yemeni Qasif-2K drones targeted the airport in the Saudi province of Asir in the early hours of Friday morning, two days after a cruise missile attack by army troopers and allied fighters from Popular Committees at the strategic Saudi facility, Yemen's al-Masirah television network reported.

There have been no immediate reports of possible casualties or the extent of damage caused as a result of the attack.

A Saudi-led coalition spokesman said in a statement released by the Saudi Press Agency that the country's air missile defense systems had intercepted five Yemeni drones over the Saudi airport on Friday morning.

According to Press TV, on Wednesday, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, the spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces,

said U.S.-built surface-to-air missile systems stationed at Abha airport could not intercept the cruise missile, which he said had hit the designated target with great precision.

He noted that the missile hit the observation tower in the airport, which is about 200 kilometers north of the border with Yemen and serves domestic and regional routes, causing significant disruption to air travel.

Saree pointed out that the missile attack on Abha airport was part of retaliatory measures by Yemeni soldiers and their allies in the face of the Saudi-led coalition's crimes against Yemeni people.

Saudi Arabia also confirmed the Wednesday attack, with coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki saying in a statement that a Yemeni missile had hit the airport's arrivals hall, injuring 26 people and causing material damage.

Putin: U.S.-Russia relations getting 'worse and worse'

TEHRAN — Vladimir Putin said relations between Moscow and Washington were getting worse and worse, noting in an interview published Thursday that the current U.S. administration had imposed dozens of sanctions on Russia. Putin made his gloomy assessment ahead of a G-20 summit in Japan later this month at which he might meet U.S. President Donald Trump.

U.S.-Russia ties remain strained by everything from Syria to Ukraine as well as allegations of Russian interference in U.S. politics, which Moscow denies.

"They [our relations] are going downhill, they are getting worse and worse," Putin told the Mir TV channel, according to a Kremlin transcript.

"The current administration has approved, in my opinion, several dozen decisions on sanctions against Russia in recent years."

The Russian leader contrasted Moscow's troubled relationship with Washington with what he described as its blossoming ties with China, a deepening strategic friendship that has alarmed some U.S. policymakers.

Trump told reporters Wednesday that he would meet Putin at the G-20 in Japan, but the Kremlin said a day earlier that the idea for the meeting was "hanging in the air" and that there were no discussions on specifics yet.

Trump said he hoped the United States would have "a great relationship with Russia," but pledged to deploy 1,000 U.S. troops to Poland, a step sought by Warsaw to deter potential aggression from Russia.

Russian lawmakers said Thursday that a new U.S. military deployment to Poland would force Moscow to take retaliatory steps, Reuters reported.

Russia vows 'retaliatory strike' to new U.S. troops in Poland

TEHRAN — Russia says a new U.S. military deployment to Poland announced by President Donald Trump on Wednesday would force Moscow to take retaliatory steps.

Trump told Polish President Andrzej Duda on Wednesday that he had decided to send an additional 1,000 troops to Poland to join 4,000 forces already there.

The U.S. will also send a squadron of MQ-9 Reaper Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance drones as well, he added.

The announcement drew response from Russia, which said on Thursday that "its military is tracking these announcements very closely."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow "is analyzing the information, and is doing what is necessary so that such steps in no way threaten the Russian Federation's security."

Sergei Ryabkov, a Russian deputy foreign minister, said Trump's move probably reflected "aggressive" intentions. Russia's foreign ministry described Trump's decision for more deployment as a betrayal of Russia's core agreement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1997.

Under the deal, NATO had agreed not to permanently deploy significant military forces on the territory of new member states.

"The headquarters structures that will be set up in Poland under this reinforcement will deliver much greater potential," the Russian ministry said in a statement.

Russia, it said, could not "fail to take this into account

in its defense planning and practical activities."

"We see in this signs of preparation for further large-scale deployments," it added.

Russian parliamentarians separately reacted to the decision, with one lawmaker threatening to make Poland a target in the event of a military conflict.

"In the event of any conflict, God forbid, the territory of Poland would become a clear target for a retaliatory strike, if there was suddenly an attack on us," said Vladimir Dzhubarov, deputy head of the upper house of parliament's international affairs committee.

Another lawmaker, Vladimir Shamanov, raised concern that the U.S. drones could be capable of carrying nuclear weapons at some point, warning that this would gradually lead the world "towards a dangerous moment."

Russia has formerly warned that any increased military presence in Poland could prompt it to step up its military presence in neighboring Belarus.

UK forces tasked to focus on Russia

Meanwhile, UK forces will be shifting away from counter-terrorism work and instead concentrate on blocking what British military describes as covert operations by countries such as Russia.

Citing unnamed British officials and military sources, a BBC report said on Thursday that "the need to confront dangerous international behavior by peer adversaries is increasing."

"Under the new plan, an operation might be mount-



ed in a Baltic republic or African country in order to uncover and pinpoint Russian covert activities," the report said.

Relations between the UK and Russia hit a new low last year, after London accused Moscow of ordering a poison attack on Sergei Skripal, a former double spy, and his daughter in Salisbury in southern England last year.

Russia has repeatedly denied any involvement in the alleged attack which left the former Russian spy unconscious for weeks. President Putin also said the Skripals case benefited London more than Moscow.

Saudi crown prince's sister to go on trial in France in July

TEHRAN — Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's sister will be tried at a criminal court in France for ordering her bodyguard to beat up a workman in the capital, Paris, according to a legal source.



The source, who was not named, told AFP on Wednesday that Princess Hassa bint Salman was to be put on trial next month over the assault of a plumber in her luxury Paris apartment in September 2016.

The victim says he had been hired to carry out refurbishment work at Hassa's apartment and, when he took a photograph of the room where the work was to be done, the woman became angry and accused him of intending to sell the picture to the media, Press TV reported.

Royal outburst

Hassa, said to be in her 40s, then cursed the workman and ordered her bodyguard to beat him.

