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Iran cannot stick to nuclear deal unilaterally: Rouhani

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WB sees the impact of U.S. sanctions on Iran 'wane' in 2020-21

TEHRAN — The World Bank (WB) in its latest world economic outlook report "Global Economic Prospects", predicts a 0.9 percent growth of gross domestic product (GDP) for Iran in 2020, indicating that the impact of the U.S. sanctions will ease in the mentioned year.

The bank predicts a -4.5 percent growth for the country's GDP in 2019 but expects it to experience one percent

of GDP growth in 2021.

"In Iran, the impact of U.S. sanctions is projected to peak this year, with growth resuming in 2020," the report reads.

Meanwhile, global growth has also been downgraded to 2.6 percent, 0.3 percentage below the previous forecasts, reflecting weaker-than expected international trade and investment at the start of the year. →4

U.S. grants Iraq new Iran sanctions waiver: source

(AFP) — The United States has granted Iraq another 90-day waiver to continue with vital energy imports from neighboring Iran despite re-imposed sanctions, a government source said Saturday.

The extension came after "long discussions" with Washington ahead of a looming deadline on a previous extension

granted in December, the official, close to the negotiations, told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The talks came amid spiking tensions between Iraq's two closest allies -- the U.S. and Iran -- following a twin attack on tankers in the Persian Gulf that U.S. President Donald Trump has blamed on Tehran. →2

Yemen army says missiles can hit Tel Aviv

TEHRAN — The spokesman for Yemeni Air Force said their missiles can reach Tel Aviv. General Abdallah Jafari said the equation of war has changed, and the Saudi-Emirati coalition will soon have to stop the war and the blockade of Yemen. "The Ansarullah's statement with regard to the existence of the targets list have

been thoroughly monitored for targeting 300 targets in the invading countries" He said in talk to Mirat Aljazeera.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has launched new airstrikes on Yemen's capital and the northwestern province of Hajjah after the Houthis called for "serious talks" to reach a peace agreement. →13



PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

London's costly mistake in following U.S. foreign policy

United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt once again accused Iran of being behind the explosions off the port of Fujairah in the Gulf of Oman.

He has claimed that Iran is "almost certainly" responsible for the attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman, and the operation was carried out by a branch of Iran military force and no other governmental or non-governmental state can be responsible for this incident. Undoubtedly, U.K. government is trying to falsely accuse Iran of the attacks, to help Trump administration in spreading anti-Iran propaganda. It seems that London is blindly following Trump's high-risk strategies in the Middle East, but 10 Downing Street (headquarters of U.K. government) has already paid a big price for following U.S. games. Taking part in Yemen War and starting Brexit, majorly supported by Trump, are only a small part of these costs.

U.K. will pay a high price for blindly supporting White House war-mongering and anti-Iran policies. U.K. support for U.S. regional strategies is surely based on Britain's traditional policy to stay in the corners and take a share of the final profits, but this time, given the upcoming crisis, it seems that London will not receive the benefits it seeks.

Since 2000, U.K. citizens have been severely burdened by high prices that they had to pay for government projects such as supporting George W. Bush in Afghanistan and Iraq war, constant interference in Persian Gulf and constructing military bases in this region, supporting Saudi Arabia regime in attacking Yemen, supporting the Zionist regime in many attacks against Palestinian resistance groups and giving large amounts of money and arms to terrorist and Takfiri groups such as ISIS and Al-Nusra Front.

U.K., with following Trump's regional policies will be incurring just more high costs on the country and will surely become the "complete loser" of this game. →13

Intel. community reluctant to accept U.S. hypothesis to boost military presence in ME: Zaccara

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Referring to hasty US accusations against Iran after the suspicious attacks on oil tankers in Oman Sea, Qatar University research assistant says international community is reluctant to accept US hypothesis aiming to boost its military presence in the Middle East.

While the Japanese Prime Minister was visiting Iran after 4 decades and many expected even more reduction of the tensions in the region due to his visit, in another suspicious and provocative move two large tankers were hit by explosions in the Sea of Oman on Thursday, a move that can intensify the tensions more than before.

Following the attack, US Secretary of State

Mike Pompeo hastily accused Iran of carrying out the attacks without providing any evidence to back up his accusation.

In this regard, Iran rejected US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's anti-Iran accusations, saying the suspicious nature of the recent attacks on two oil tankers in the Sea of Oman is "not funny or ridiculous but alarming".

To know more about the issue we reached out to Dr. Luciano Zaccara, research assistant professor in Qatar University.

■ The US administration has hastily accused Iran of being behind the attacks on two oil tankers in Oman Sea. How do you assess validity of the accusations?

A: After one month of the previous incident in Fujairah port, which so far has not been clarified, and with the lack of proper evidence apart from a released video which actually is not demonstrating anything, I believe the US administration is rushing too much to reach the conclusions that only Iran can be behind those attacks. It is evident that the current US government, mainly Bolton and Pompeo, is trying to make a case against Iran, with the objective to justify the withdrawal from the JCPOA, and in order to increase the military presence in the Persian Gulf, engaging all the Arabian Peninsula states in the MESA (Arab NATO), with the aim to contain Iran. →7

Human-animal interactions: Hospitable locals play host to storks for ages in Iran

By Faranak Bakhtiari

TEHRAN — Iranian hospitality never failed to bring back the storks from their wintering grounds; oddly enough erecting nesting sites endlessly on their roofs remained favorable to the birds, showing that the relationship between them is peculiarly an intimate one.

Always caring about the birds which are regarded as symbols of blessing and are believed to bring luck and peace from long ago, have led to their flourishing in the country even despite climatic variations.

Years ago, storks have managed to find a way of living with humans, preferring human settlements and rooftops for nesting to more natural habitats like treetops, and surprisingly, humans also have rarely attacked or persecuted them.

Myths about the storks' immunity goes back to ancient beliefs; in Egypt it was believed that their souls were human, while in the ancient Greece beliefs storks have been protectors of elderly people and take care of the aged parents while living on their roofs. The Greeks also held that killing a stork could be punished by death.

Ship insurance costs soar after Middle East tanker attacks

TEHRAN — Insurance costs for ships sailing through the Middle East have increased by at least 10% after attacks on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday, with the potential for costs to rise further as regional tensions escalate, ship insurers said.

The attacks have already stoked concerns about reduced flows of crude oil on one of the world's key shipping routes, pushing up oil prices by as much as 4.5%, Reuters reported.

Some tanker companies have already sus-

pending new bookings to the Persian Gulf.

Freight rates for supertankers transporting oil from the Persian Gulf to Asia were already close to a two-month high on Thursday at nearly \$13,000 a day, up nearly \$2,000 from Wednesday.

Every ship needs various forms of insurance, including annual war-risk cover as well as an additional 'breach' premium when entering high-risk areas. These separate premiums are calculated according to the value of the ship, or hull, for a seven-day period.

Ship insurers say the biggest vessels sailing through the Persian Gulf area face additional costs of up to \$200,000 for a single seven-day voyage, roughly twice as expensive as earlier this week.

"The facts on the ground have changed. If any of those tankers sink, you will see a rise across the board in the annual war premiums," one underwriter said.

"This is not the first incident, and what we are seeing (with rates going up) reflects the worsening situation in the area." →13



REPORT

Setareh Behrooz
Tehran Times journalist

Times rankings: Top Iranian universities on the list

Iranian universities are included in different subjects of 2019 Times Higher Education World University Rankings, according to its website.

In physical science, 24 Iranian universities are amongst 963 universities worldwide. Twenty one universities in Iran are amongst 903 universities assessed in engineering and technology subject.

Eleven Iranian universities are on ranking table for life sciences amongst 751 universities and nine Iranian universities are amongst World University Ranking in computer science, which has expanded to include 684 universities.

Additionally five Iranian universities are named on the clinical, pre-clinical and health university ranking which includes medicine, dentistry and other health subjects.

University of Tehran and University of Isfahan are on ranking table for business and economics amongst 585 universities. The University of Tehran is the only Iranian university ranked among top universities in arts and humanities, education and social science subjects.

The ranking is according to scores of citation, industry income, international outlook, research teaching and the table includes number of full-time equivalency (FTE) students, number of students per staff, international students, and female to male ratio.

■ **Physical sciences**

A total of 24 Iranian universities are amongst the ranking table for physical sciences, which highlights the universities that are leading across mathematics and statistics; physics and astronomy; chemistry; geology; and environmental, earth and marine sciences subjects.

The 2019 physical sciences ranking has expanded to include 963 universities, up from 501 last year.

The table is led by Princeton University for the second consecutive year, while the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is now second, up from fourth.

Babol Noshirvani University of Technology (251-300), University of Kashan (401-500), Amirkabir University of Technology (501-600), University of Guilan (501-600), Iran University of Science and Technology (501-600), →11

Invitation to Tender

Persian Gulf Star Oil Company (PGSOC) intends to sell part of its product, Slops Naphtha (14,000 MT), through running a public tender in term of delivery FOB (Free On Board) Rajaei port in Bandar Abbas. Accordingly, all interested individuals and legal entities are invited to referred PGSOC's legal and contract department (address: PGSOC-13th kilometer of Bandar Abbas highway to Bandar Khamir- Bandar Abbas, Iran and the Site Address is www.pgsoe.ir for receiving more details) during 16 June 2019 until 22 June 2019 to collect the document against letter to be signed by managing director of entity containing the intention to participate in tender.

Tel: **009876-31310000**, Postal Code: **7931181183**, Email: **tender.pgsoe@gmail.com**

Public relations affairs of Persian gulf star oil company



Tehran lashes out at UAE for attack on Zarif

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Tehran has responded to the UAE for making remarks against Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash claimed in a tweet on Friday that Zarif's reference to the so-called B-Team "becomes more farcical and his credibility diminishing," Press TV reported.

Responding to Gargash's tweet, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said countries that lack "credibility and independence" and serve as "milk cows" for the U.S. are in no position to raise doubts about the Iranian officials' credibility.

Zarif had tweeted that U.S. allegations against Iran over the Thursday attacks on two oil tankers in the Sea of Oman were part of "sabotage diplomacy" adopted by the "B-Team" to cover up "economic terrorism" against Tehran.

Zarif has coined the phrase "B-Team" to refer to U.S. national security adviser John Bolton and three other hawkish officials in the region, including Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan who are trying to drag Donald Trump into an armed conflict with Iran.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia are the major arms importers from the United States.

A report in May said Trump was approving the sale of billions of dollars' worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia, citing Iranian threats to its arch rival to reap the sweet fruit of his weeks-long fierce anti-Iran propaganda where he has claimed increasing threat from Iran to the interests of America and allies in the Middle East.

Before his presidency, Trump had described Saudi Arabia as "a milk cow" which would be slaughtered when its milk ran out.

In September 2018, Trump said he had told Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud that Riyadh had "trillions of dollars" and could pay its military bills.

"I love Saudi Arabia. They are great, King Salman, I spoke with him this morning. I said, king, you have got trillions of dollars. Without us, who knows what's going to happen. With us they are totally safe," Trump said then.

In October 2018, the U.S. president warned King Salman that he would not last in power "for two weeks" without the U.S. military support.