"We have to kill him, this dog. He doesn't deserve to live," she said, according to the worker's account of the incident, as reported by French newspaper Le Point.

The workman said he was punched in the face, his hands were tied, and he was forced to kiss the woman's feet during an hours-long ordeal.

He said his tools were also confiscated and he was held in the apartment for several hours before being allowed to leave.

AFP reported at the time of the incident that the workman's injuries had been so severe that he was ordered off work for eight days.

France issued an arrest warrant for Hassa in March 2018. Bint Salman's bodyguard was also charged in 2016 with armed violence, theft, issuing death threats, and holding an individual against their will.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders leaving job at end of June

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump said that White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders will leave her job at the end of the month.

Announcing her departure after three and a half years in the job, Trump tweeted that Sanders was "a very special person with extraordinary talents, who has done an incredible job".

"[Sanders is] going home to the Great State of Arkansas," he said. "I hope she decides to run for Governor of Arkansas - she would be fantastic. Sarah, thank you for a job well done!"

Trump has not immediately named a replacement for Sanders.

Sanders is one of the president's closest and most trusted White House aides and one of the few remaining who worked on his campaign.

Sanders joined the Trump campaign in February 2016. In July 2017, she took over as the top spokeswoman for the administration.

Her tenure was marked by a breakdown in regular White House press briefings and questions about the administration's credibility.

The last briefing was 94 days ago, but Trump answers questions from reporters on a near-daily basis, including two extended sessions with them on Wednesday.

Special Counsel Robert Mueller's revealed that Sanders admitted to investigators that she had made an unfounded claim that "countless" FBI agents had reached out to express support for Trump's decision to fire FBI Director James Comey in May 2017, Al Jazeera reported.

UK court sets Assange's U.S. extradition hearing for February 2020

TEHRAN — The full extradition hearing to decide whether Wikileaks founder Julian Assange should be sent to the United States to face accusations including spying charges will take place in February next year, a London court ruled on Friday.

Assange, 47, is accused by U.S. authorities of 18 charges including conspiring to hack U.S. government computers and violating an espionage law.

He is currently in a London prison after being jailed for 50 weeks for skipping bail after fleeing to the Ecuadorian embassy seven years ago to avoid extradition to Sweden for questioning in a sexual assault investigation.

Assange, dressed in a grey T-shirt and wearing black-framed glasses, appeared by videolink for the short hearing at Westminster Magistrates' Court.

As Ben Brandon, the lawyer representing the United States, ran through a summary of the accusations against him including that he had cracked a U.S. defense network password, Assange said: "I didn't break any password whatsoever", Reuters reported.

Israeli settlement products should be labeled: EU court advised

TEHRAN — A senior official of the European Union says it is his legal opinion that labels of the products from the Israeli-occupied territories must clearly show the precise origin of the products to avoid misleading consumers.

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) outlined its Advocate General Gerard Hogan's legal opinion in a statement released on Thursday.

Hogan's opinion made invalid an earlier French court's decision that had ruled otherwise. The ECJ is not obliged to follow the advice of its advocate general, but the

former Irish judge's legal opinions usually set the tone for the ruling.

In his advisory opinion, Hogan said the EU law requires that a product made on a territory occupied by the Israeli regime since 1967 be marked as produced in the settlements.

The West Bank, including the annexed East Jerusalem al-Quds as well as the Golan Heights which Israel took from Syria, are considered as Israeli-occupied by the international community.

"EU law requires, for a product originating in a territory occupied by Israel since 1967,

the indication of the geographical name of this territory and, where it is the case, the indication that the product comes from an Israeli settlement," an ECJ statement said.

According to Press TV, back in 2016, France published guidelines saying products from Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and the Israeli-held Golan Heights must carry labels making their origin quite clear. However, this was challenged by the Organization Juive Europeenne (European Jewish Organization) and Psagot, a company that runs vineyards in occupied territories.

"It is hardly surprising that some con-

sumers may regard this manifest breach of international law as an ethical consideration that influences their consumer preferences and in respect of which they may require further information," Hogan said, referring to legal judgments that Israel's settlement policy is illegal.

"The absence of the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance of a product originating in a territory occupied by Israel and, in any event, a settlement colony, might mislead the consumer as to the true country of origin or place of provenance of the food," he added.

Boris Johnson far ahead in first round of contest to replace UK PM

TEHRAN — Boris Johnson, who has pledged to deliver Brexit on Oct. 31, edged closer to power on Thursday when he won by far the most support from Conservative Party lawmakers in the first round of the contest to replace Prime Minister Theresa May.

Three years since voting 52%-48% to leave the European Union, the United Kingdom is heading towards a possible crisis over Brexit as most of the candidates vying to succeed May are prepared to leave on Oct. 31 without a deal.

But the British Parliament has indicated it will try to thwart

such a no-deal exit - a step cartoonists regularly portray as driving over a cliff and that investors warn would send shock waves through financial markets and the world economy.

Johnson, the face of the official Brexit campaign in the 2016 referendum, won the support of 114 Conservative lawmakers in the first round of the contest to replace May. A total of 313 lawmakers voted. Of the other 10 candidates in the first round, Jeremy Hunt, currently foreign minister, garnered 43 votes; Michael Gove, currently environment minister, garnered 37 votes and Dominic Raab, former

Brexit minister, won 27 votes.

Andrea Leadsom, former leader of the House of Commons, Mark Harper and Esther McVey were knocked out.

Betting markets give Johnson, who has a long record of scandals and gaffes, a 70% probability of winning the top job.

After Thursday's vote, Johnson said: "Thank you to my friends and colleagues in the Conservative & Unionist Party for your support. I am delighted to win the first ballot, but we have a long way to go."

Former Juventus boss Allegri wants year off from football

Former Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri has said he needs to recharge his batteries and will take a year off from football before returning to management.

The 51-year-old led Juventus to five consecutive Serie A titles, four Coppa Italias and two Champions League runner-up finishes in his five years in charge, but parted ways with the club at the end of the season.

"I'm going to take a year off to recharge the batteries and take my personal life back in hand," the BBC quoted Allegri as saying at an event in Milan. "The last 16 years have felt like being in a spin-dryer." Allegri began his managerial career in 2004 in Italy's fourth division and also managed AC Milan, who he led to the Serie A title in 2011, before joining Juventus in 2014.

British and Italian media have reported that Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri is close to being named as Allegri's replacement after Juventus reached an agreement in principle with the Premier League side to sign the Italian.

(Source: Reuters)

Brazil police question Neymar over alleged rape

Brazilian police questioned Neymar for five hours on Thursday over allegations he raped a woman he met through social media in a Paris hotel last month -- charges he has denied.

"The truth appears sooner or later," the world's most expensive footballer, who walked on crutches after injuring his right ankle in a pre-Copa America friendly against Qatar last week that forced him out of South America's showcase tournament, told reporters.

The footballer, aged 27, arrived at the police station shortly before 4:00 pm local time (1900 GMT) and left at around 9:00 pm.

Neymar's appearance comes after Brazilian police said Thursday they had filed a defamation suit against his rape accuser for insinuating the force was corrupt.

During an interview with television channel SBT this week, Najila Trindade said: "The police are bought, aren't they? Or am I crazy?", in response to questions over the police investigation of an alleged theft of a tablet device from her home that contained a short video she claims has conclusive evidence she was assaulted.

The ugly affair has dominated headlines in Brazil as it prepares to host the Copa America and tarnished the festive atmosphere ahead of Friday's opening game between the Selecao and Bolivia.

Neymar, who plays for Paris Saint-Germain, previously gave a statement to Rio de Janeiro police over WhatsApp messages posted on his Instagram account that featured intimate photos of Trindade.

He told police that an assistant and a technician were responsible for sharing the messages and photos. TV Globo reported previously. More than 60 percent of Brazilians believe Neymar is innocent, according to a recent poll of 2,071 people last week.

Only 14 percent think he is guilty, Parana Pesquisas said.

(Source: AFP)

Ibrahimovic tops MLS salary rankings

Zlatan Ibrahimovic is the highest-paid player in Major League Soccer earning \$7.2 million per year, according to figures released by the MLS Players Association.

The 37-year-old Swedish star, who joined the Los Angeles Galaxy last season, earned more than double the \$3.5 million paid to former Manchester United team-mate Wayne Rooney, who also joined MLS in 2018. Rooney earned \$3.5 million from his contract with D.C. United, according to the MLSPA figures, which details salary and compensation for all MLS players under contract as of June 1, 2019.

Since arriving in Los Angeles, Ibrahimovic has scored 33 goals in 39 games while adding 13 assists.

The second highest-paid player in 2018 was Ibrahimovic's former Galaxy team-mate Giovanni Dos Santos. The Mexican striker earned \$6.5 million. Toronto's two US internationals Michael Bradley and Jozy Altidore were next on the earning list, receiving \$6.43 million and \$6.33 million respectively.

Los Angeles FC striker Carlos Vela, who is leading the scoring charts this season, is the fifth highest-paid player with \$6.3 million, putting him ahead of Chicago Fire's former Germany international Bastian Schweinsteiger (\$5.6 million).

According to the MLSPA, 54 of the 691 players in MLS are earning at least \$1 million a year, while non-designated players earned an average of \$345,867, a 13.3 percent increase on 2018.

(Source: Goal)

OFFICIAL: Milan promote Maldini

Milan have officially promoted club legend Paolo Maldini to the role of technical director.

Maldini was previously Sporting Strategy and Development Director, but Leonardo's exit has enabled him to take a front-row seat on Milan's new-look board.

"Paolo embodies that quality and those values that are the building blocks of our club," CEO Ivan Gazidis told the club's official website. "I am happy to have him at the helm of our Sporting Area. With him, we will be able to build a modern club, formed by professionals of the highest quality."

"It will be a journey we will pursue together to achieve a challenging and compelling project, one which will require great energy and dedication. I am confident Paolo will be able to project his experience, his vision and his leadership."

"Paolo is an integral part of AC Milan and knows the way to success. He will be an important point of reference for everyone."

The 50-year-old made a record 902 appearances for the Diavolo between 1985 and 2009, winning 26 trophies during that time.

He will work alongside Gazidis and former Milan teammate Zvonimir Boban, who has been installed as Chief Football Officer. The Rossoneri are also expected to appoint Ricky Massara and Marco Giampaolo as their new sporting director and Coach imminently.

(Source: Football Italia)

Raptors dethrone Warriors to capture first NBA crown

An upstart Toronto Raptors squad dethroned defending champions Golden State on Thursday, defeating the Warriors 114-110 to win the NBA Finals and capture the first crown by a club from outside the United States.

Kyle Lowry and Pascal Siakam each scored 26 points while Kawhi Leonard and reserve Fred VanVleet both had 22 as Toronto won the best-of-seven series four games to two.

Leonard was named the NBA Finals Most Valuable Player for the second time in his career after the first in 2014 with San Antonio, which traded him to Toronto last July.

"Last summer I was going through a lot. I just kept working hard and had my mind set on this goal right here," Leonard said. "This is why I play basketball. This is what I work hard for. I'm glad to see it all pay off."

The Raptors became the first Canadian club to win a major North American sports title since the 1993 Toronto Blue Jays captured Major League Baseball's World Series.

"It means a lot for our city and the country and for these players," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said, who didn't mind not winning it at home. "You get the win and you're just happy you got it and celebrate that fact."

The Raptors spoiled the Warriors' farewell appearance at Oracle Arena. Golden State's home since 1971 will be replaced by a new \$1 billion venue in San Francisco next season.

"To be able to celebrate with these guys is awesome," Siakam said, the flag of his home-



land Cameroon draped around his shoulders.

"It's a dream to have achieved this," Spanish center Marc Gasol said. "I've never worked so hard."