In August, Trump emphasized that he would like to keep Saudi Arabia as a close partner because of the Riyadh regime's extravagant purchases from American companies.

"They [Saudis] have nothing but cash, right?" he told a rally in Wisconsin. "They buy a lot from us, \$450 billion they bought."

UK Labor leader says no 'credible evidence' of Iran role in tanker attacks

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The UK Labor Party leader has called on the government to abstain from escalating tensions with Iran without "credible evidence" that Tehran was responsible for attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman.

Jeremy Corbyn said Britain risked increasing the threat of war after the Foreign Office said it was "almost certain" in its assessment that "a branch of the Iranian military ... attacked the two tankers on 13 June", the Guardian reported on Saturday.

The foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, had said earlier that the U.S. "immediately jumped to make allegations against Iran without a shred of factual or circumstantial evidence".

Corbyn tweeted: "Britain should act to ease tensions in the (Persian) Gulf, not fuel a military escalation that began with U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement.

"Without credible evidence about the tanker attacks, the government's rhetoric will only increase the threat of war."

On Friday, Donald Trump told Fox News that Iran "did do it".

The price of oil rose sharply on Thursday amid fears of disruption to one of the world's most important tanker routes.

The suspected attacks came after four commercial ships were "subjected to sabotage operations" in the Persian Gulf in May.

U.S. grants energy-hungry Iraq new Iran sanctions waiver: source

1 → Iranian energy imports are vital to Iraq, one of the world's hottest countries, which faces chronic blackouts that often leave homes without power for up to 20 hours a day.

Summer temperatures in Baghdad are already topping seasonal averages, boosting electricity consumption and raising fears of a repeat of last summer's mass protests over power outages.

To compensate, Iraq pipes in up to 28 million cubic meters of Iranian gas a day for power generation and also directly imports up to 1,300 megawatts of Iranian electricity.

That dependence is uncomfortable for Washington, which sees Tehran as its top regional foe.

Trump reimposed crippling unilateral sanctions on Iran's energy and finance sectors in November following a decision to abandon a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between major powers and Tehran.

He gave Iraq an initial 45-day waiver to continue buying electricity and natural gas from Tehran, and in December Washington granted Baghdad an 90-day extension.

Kono Taro: Paper in Abe's hand was 'talking points', not message from Trump

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The paper that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had in his hand during the meeting with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was just "talking points" and not a written message from U.S. President Donald Trump, Japanese Foreign Minister Kono Taro said on Saturday.

Taro said it was "wrong" to think it was a written message from Trump.

"What PM had in his hand was PM's talking points, not the message from Donald Trump," Taro tweeted.

Prime Minister Abe held talks with Ayatollah Khamenei on Thursday. Abe told the Leader that Trump had told him that the U.S. was not seeking a regime change in Iran, that he is ready to help Iran make progress, etc. However, the Leader said Trump does not "deserve" a response.

Cooperation with neighbors is Iran's fixed principle: Rouhani

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that cooperation with neighboring countries is a fixed principle of Iran's foreign policy.

Rouhani made the remarks during a meeting with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on the sidelines of the CICA summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, which brought Asian leaders together.

"Bilateral and multilateral consultation and more cooperation are the only ways to reduce differences and solve problems in the region and Iran is always ready to contribute to this," Rouhani stated.

Rouhani said, "The stability and security of regional countries are intertwined and we want spirit of moderation, brotherhood and wisdom in relations among the countries." He also said called for unity among Muslim states.

The president also described Iran-Qatar relations as "friendly" and "brotherly" and said the ties benefit the whole region.

For his part, Sheikh Tamim said Doha is ready to expand relations with Tehran in various areas.

He said problems in the region can be solved through dialogue, collective cooperation and political ways.

The amity between Tehran and Doha has been increasing since Iran opened its arms to Qatar when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain closed their land, sea and air to the country in June 2017.

■ 'Iran interested in expanding ties with Turkey'

Rouhani also met separately with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during which he said Iran is interested in expanding ties with Turkey.

Rouhani noted that the value of annual trade ties between the two countries should increase to 30 billion dollars.

Erdogan also said his country attaches great importance



Qatar's Emir held talks with President Rouhani

to expansion of relations, noting, "Turkey is determined to increase relations with Iran in various areas."

■ 'Iran wants stability in Afghanistan'

During a meeting with Afghanistan's Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah, Rouhani also said that Iran wants stability, security and development in Afghanistan.

"Security of regional countries, especially Iran and Afghanistan, is intertwined. So, establishment of security depends on regional countries' cooperation," Rouhani remarked.

He also attached great importance to cooperation in fighting drug trafficking.

Abdullah called for expansion of cooperation in fighting drug trafficking.

He thanked Iran for its supports to the Afghan government and people.



Tajik President Rahmon shakes hand with Rouhani

■ 'Welcome to your second homeland'

Rouhani and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, whose country hosted the CICA conference, also held talks.

Rahmon told Rouhani, "Welcome to your second homeland".

For his part, Rouhani said that he feels like being in his home country and added that Iran is ready to expand relations with Tajikistan.

The Iranian and Tajik people share close cultural and historical affinities. They speak a common language, Persian.

Rahmon also said developing ties with Iran is the "will of the Tajik government".

"I am sure that, in view of the two governments' will, bilateral ties will be strengthened in line with meeting interests of Tehran and Dushanbe and reinforcing regional security and stability," Rahmon stated.