Klay Thompson scored 30 points to lead the Warriors but left the game with a torn left knee ligament late in the third quarter after landing awkwardly on his left leg.

It was the latest setback for an injury-hit Golden State team that was already without two-time NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Kevin Durant, who returned in game five Monday after being sidelined for a month

only to suffer a ruptured right Achilles tendon.

"Tough, tough way to go out," Curry said. "I think a lot has been proven about who we are as a team and the adversity we faced throughout the playoff run."

"The DNA and character we have on this team, I wouldn't bet against us being back on this stage next year and going forward."

Andre Iguodala added 22 points for the Warriors, Stephen Curry had 21 and Draymond Green contributed 11 points, 18 rebounds and 13 assists.

"Everybody on this team played with a

lot of heart," Green said. "We just came up a little short."

Golden State had a final shot to win trailing 111-110 but Curry missed a 3-pointer and Green called a timeout when the team had none, setting up three final free throws by Leonard to seal the victory.

The Warriors failed in their bid for a third consecutive title and to become the first team in 50 years to win four titles in five seasons.

Thompson goes down

Golden State led 80-76 when disaster struck. Thompson landed awkwardly on his left leg on a missed shot and went to the floor writhing in pain, being helped to the locker room.

Thompson turned back and returned to the court, a standing crowd screaming with delight to see him sink two free throws, giving the Warriors their biggest lead at 85-80.

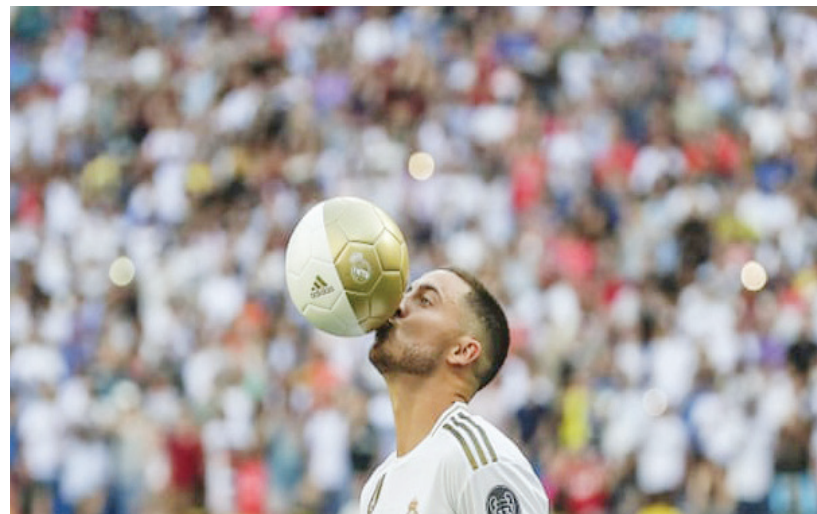
But after he was seen limping, Thompson was removed and later left the arena on crutches. VanVleet, who had 12 points in the fourth quarter, sank two 3-pointers and his three free throws with 5:39 remaining pulled the Raptors level at 99-99.

VanVleet struck again from 3-point range and Serge Ibaka scored off a rebound to put Toronto ahead 106-101 with 3:03 remaining.

Green's 3-pointer pulled the Warriors within 108-105 and after trading free throws, Cousins scored on a layup to pull Golden State within 109-108 with 46 seconds remaining.

(Source: AFP)

Eden Hazard fulfils his dream of a lifetime with Real Madrid move



The Garden of Eden moved to the Bernabéu. Eden Hazard took a stroll around the grass at his new home, kicking gold and white footballs into a crowd that was bigger than those that came to see some La Liga matches last season, and then said that he had been waiting for this since he was a kid in La Louvière. Now, at last, the time had come and it was the "right time", he said, having left Chelsea with the Europa League -- even though he admitted this was a move that he had thought he might make 12 months ago.

Still, better late than never. And Hazard insisted it was not too late. "I'm 28 years old, I think I can go to 32, 33 years. It's a good moment," he said. Yet it has been a long time in coming. "I dreamed of this moment when I was very little, ever since I started playing football in the garden with Thorgan, Kylian, Ethan," Hazard said as he sat in the press room at the Bernabéu, white kit now swapped for grey suit.

In the front row as he talked, his brothers sat alongside his mother, Carine, and father, Thierry. All of them are footballers; only the 28-year-old was asked if he was a galactico. "No," he said. "Not yet, but I hope to be one."

So do Madrid. His presentation underlined this; it revealed, in fact, that he is already being treated as such, the first at the club for five years. That said, he did admit that he hasn't been given the number he wanted. "Through Kovacic I asked Luka Modric if I could have the No 10, but he said no, so I'll have to find another one," Hazard joked. "The number doesn't matter now."

The shirt he was handed -- on sale in the club shop for more than €100 (£89) -- had gold lettering on the back but no number. Madrid has missed events like these, that sense that they dominate the summer even when they do not dominate the season.

(Source: Guardian)

Horror crash puts Chris Froome in 'intensive care'



Four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome will miss this year's race after sustaining "multiple serious injuries," including a fractured leg, in a horrific crash during a practice ride in France Wednesday.

"He underwent successful surgery last night but remains in intensive care," a spokesman for Team Ineos, who Froome rides for, told CNN Sport.

The 34-year-old Froome, who won cycling's most prestigious race in 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017, was competing in the Criterium du Dauphine near Roanne, central France, when he crashed at speed ahead of the fourth stage time trial.

Froome was initially assessed at Roanne Hospital before being airlifted to St. Etienne Hospital where he underwent a six-hour operation which "went very well," according to team doctor Richard Usher.

"Chris woke up this morning and was reviewed by the intensive care consultants and the orthopaedic specialist who operated on him and they're both very happy with

his progress to date," Usher continued.

"Chris will remain in hospital for the next few days for observation, but he is already actively engaging in discussing his rehabilitation options, which is very encouraging."