Iran cannot stick to nuclear deal unilaterally: Rouhani

President says Iran has acted as a 'powerful barrier' against Takfiri terrorism

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that Iran cannot unilaterally remain committed to the 2015 nuclear deal, known officially as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"It is obvious that Iran cannot unilaterally remain committed to the JCPOA, and it is necessary that the other countries contribute to the survival of this important agreement," he said during a speech at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Rouhani also said that Iran has acted as a powerful barrier against Takfiri terrorism.

Following is the text of his speech published by the presidential website:

Undoubtedly, holding the CICA Summit in Dushanbe provides a perfect opportunity for consultation and discussion, given the current situation in the region and the wide range of topics, opportunities, challenges and threats.

Now, Asia, which enjoys the legacy of great civilizations and huge achievements in the field of reasoning and interaction, is facing a huge challenge. From the easternmost parts of Asia to its westernmost regions, there has been cultural interaction and commerce for hundreds of years through the Silk Road on the earth and the sea, in a way that even today, this valuable experience can be the basis of better and more constructive relations between countries. In addition, the existence and continuity of philosophical, religious, and scientific ideas among the people who lived in past ages and the ancient world provides us with an enormous amount of capital to face upcoming challenges properly.

In other words, the capital that we inherited is enough to create a world free of discrimination, terrorism, monopolism, bullying and injustice. The present assembly can certainly inspire and influence not only Asia, but also the entire world, under the wisdom of its leaders and peoples by taking advantage of this ancient heritage.

By taking advantage of this precious heritage, the Islamic Republic of Iran is looking for the values that Your Excellencies have seen during the last four decades in our foreign policy, including the fight against terrorism and extremism, which present a harsh and violent image of Islam, sheltering

innocent people who have been grappling with war and its resulting disasters, fighting unilateralism by which a country tries to dominate others with material power and the use of force, explicit opposition to the production of any weapons of mass destruction from nuclear to chemical, and ultimately, constructive interaction with all countries that believe in these values.

It is on this basis that the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a key player in the region, has repeatedly expressed its willingness to draft and approve bilateral and multilateral political and security mechanisms to ensure peace and security, and has welcomed any interaction and exchange of opinions with CICA member states on ways to approach the challenges and cope with existing threats.

The interference of some foreign powers in the internal affairs of the countries of the Middle East region, forceful unilateral policies, terrorism and extremism, their blatant breach of promises and lawlessness in matters related to international peace and security, including the important nuclear deal with Iran, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have made our region one of the world's most instable regions.

Regarding the JCPOA, I would like to remind you that the full compliance of Iran to its obligations has repeatedly been approved by the IAEA and, despite the withdrawal of the United States, the resumption of its unilateral, illegal sanctions and the negligible support of the other parties to the agreement, we still believe that the fulfillment of the agreed-upon commitments by all relevant parties will play an important role in increasing regional and global stability.

It is obvious that Iran cannot unilaterally remain committed to the JCPOA, and it is necessary that the other countries contribute to the survival of this important agreement. Now that our utmost goodwill and strategic tolerance on the one hand, and the United States' lawlessness on the other hand have

been proved to everyone, the Islamic Republic of Iran, while announcing its readiness for any interaction, has decided to reduce its obligations under Paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA to restore balance. In case of the absence of proper response, we will inevitably have to take more measures.

We are all aware of the role of the current U.S. government's policies in destabilizing the countries of the region. The current situation in Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen are clear examples of the consequences of this policy in recent years. These policies have violate the right of self-determination as one of the fundamental rights of all nations in many countries of the region.

Palestine's longstanding problem remains the most important factor of insecurity and the spread of violence in the region and the world. The international community's indifference to the Israeli regime's illegitimate actions, the illegal move to move the U.S. Embassy to the Holy Quds, and supporting the annexation of the Golan Heights to the Zionist Regime have led to the continuation of expansionist policies and has caused reaching a comprehensive and fair solution to this crisis to become more far-fetched than the past. The international community must fulfil its duty to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people, including the formation of an independent Palestinian state with the Holy Quds as its capital. The just settlement of the Palestinian issue and the rights of the Palestinians is a key to the return of stability and sustainable security and economic development of the Southwest Asian region.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has acted as a powerful barrier against Takfiri terrorism in Syria and Iraq, and has prevented the spread of terrorism to other parts of the world, and has played a worthwhile role in bringing peace and stability to the region and the world. Furthermore, since the beginning of the foreign invasion on Yemen,

Rouhani told the CICA conference that if the remaining parties do not honor their obligation under the JCPOA, Iran "will inevitably have to take more measures" to suspend parts of its nuclear commitments.

Everyone is concerned about fate of nuclear deal, Putin says

By staff and agency

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that everyone is concerned about the fate the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Addressing the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Putin said, "The United States' withdrawal from the agreement has significantly impeded its implementation, and has had a negative effect on the overall situation in nuclear non-proliferation."

"We believe that the only reasonable solution is for all signatories to continue honoring their commitments under the Plan, and this is what Russia is set to do," he said.

On May 8, Iran announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities.



It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if an agreement is not made within 60 days to shield it from

the sanctions' effects.

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

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

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

Raeisi calls on people, elites to help Judiciary improve

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raeisi has called on the people and the elite to give feedback on judicial processes in order to help improve the performance of the body under his leadership.

In a letter on Saturday, Raeisi underscored the role of public opinion in improving the efficiency of the country's bureaucracy due to their access to different means of communication including the internet, the Tasnim news agency reported.

He said such public feedback could help the Judiciary become a "popular, revolutionary and anti-corruption" body.

The top judge said he will be making more calls for public comments on ways to initiate,

amend, or complete certain legal processes, approaches, regulations and bylaws.

Raeisi also warned the country's decision-makers not to make a miscalculation by ruining the opportunity for direct contact with the people through the internet, echoing remarks by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that the invaluable opportunity provided by the cyber space should be seized.