Speaking on Radio 5 Live's BeSpoke podcast, Team Ineos general manager Dave Brailsford said his lead rider wouldn't be able to defend his yellow jersey at the Tour de France.

"He's not in great shape. He's in intensive care," said Brailsford. "There are crashes and bad crashes and this was a bad crash. It's a very serious accident. Clearly, he won't be at the start of the Tour de France."

"It wasn't just a serious accident, it was also a freak one."

"It sounds like he was at the foot of the descent," Brailsford told Cycling News. "It's obviously very gusty today and he took his hands off the bars to blow his nose and the wind has taken his front wheel. He's hit a wall at 60km/h or something like that."

(Source: CNN)

Juventus move ends Sarri's unhappy marriage with Chelsea

Maurizio Sarri is set to return to Italy to take the vacant managerial role at Juventus and bring the curtain down on a fretful one-year stay at Chelsea.

Sarri met his targets by returning Chelsea to the Champions League via a third-placed finish in the Premier League and winning the Europa League, claiming his first major trophy as a coach in the process.

However, a failure to connect with the Chelsea support, public criticism of his players and a refusal to adapt his style of play meant Sarri was always unlikely to hang around for a second season at Stamford Bridge.

The 60-year-old former banker becomes the ninth full-time manager to leave Chelsea since Roman Abramovich took charge of the club in 2003.

Yet, for once the Russian didn't wield the axe and waited instead until Juventus agreed to pay the compensation to free Sarri from the final two years of his contract on Thursday, according to reports in England and Italy.

The Italian champions are keen on the brand of football Sarri imposed during three years at Napoli when only Juventus' remarkable consistency prevented the Neapolitans a first league title since the days when Diego Maradona graced the San Paolo pitch.

However, Sarri failed to transport that free-flowing football to Chelsea, despite making midfielder Jorginho his first signing.

After a brilliant start to the season that saw Sarri's men



keep pace with Premier League champions Manchester City and Champions League winners Liverpool, Chelsea fans soon rebelled at a ponderous possession game with little cutting edge. After a 2-0 defeat at Arsenal in January, Sarri labelled his players "very difficult to motivate".

Worse was to come as a 4-0 thrashing at Bournemouth was followed by a 6-0 demolition by Manchester City -- Chelsea's heaviest defeat in 28 years.

The players soon started rebelling too. Goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga refused to be substituted towards the end of the League Cup final to stay on the field for a penalty shootout, which Chelsea lost to City in February.

Supporters also voiced their frustration, calling for Sarri's sacking, during a controversial 2-1 win at relegated Cardiff a month later.

Sarri, though, did manage to end on a high as Chelsea lost just one of their last eight Premier League games while the other contenders for a top-four finish stumbled towards the end of the season.

Eden Hazard then bade farewell in fitting fashion by scoring twice in a 4-1 rout of Arsenal in the Europa League final to ensure Chelsea again ended the season with a trophy despite the turmoil.

Yet, that will be an even tougher test for Sarri's successor without Hazard, who joined Real Madrid earlier this week for a fee in excess of 100 million euros (\$113 million).

Chelsea currently cannot recruit a replacement with the club serving a two-window transfer ban handed down by FIFA. The club's record goalscorer Frank Lampard is the favourite to return to Stamford Bridge after just one season in management at Derby County.

Lampard, 40, led the Rams to the Championship playoff final where they fell just short of a return to the Premier League.

(Source: Eurosport)

Iran among top 20 in FIFA ranking

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran national football team climbed one spot to make a rare appearance for an Asian team in the top 20 in the latest edition of the FIFA World Ranking.

Iran moved up to 20th place following a 5-0 victory over Syria in Tehran in a friendly match.

Team Melli also drew 1-1 with South Korea at the Seoul World Cup Stadium on Tuesday.

Marc Wilmots's team are preparing for the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifications which begins in September.

Except for Uzbekistan replacing Syria as Asia's 10th highest ranked team, Asia's other top 10 from the April rankings remained unchanged, with Japan, Korea Republic and Australia and Qatar completing the top five.

Japan dropped two spots to 28th while Korea Republic were unchanged at 37th.

Australia moved down two spots to 43rd while AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 winners Qatar were unchanged at 55th.

Belgium, France, Brazil and England are unchanged at the top of the rankings.

There were plenty of success stories elsewhere, too, with the likes of Austria (26th, up 8), Northern Ireland (28th, up 5), Czech Republic (41st, up 7), Hungary (42nd, up 9), Armenia (97th, up 9) and Malaysia (159, up 9) racing up the Ranking. There was also reason to celebrate for Senegal (22nd, up 1) and Kosovo (121st, up 6), both of whom reached their highest position to date.

The next FIFA World Ranking will be published on 25 July 2019.



Ex-Persepolis coach Denizli takes charge of Tractor Sazi



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Former Persepolis coach Mustafa Denizli has been appointed as new head coach of Iranian football club Tractor Sazi.

The 70-year-old coach will lead the Tabriz based football team in Iran Professional League (IPL) new season.

Denizli spent two seasons in two separate stints at Persepolis (2006-07 and 2011-12). He is Tractor Sazi's second

Turkish coach after Ertugrul Saglam who coached the Iranian team last year.

Denizli is the only coach in history to win Turkey's Super League title with Fenerbahce, Galatasaray and Besiktas.

Former Bursaspor coach Irfan Buz was also in the frame to succeed Belgian coach Georges Leekens.

Under tutelage of Leekens, the Iranian team failed to book a place in the 2020 AFC Champions League.

Ex-Inter coach Stramaccioni signs for Esteghlal



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Andrea Stramaccioni has signed a two-year contract with Iranian football club Esteghlal.

The 43-year-old coach has signed a two-year contract with option for a third worth €1.6m per year.

The Italian tactician best known for his spells in charge of Inter and Udinese.

He had more fascinating adventures in recent years, working at Panathinaikos

and Sparta Prague.

Stramaccioni has replaced German coach Winfried Schaefer, who was sacked from his role following his poor results in late April.

The eight-time Iran Pro League champions finished third in the 2018-19 season, with Sepahan second and arch-rivals Persepolis completing a hat-trick of league titles.

Esteghlal failed to book a place at the 2019 AFC Champions League Round of 16 but will take their place in the 2020 edition.

Farhad Majidi officially named Iran U23 football team coach

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Ex-Esteghlal coach has been finally named as head coach of Iran's U-23 football team.

He was named as head coach of Iran Olympic team on Monday but the Iran's Ministry of Sports and Youth and National Olympic Committee (NOC) expressed their dissatisfaction with the way of football federation for choosing him as a coach and called it disappointing.

After a few days, the consensus was reached on him and Majidi announced his provisional squad for the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020.

Majidi, 43, replaced Zlatko Kranjcar, who was fired as



head coach of Iran U23 football team in early May after one year in charge.

The Persians earned a spot in the AFC U23 Championship 2020 Final in late March under coaching of the 62-year-old Croat.

The 2020 AFC U23 Championship will be held in Thailand from Jan. 8 to 26.

The top three teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2020 Summer Olympics men's football tournament in Japan as the AFC representatives.

Iran, a powerhouse of the Asian football, have not been in the Olympics since the 1976 games in Munich.

Shaikh Salman sends message to AFC U-20 Futsal C'ship participants

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) President, Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, has wished all 12 teams the very best at the 2019 AFC U-20 Futsal Championship in Tabriz, Iran.

The focus of Asian futsal will be on hosts Iran as they kicked off title defense against Hong Kong in Group A at the Pour Sharifi Indoor Stadium on Friday.

Standing in their way are 11 of the most promising sides on the Continent, who will compete for the trophy from June 14 to 22

having sealed their final spots after a tough qualifying campaign that showcased the development of Asian futsal.

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa said: "The AFC is resolute in our commitment to stage top level competitions for our Member Associations and the growth in technical ability and tactical maturity of Asian futsal teams is a clear example of the progress of the sport and of our competitions."

"This is the first time we have introduced the qualifying program for age-group futsal,



which once again showcased the growing standards of our Member Associations and I have no doubts that we will witness some compelling action which will excite and enthuse our fans and I wish all 12 teams the very best."

The 12 teams were drawn into four groups with the top two sides advancing into the quarter-finals.

All 20 matches will be played at the Pour Sharifi Indoor Stadium in Tabriz.

(Source: the-afc)

Real sign 'Japanese Messi' Kubo from FC Tokyo

Japanese striker Takefusa Kubo joined Real Madrid on Friday, with the Spanish La Liga club hailing the 18-year-old as "one of the most promising youngsters in world football".

Details of the deal were not disclosed but Spanish newspaper Marca said Real have paid FC Tokyo a two million euro (£1.78 million) transfer fee, while Kubo was expected to have signed a five-year contract.

"Takefusa Kubo will come in to strengthen the Castilla ranks next season," La Liga side Real said in a statement on their website.

"A technically gifted and hugely talented attacking midfielder, he possess wonderful vision, quick feet and has an eye for goal."

Kubo, who made his Japan debut against El Salvador earlier this month, impressed for table-topping J League side FC Tokyo.

He is currently in Brazil with the rest of Hajime

Moriyasu's Japan squad preparing for the Copa America, which begins later on Friday. Samurai Blue's first game is against Chile on Monday.

Kubo's arrival in Madrid will not be his first taste of Spanish soccer, having joined Barcelona's famed La Masia youth academy aged nine.

Nicknamed the 'Japanese Messi', Kubo was earmarked for a future at the Nou Camp but returned to Japan after Barcelona were found guilty of youth transfer breaches and handed a 14-month transfer ban by FIFA.

Real Madrid, under returning boss Zinedine Zidane, are making sweeping changes following a disappointing, trophy-less campaign last season.

Kubo joins the likes of Belgian playmaker Eden Hazard, striker Luka Jovic and defender Ferland Mendy in making moves to the Santiago Bernabeu in recent weeks.

(Source: Reuters)



Iran's Abedini takes bronze at Asian Fencing Championships

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Mojtaba Abedini from Iran claimed a bronze medal on day two of the Asian Fencing Championships in Chiba, Japan.

The Iranian fencer secured a bronze medal in the sabre event alongside South Korean Ha Han-sol at the Chiba Port Arena.



The gold medal went to Korean representative Oh Sang-uk who defeated Wang Shi from China.

Action in the men's sabre and women's epee took place on Friday, while the men's epee and women's foil will be on Saturday.

Men and women's team events in the sabre, foil and epee will then be held on the final three days of the event, which concludes on Tuesday (June 18).

Alireza Beiranvand ready to move at summer

Iran national football team and Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand is going to move to a European big club this summer.

After his heroics at the 2018 FIFA World Cup, where he famously denied Cristiano Ronaldo from the penalty spot, Beiranvand was tipped to make the move to Europe but opted to stay at Persepolis, where he has since helped the Reds reach the final of the AFC Champions League and emerge champions of the most recent Persian Gulf Pro League campaign.

Now that there is little more he can achieve at Persepolis, especially with the club already eliminated from this year's ACL, the time could be nigh for the 1.94-metre custodian to take the next challenge of his career.

Ali Daei, Mehdi Mahdavia, Ali Karimi and Andranik Teymourian are just some of the famous Iranian names to have gone on to star in Europe, but Beiranvand has the chance to be the first in his position to really fly the flag for his country — perhaps even in Serie A where he would be reacquainted with Ronaldo.

(Source: Fox Sports Asia)

Lazio return to Azmoun after Wesley failure

After Lazio's failure to sign Club Brugge forward Wesley Moraes, after being pipped to the signing by Premier League side Aston Villa, the Biancocelesti have returned to yet another new name for the attack: Sardar Azmoun.

Azmoun has been linked to Lazio for the past couple of summers and sporting director Igli Tare is clearly a big fan of the Iranian.