In a decree in March, Ayatollah Khamenei appointed Raeisi as the new head of the Judiciary. He was national attorney general and served as the chief custodian of Astan Quds Razavi, the organization managing the affairs of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shiite Imam.



Israel responsible for oil tanker attacks: ex-diplomat

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Hamid Reza Asefi, a former Iranian diplomat, has said the Zionist regime is to blame for recent attacks on two oil tankers in 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.

The United States has blamed Iran for the attacks.

In an interview with Iran Online, Asefi said Israel benefits the most from such accusations against Iran, hence "logically the Zionist regime is the agent of this incident."

"I think the directing of such incidents in the region are done by the Zionist regime and this has no hidden dimensions," he stated.

Asefi, who served as Iran's ambassador to France and Foreign Ministry spokesman, argued that Israel intends to draw the Islamic Republic into a tense and anti-diplomatic atmosphere to justify its stance against Iran.



Pointing to Japanese Prime Minister Shizo Abe's visit to Tehran, he said the oil tankers attacks were aimed at impacting the trip.

"I was surprised when the Foreign Ministry said the attack was suspicious, because there's nothing suspicious about it and it's clear," he stated.

Soon after the attacks, U.S. Secretary of State Mike 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."

Asefi rejected Pompeo's rash decision to accuse Iran, arguing that it is not rational to think Iran would benefit from such acts while hosting the Japanese premier.

U.S. allies balk at blaming Iran for tanker attack

A day after two oil tankers were attacked in the Gulf of Oman, some U.S. allies were reluctant to join the Trump administration in blaming Iran for the incident as conflicting accounts emerged, the Foreign Policy said on Friday.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration was quick to blame Iran for the Thursday attacks, which targeted a Norwegian-owned and a Japanese-owned vessel carrying petroleum products in the strategic chokepoint through which much of the world's oil travels. The U.S. Defense Department released black-and-white video footage purportedly demonstrating that Iran is behind the attack, but some of the United States' allies have held back from explicitly blaming Iran—including Japan and Norway. For its part, the Iranian government denied the U.S. accusations that it was involved.

U.S. Central Command took the unusual step of releasing footage of the incident, which it says shows Iranian special forces removing an unexploded mine from the side of one of the oil tankers damaged in the incident, a few hours after the attack. The Japanese owner of one of the tankers contradicted the account put forth by the U.S. military, saying the vessel was struck by a flying projectile and not a mine or torpedo, adding further confusion.

After the UK government conducted its own assessment, British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt on Friday backed up Centcom's account, saying in a statement that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was "almost certainly" behind the attacks and calling on Tehran to "cease all forms of destabilizing activity."

But other U.S. allies, which have parted ways with Washington over its withdrawal

from the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran, haven't gone as far and appear to be treading carefully around a potentially explosive diplomatic standoff between Washington and Tehran. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said the video evidence isn't sufficient by itself. "The video is not enough. We can understand what is being shown, sure, but to make a final assessment, this is not enough for me," he told reporters on a visit to Oslo, Norway.

Some U.S. allies may not "want to be seen as bandwagoning with a U.S. administration that may be seen as a loose cannon on this," said Michael Eisenstadt, an expert on the region at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think tank. "They're going to want to wait until their intelligence agencies get from the American intelligence community our assessments and forensics," he said. "They'll want to have their own intelligence people look at the ships before they arrive at their own judgment."

The conflicting reports of the attacks are stirring further unrest in a region already beset by tensions as the Trump administration ratchets up pressure on Iran through severe sanctions and diplomatic maneuvering. Trump in April designated Iran's elite branch of its armed forces, the IRGC, as a terrorist organization, and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani hit back by declaring all U.S. troops in the Middle East terrorists. The latest attacks also come after the White House hit Tehran with additional sanctions as part of a so-called maximum pressure campaign to squeeze the country and sent a fresh deployment of U.S. forces to the region to deter what the administration called "credible" threats from Iran and its proxies against U.S. troops.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad

Javad Zarif condemned U.S. accusations that Iran was behind the incident, saying they were made without "a shred of factual or circumstantial evidence."

Zarif even went so far as to insinuate the incident was a setup, tweeting, "Suspicious doesn't begin to describe what likely transpired." The attacks occurred while Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was meeting with Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei for talks, in part to try to open a dialogue between Tehran and Trump.

On Friday, Zarif rebuffed Pompeo's allegations that Iran was to blame, saying they were part of the "sabotage diplomacy" pushed by the "B-Team".

The B-Team is a reference to hawkish 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.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi also asked, "While Japan's prime minister is meeting with the number one figure of the Islamic Republic of Iran to reduce tensions, which clandestine hands seek to undermine these efforts in the region and who benefit from it?"

Jeremy Corbyn, Britain's Labor Party leader, has warned against blaming Iran for the tanker attack without "credible evidence", the Independent reported.

Writing on his social media account, Corbyn said, "Britain should act to ease tensions in the (Persian) Gulf, not fuel a military escalation that began with U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement."

"Without credible evidence about the tankers attacks, the government's rhetoric will only increase the threat of war."



■ 'Anti-Iranian sense'

Also, Russia on Thursday warned against rushing to attribute blame for suspected attack on oil tankers, saying the incident should not be used to stoke tensions with Tehran, Russia's state-run RIA news agency reported.

"I would take the opportunity to warn against hasty conclusions, against attempts to lay the blame at the door of those we don't like," the agency quoted Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying. "Lately we have been seeing a strengthening campaign of political, psychological and military pressure on Iran. We wouldn't want the events that have just happened, which are tragic and shook the world oil market, to be used speculatively to further aggravate the situation in an anti-Iranian sense," Ryabkov was quoted as saying.