Azmoun has played for Rubin Kazan in the past two summers but is now a player of Zenit St Petersburg and therefore you would expect that he would sell for more than if Lazio had purchased him a season or two ago.

CittaCeleste report that Tare's interest in the Iranian is greater than that in Atalanta forward Andrea Petagna and, therefore, Lazio may have already found their alternative to signing Wesley in the attack.

(Source: CittaCeleste)

Persepolis move up at Club World Ranking

TASNIM — Iran's Persepolis football teams moved up at the Club World Ranking.

The Iranian team have climbed one spot up to 174th place with 3578 points.

Zob Ahan are the second Iranian team in the ranking, The Isfahan-based football team remain at 248th place with 2874.

Esteghlal are third in 290th with 2567 points and Sepahan have moved up one place to 522nd with 1366 points.

Clubworldranking.com is a weekly ranking system of the best soccer teams, top scorers and coaches in the world, based on match results over the past 52 weeks.

Four Iranian teams eye Vahid Amiri: report

Four Iranian football clubs have lined up to sign Trabzonspor winger Vahid Amiri.

Amiri joined the Turkish football club from Persepolis last season but failed to meet expectations.

The 31-year-old player has been linked with a move to the Iranian clubs.

Persepolis are going to sign Amiri, while Sepahan, Esteghlal and Tractor Sazi have shown their interest in signing the player.

Amiri was a member of Iran national football team in the 2018 World Cup and 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

(Source: Gazetedamga)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The most deserving person is he who can punish the guilty, but shows indulgence and forgiveness.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

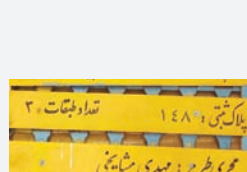
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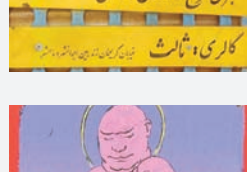
Seyhun Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of photos and sets of installation by Fereshteh Shadi. The exhibition titled "Wishes Turned into Dust" will run until June 26 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.



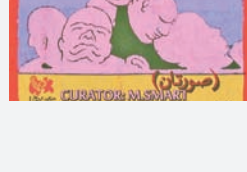
Artland Gallery is displaying paintings and sculptures by a group of artists, including Nasser Ovissi, Bahram Dabiri, Hekmat Rahmani, Arash Lahiji and Ali Khaleq, in an exhibition named "The Role of the Cow".



The exhibit runs until June 25 at the gallery located at 4 Safa Alley, Kachui St. in the Evin neighborhood. Sets of installation and paintings by Mehdi Mashayekhi are on display in an exhibition at Saless Gallery.



The exhibit named "Brick, Cement and Some Other Materials" runs until June 19 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan Ave.



An exhibition of paintings and drawings by a group of artists, including Kian Vatan, Farrok Mahdavi, Sadra Bani-Asadi, Shahla Hosseini and Sina Chupani, is currently underway at Homa Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Faces" runs until June 20 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

Photo



Photos by Ruzbeh Ruzbehani are on display in an exhibition at Atbin Gallery. The exhibit titled "But You Weren't There" will run until June 25 at the gallery located at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.

Painting



Deilaman Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Masud Sadeddin.



The exhibit named "Rapture in the Moment" runs until July 12 at the gallery that can be found at 50 Purmeshkati St. off Shariati Ave.



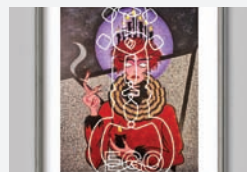
A collection of paintings by Elham Azimi is on view in an exhibition at Mojdeh Gallery.



The exhibit entitled "Patchwork Identity" will run until June 21 at the gallery located at No. 27, 18th Alley off North Allameh Blvd. in the Saadatabad neighborhood.



Nushin Sheikhzadeh, Ramtin Alavi, Maryam Farid, Azadeh Mirza-Aqatabar and Metanar Homairad are showcasing their latest paintings in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery.



The exhibition will be running until June 20 at the gallery, which can be found at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.



An exhibition of paintings by Saeid Emdadian, Homa Tavakoli, Shamsi Yari and several other artists is underway at Haft Samar Gallery.

The exhibit titled "The Friend's Home" runs until June 19 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motahari Ave.

Negar Gallery is host to an exhibition of paintings by Saeideh Aalikhani.

Entitled "Breath", the exhibit will run until June 19 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.

Finnish artists Carin Bengts, Iina Heiskanen display works at Tehran gallery

TEHRAN — Shirin Gallery in Tehran is playing host to an exhibition of artworks by Finnish artists Carin Bengts and Iina Heiskanen.

Bengts who creates her works based on light and shadows is showcasing a collection of her latest paintings at the exhibition titled "Rare Tranquility from Finland", the gallery has announced.

"Light, shadows and their different shades have always fascinated me," she wrote in a statement for the exhibition.

She said that her big passion is to observe and added, "I enjoy seeing a beautiful light on, for example, a leaf that glitters on a teacup or reflects on a table surface, and the shades, glitter and reflections on the shadow side of them. Particularly fascinating is how the color of light changes the mood."

"The motifs in my paintings are moods. I mostly paint the light and the shadows that I have studied in my immediate surroundings: interiors from our home or my studio, exteriors from our garden and the view of our hometown."

The showcase is also displaying a collection of Heiskanen's woodcuts, prints of pictures made by pressing shaped pieces of wood and a coloring substance onto paper.

In her statement for the exhibit, she wrote, "During the last couple of years, I have been working with the themes of time and the duration of it by concentrating my eye on the world of shadows."

"I have been collecting shadows of artworks and artifacts as well as their audiences. I have developed these images into independent works on paper. Shadows of 3-D objects are transformed into figure plans. Taken out from their original context, the images don't show the origin of the artwork but something new."

"In this world of shadows, I'm interested in the idea that the shadows are not meant to be observed but are something which makes us experience the space around us and the passing of time. Darkness as a metaphor of the passing of time is inspiring and even mystical. The silence of the shadows and their immateriality is transformed into images on paper. The nature of the works is half abstract, and in the end, it is not essential to know the origin of the pictures. They are something in between things."

The exhibition will run until June 26 at the gallery that can be found at No. 5, 13th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



"Interior" by Carin Bengts.

Turkmenistan to organize cultural festival in Tehran

TEHRAN — Turkmenistan will organize a cultural festival in Tehran from June 16 to 18.

Turkmenistan Culture Minister Atagely Shamuradov is scheduled to attend an opening ceremony, which will be held at Vahdat Hall on Sunday, Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) announced on Thursday.

Groups of Turkmen dancers and musicians will give performances during the festival.

Exhibitions, which are scheduled to be organized at the Iranian Artists Forum, will showcase artworks by Turkmen artists.

In addition, Turkmen costumes and handicrafts will be on view at showcases at the forum.

"Ruhnama" (The Book of the Soul), a book written by Saparmurat Niyazov, the president of Turkmenistan from 1990 to 2006, will be introduced in a special meeting, which is to be organized at the National Library and Archives of Iran.

The forum will also host workshops and meetings which will be organized by a group of Turkmen and Iranian artists on Monday.

A lineup of movies by Turkmen filmmakers will also be screened during the festival, which will end with a roundtable on the Silk Road at the Sadi Hall of the Milad Tower.



Turkmen artists perform traditional dances at a gala in Beijing, June 23, 2018. (China Daily)

Books on child abuse prevention published in Persian

TEHRAN — Four books to teach young children how to resist uncomfortable touching have been published in Persian, Iranian publisher Nardeban announced on Thursday.

"It's MY Body" by Lory Britain is one of the books. It discusses the different types of touching and offers advice on how to react to unwanted touching.

Another book is "Good Touch Bad Touch" by Teresa Connor, which is for parents and grandparents to use as a tool to talk to their child ages 3-10 about proper and improper touches.

The book also helps educate children to be aware of the things perpetrators do when grooming a child to be a victim of abuse. It



A combination photo shows front covers of four books Nardeban published in Persian to teach young children how to resist uncomfortable touches.

doesn't scare the child but educates them to be aware and what to do if they are approached or touched improperly.

"This book isn't explicit in any way and leaves the door open for further discussion as the parents see fit," Connor wrote in a preface to the book.

"It is my hope to prevent children from becoming a victim like I was and not have to go through the things I've had to deal with in life. I will be happy to save one child," she added.

The other books are "Some Secrets Should Never Be Kept" by Jayneen Sanders and "Your Body Belongs to You" by Cornelia Maude Spelman.

"Some Secrets Should Never Be Kept"

suitable for children aged 3 to 12 years is a beautifully illustrated children's picture book that sensitively broaches the subject of keeping children safe from inappropriate touching.

This book is an invaluable tool for parents, caregivers, teachers and healthcare professionals to broach the subject of safe and unsafe touching in a non-threatening and age-appropriate way.

In simple, reassuring language, the author of "Your Body Belongs to You" explains that a child's body is his or her own; that it is all right for kids to decline a friendly hug or kiss, even from someone they love; and that you can still be friends even if you don't want a hug now.

More Sherlock Holmes stories come to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN — More Sherlock Holmes short stories have recently been published in four collections in Persian by Hermes Publications in Tehran.

Created by British writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in 1887, Sherlock Holmes is a fictional private detective who is known for his proficiency with observation, forensic science and logical reasoning.

Karim Emami is the translator of the stories, which have been selected from among 56 short stories from

the books entitled "The Silver Blaze", "The Yellow Face", "A Scandal in Bohemia" and "The Golden Pince-Nez".

Each book contains six short stories narrated by Holmes' friend and biographer Dr. Watson. "The Red-Headed League", "The Final Problem", "The Five Orange Pips", "The Man with the Twisted Lip" and "The Greek Interpreter" are among the stories.

Sherlock Holmes stories, which are very popular among Iranian book readers, have been previously published in Persian by various publishers.



A combination photo shows front covers of Persian copies of Sherlock Holmes stories published by Hermes in Tehran.

Investigation begins into supposed voice of Frida Kahlo

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Frida Kahlo's voice may have finally been unearthed, say researchers at Mexico's National Sound Library.

Library officials say it would be the first record of the Mexican artist's voice if confirmed.

The director of the Frida Kahlo Museum, Hilda Trujillo, told The Associated Press on Thursday that "there's still a long way to go" to verify the voice in question.

"I personally think that the art world has to be very strict in its judgment and can't rush to assumptions," Trujillo said.

Investigations will involve sound library officials, engineers, audio experts and even still-living sources. Trujillo said she is optimistic that there are still "enough elements to do a rigorous analysis."

The 90-second audio clip from a 1950s pilot episode of the Mexican radio program "The Bachelor" consists of a woman describing Kahlo's former husband and painting partner, Diego Rivera.

"He's a large child, massive, with a friendly face and sad



In this April 14, 1939 file photo, painter and surrealist Frida Kahlo, who was the wife of noted Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, poses at her home in Mexico City. (AP Photo/File)

look," the woman's voice says. "His bulging, dark, intelligent and big eyes are difficultly detailed."

Kahlo is not directly identified by the narrator, but her voice is introduced as "she who no longer exists." Library officials estimate that the program was released in 1955 or 1956, a year or two after Kahlo died.

The voice is notable for its light and smooth tone, which contradicts previously held assumptions of the artist.

"I would have imagined that it would be a bit deeper and worn out," Trujillo told AP. She noted that Kahlo was very sick at the end of her life and was a heavy smoker and drinker.

Pavel Granados, director of the National Sound Library, said Wednesday in announcing the discovery of the recording that Kahlo's voice has been one of the most sought after voices within the library's archive, which contains 600,000 files.

He said researchers will try to confirm that the voice belongs to Kahlo by going through 1,300 more tapes from "The Bachelor."