Russia and Iran share common interests in the Middle East. Moscow has spoken out against Washington's decision to unilaterally withdraw from a deal with Tehran on its nuclear program and impose sanctions.

UN chief urges independent inquiry into oil tanker attacks

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Antonio Guterres, the secretary-general of the United Nations, has urged an independent probe into Thursday's attacks on two oil tankers in the Sea of Oman.

The UN chief in a Friday statement underlined the need for an investigation to establish the facts about the attacks and noted that only the Security Council could order a UN inquiry.

He added, "It's very important to know the truth and it's very important that responsibilities are clarified. Obviously that can only be done if there is an independent entity that verifies those facts."

The Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous and Norwegian-owned Front Altair oil tankers were struck by explosions near the strategic Strait of Hormuz waterway in the early hours of Thursday.

They were hit while sailing in the Sea of Oman after leaving ports in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Japan's government said both vessels were carrying "Japanese-related" cargo. The attacks came as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was meeting with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran.

The cause of the attack is not yet known, but the Japanese shipping company has said two "flying objects" attacked its tanker in the Oman Sea, contradicting the U.S. account that mines had hit the vessels.

A few hours after Thursday's attacks, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo offhandedly blamed Iran for the attacks without providing evidence. U.S. President Donald Trump also claimed that the incident had Iran "written all over it"

The accusation was further echoed by British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who blamed Iran and Iran's Islamic



Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) for the attacks.

On Thursday, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) released a grainy footage purportedly showing "an IRGC Gashti Class patrol boat ... removing [an] unexploded limpet mine" from the side of the Japanese ship following the blasts.

Iran was the first country to respond to a distress call and rush to the assistance of the oil tankers, transferring all their 44 crew members to its southern shores.

"The American government has turned into a serious threat to the stability of the region and the world over the past two years through misusing its economic, financial and military capacities," Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said on Friday.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also tweeted

that the U.S. had "immediately jumped to make allegations against Iran without a shred of factual or circumstantial evidence."

He said the U.S. allegations against Iran over the tanker attacks were part of "sabotage diplomacy" adopted by the so-called B-Team.

The B-Team refers to U.S. national security adviser John Bolton, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Iran also warned the U.S. to stop playing a blame game through "suspicious" attacks on oil tankers in the Middle East, describing the American behavior as "worrying".

On Thursday, Iran's deputy ambassador to the UN, Es'haq Al-e Habib, brushed aside the U.S. claims that Tehran was responsible for the attacks in the Sea of Oman.

"Strongly we are rejecting any accusation of Iran," he said. "Definitely, those that accuse Iran have the main role in creating those incidents and it could be the United States itself."

In an indirect reference to Israel and Saudi Arabia, the Iranian diplomat noted that the two regimes "are looking for more tensions" in the Persian Gulf region and that Washington is a staunch backer of them.

The incident in the Sea of Oman "happened at the same, exactly at the same time that the prime minister of Japan was in Iran and meeting our leaders, and it shows that these are orders that are behind this incident, and the previous one," he added.

Oil prices jumped as much as 4 percent following Thursday's incident.

The blasts came a month after mysterious attacks on four oil tankers -- an Emirati, a Norwegian and two Saudi vessels -- off the coast of Fujairah in the UAE on May 12.

Ghani calls for Iran's active role in Afghan peace talks



POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Afghan President Ashraf Ghani

has underlined the necessity of promoting cooperation with Iran, calling for the Islamic Republic's active role in the Afghanistan peace talks.

Ghani made the remarks in a meeting with President Hassan Rouhani on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Bishkek on Friday.

He highlighted Iran's status and role in the region, saying Kabul is after promoting collaboration with Iran in all fields, IRNA reported.

"We favor Iran's bigger role in the Afghanistan peace talks and the issue of drugs is among the issues which should be pursued within the framework of bilateral and international talks," Ghani said.

Tehran and Kabul should join hands to fight terrorism, drugs, and extremism, the Afghani president asserted.

President Ghani also said, "We will never allow Afghan territory to be used against Iran."

INSTEX remains on paper, Larijani says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani on Saturday criticized the role of France in salvaging the 2015 nuclear accord, saying the European banking mechanism has remained "on the paper" and has not been made operational.

"Despite various talks, the French president's promise to the Iranian president for preserving Barjam (nuclear deal) has not been met and it should be actually said that the INSTEX mechanism has remained on the paper," Larijani told Marielle de Sarnez, the head of France's parliamentary foreign affairs committee.

European countries established INSTEX in January to help shield trade with Iran from U.S. sanctions imposed after President Donald Trump withdrew from the multinational nuclear deal in May 2018.

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

Guardian Council says ready to hold electronic elections

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Guardian Council is prepared to hold electronic elections, its spokesman Abbasali Kadkhodaei said on Saturday.

"To the extent that the Interior Ministry is ready and the facilities and security of election are provided, we are ready to hold electronic elections," Kadkhodaei told the Mehr news agency on Saturday.

He further said there is good coordination between the Guardian Council and the Interior Ministry with regard to the upcoming parliamentary elections.

The parliamentary election will be held on February 21, 2020.

The Guardian Council vets candidates for presidential, parliamentary, and Assembly of Experts elections and monitors elections.

Iran embassy rejects Pompeo's accusation over Kabul explosion

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian embassy in Afghanistan has rejected as "untrue" and "inauthentic" an accusation leveled by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo against Iran over an explosion in Kabul.

In a statement issued on Friday, the embassy said the Islamic Republic denounces terrorist attacks anywhere in the world, IRNA reported.

Addressing a press conference on Thursday, Pompeo blamed Iran for the car bomb attack near the main gate of Marshal Fahim Military University in Kabul on May 31.

"On May 31st, a car bomb in Afghanistan wounded four U.S. service members, killed four Afghan civilians, and wounded bystanders," Pompeo stated, accusing Iran of being behind the attack.

The Iranian embassy reiterated that Iran has announced its readiness for cooperation with regional governments, especially the Afghan government, to fight such measures.

The U.S. is leveling such baseless accusations while Iran has been working for peace, stability and security in the neighboring state and proved that it will never intend to bring its disputes with certain countries into the Afghan soil.

Afghan national security advisor Hamdullah Mohib recently declared in an interview with one of the country's TV networks that Iran is keen on establishing peace and calm in Afghanistan.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	234167.7
IFX	2951.83

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,429 rials
GBP	52,875 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$62.01/b
WTI	\$52.51/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.51/b
Gold	\$1,342.70/oz
Silver	\$14.93oz
Platinum	\$807.85/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Global economy on leading edge of recession

Global trade flows are flat or falling in all major regions as the world economy flirts with recession for the first time since 2008/09 – which will cut growth in oil consumption, especially for mid-distillates such as diesel.

According to gulfbusiness.com, freight volumes handled through major ports such as Long Beach and Singapore as well as air cargo handled through hubs such as Hong Kong, Memphis, London and Frankfurt are either flat or down compared with 2018.

Hong Kong International Airport, the largest air freight hub in the world, has seen volumes fall more than 5 percent in the three months from March to May compared with a year earlier.

London's Heathrow reports cargo down 4.5 percent between March and May compared with a year earlier, the worst performance since 2013.

Germany's Frankfurt has seen volumes fall almost 3 percent, while at Tennessee's Memphis International volumes were down almost 1 per cent, in both cases year-on-year between February and April.

Air freight is used only for the most valuable and time-sensitive merchandise but is generally a good leading indicator for the rest of the cargo sector and the broader economy.

Seaborne container volumes through California's Long Beach, the largest terminal for trans-Pacific trade, fell by 10 percent in March-May compared with a year earlier, the worst performance since 2015/16.

Container volumes through Singapore were up 1 percent between March and May compared with a year earlier, but growth has slowed from 16 percent in the first quarter of 2018.

Forward-looking freight indicators suggest the slowdown is likely to continue for the rest of the year and could turn into an outright recession.

Global manufacturers report new export orders have been falling for nine months and are now declining at the fastest rate since 2015/16, according to the JPMorgan global purchasing managers' index.

South Korea's KOSPI-100 equity index, a good proxy for global trade growth given its heavy exposure to exports, was down almost 15 percent at the end of May compared with a year earlier.

The World Trade Organization's trade outlook indicator has fallen to its lowest since 2010, signaling a continued deceleration in trade volume growth.

In March, the OECD's composite leading indicator of economic activity in the advanced economies and major emerging markets fell to its lowest level since the recession of 2008/09.

■ The U.S. economy in recession

Since 1970, whenever the OECD indicator has fallen this low, the U.S. economy has always entered a recession, and taken the other advanced industrial economies with it.

The global economy might still avoid an outright recession. In 2015/16, the slump in oil and other commodity prices pushed the economy close to recession, only for it to re-accelerate in 2017/18.

Or the Federal Reserve and other central banks could cut interest rates to improve confidence and boost spending on durable goods. In 1998, prompt interest rate cuts kept the expansion going for another two years.

U.S. interest rate traders are already pricing in at least one quarter-point reduction in the Fed funds rate by the end of September and possibly a second, with rates expected to be 75 basis points lower than today by January 2020.

Annual crude steel output to hit 30m tons by March 2020

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Jafar Sarqini announced that the country's annual crude steel production is planned to reach 30 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

The official put Iran's crude steel production at 25 million tons in the past year, Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday.

Sarqini has previously announced that Iran will inaugurate steel projects with the capacity of at least 10 million tons during the current Iranian calendar year.

Also, Ardeshir Sa'd Mohammadi, a deputy director in Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), has recently announced that the country's crude steel production capacity will increase by 25 million tons within the next four years.



He said that through such increase in crude steel output, the required feedstock for the plants will be properly supplied. According to World Steel Association

(WSO), Iran became the world's tenth largest steel producer in 2018.

Iran which stood at the 13th place in 2017 could lag behind three major steel producers in the world, namely Italy, Taiwan, and Ukraine to stand at the 10th place in 2018, despite the re-imposition of sanctions by the U.S.

According to the WSO's report, Iran produced 25 million tons of crude steel in 2018 which indicates 17.7 percent growth from 21.2 million tons in 2017.

Over 40% of crude steel produced in Iran is exported to different markets worldwide, according to IMIDRO Head Khodadad Gharibpour.

Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries where 68 types of minerals have been identified so far, including the world's largest deposits of copper, zinc and iron ore, which are tempting international investors.

‘Neighboring countries destinations of half of annual non-oil exports’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Half of Iran's non-oil exports was to its neighboring countries in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019), Saeed Zareandi, the deputy industry, mining and trade minister for planning, announced in a press conference on Saturday.

The official said of the total \$46 billion worth of non-oil exports in the past year, some \$23.4 billion was to 15 neighbors, IRNA reported.

Zareandi further pointed to development of non-oil exports as one of the major seven plans of the ministry under the sanctions time and said, “Given the difficulty in international transactions, we put development of non-oil exports specially to the neighboring countries a top agenda of our work in the current year.”

The official also mentioned promotion of domestic production, development of mining sector, benefiting from knowledge-based companies, market management, and improvement of business environment as some other priorities of the ministry in the current year.

In mid-April, Iranian industry, mining



and trade minister said the country plans to double its exports to the neighboring countries by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (which starts in March 2021).

Mentioning the fact that only two percent of the total imports of Iran's neighbors comes from the Islamic country, Rahmani noted that his ministry is going to focus on developing domestic production and defining new projects to manufacture all the industrial equipment needed inside the country.

The official further pointed to some of the potent areas which could be worked on in order to increase exports including home appliances, apparel industry, petrochemicals, and marine industries, basic metals such as steel, aluminum and copper as well as agriculture.

15th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting kicks off today

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**– The 15th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting and the second Iran-North Caucasus trade conference are due to kick off today in Tehran and Isfahan respectively, IRNA reported.

As reported, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and his Russian counterpart Alexander Novak are going to co-chair the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting. The Iran-North Caucasus trade conference

will also be attended by the Minister of North Caucasus Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Chebotarev and Reza Ardakanian.

The third Iran-Russia provincial cooperation working group will also be held, in which Ardakanian, Chebotarev, the deputy prime minister of the Russian Republic of Dagestan and eight regional ministers are going to attend.

During the three-day events, nine working groups and three specialized committees are

scheduled to be held to explore cooperation in a variety of areas including industry, energy, transport, ICT, etc.

Establishing a freight line between Zhukovsky International Airport in Moscow and Isfahan International Airport, joint production of freight wagons, joint production of small-scale turbines, joint production of heavy vehicles, and exports of meat from North Caucasus region to Iran are some of the projects which are going

Several industrial projects inaugurated in southeastern Iran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani visited Kerman Province in southeastern Iran on Thursday and Friday and inaugurated several industrial projects, IRNA reported.

The water purification and recycling plant of Zarand Iranian Steel Company (ZISCO)'s Iron Ore Concentrate Complex was among the projects inaugurated by the industry minister.

Some 300 billion rials (nearly \$7.15 million) was invested in this project which is expected to reduce the plant's water consumption and waste by 70 percent.

Speaking in the opening ceremony, Rahmani stressed the importance of employing local workforce in the country's industrial projects, saying “All industrial units should concentrate their financial activities on their area of origin to bring prosperity to those regions.”

The plant will recycle 6.5 million liters of water every year.

Inaugurated in the Iranian calendar year of 1397 (ended in March 2019), Zarand Iranian Steel Company has created 160 direct job opportunities in the region.

A copper cathode plants was also inaugurated during the minister's visit in Jiroft Country in Kerman Province.

The \$38-million plant is expected to produce

to be discussed during the Joint Economic Committee meeting.

It is also agreed for the two countries' businessmen and entrepreneurs to hold B2B talks on the sidelines of the upcoming event in order to explore avenues of mutual cooperation.

As part of the Russian Federation, the Northern Caucasus region is included in the North Caucasian and Southern Federal Districts and consists of Krasnodar Krai, Stavropol Krai, and the constituent republics.



5000 tons of copper cathode on an annual base and it has created 200 direct job opportunities.

WB sees the impact of U.S. sanctions on Iran ‘wane’ in 2020-21

1→ Growth is projected to gradually rise to 2.8 percent by 2021, predicated on continued benign global financing conditions, as well as a modest recovery in emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) previously affected by financial market pressure.

As for the Middle East region, growth is projected to fall to 1.3 percent in 2019

and to pick up to about 3 percent in 2020-21.

“The projected pickup over the next two years is largely driven by an assumed rebound in activity in Iran as the impact of recent U.S. sanctions wanes,” the report said.

In its previous report, WB predicted a 1.1 percent GDP growth for Iran in

2020 and 2021.

The bank saw a -3.6 percent growth for the country' GDP in 2019 but expected it to experience 1.1 percent of GDP growth in the following two years.

Global economic growth was also projected to slow to 2.9 percent in 2019 from a downwardly revised 3 percent in 2018 amid rising downside risks.

U.S., Japan exchange candid views on trade

Japan and the United States have deepened their understanding of each other's positions on trade, Japan's economy minister said after meeting his U.S. counterpart, adding that the two countries will likely meet again ahead of a Group of 20 (G-20) summit later this month.

After Thursday's meeting in Washington, Mr. Toshimitsu Motegi said he exchanged views on trade “candidly” with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, but refrained from commenting on details.

“Japan and the U.S. have been sorting out points of discussion over trade issues and those points are clarifying but we need to continue ministerial talks,” Mr. Motegi said.

Motegi said Japan and the U.S. have al-

ready agreed to aim for an early trade deal after Japan's Upper House election, likely to be held next month.

Trade issues are seen as among key topics of debate during U.S. President Donald Trump's expected meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Osaka, western Japan, on June 28-29.

President (Donald Trump) would have preferred to have seen something done last year. Let me be clear ... we're way behind schedule from this standpoint.

Trump has pressured Tokyo to speed up talks for a two-way trade deal that would open up the Japanese market for US goods, par-

ticularly in areas of agriculture, and fix what he sees as a huge bilateral trade imbalance.

In an interview with The Japan Times, U.S. Ambassador to Japan William Hagerty said Trump was “frustrated” by the fact that the U.S. and Japan have yet to seal a trade deal.

Japan's ruling party officials have signalled their hopes of holding off on signing a deal that could require concessions on agriculture at least until the summer Upper House election, for fear of losing farmers' votes.

Responding to a journalist's question, Motegi said Japan has been requesting that Washington cut its tariffs on industrial products.

(Straitsimes.com)



EMBASSY OF INDIA SCHOOL, TEHRAN
(KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA, TEHRAN)



NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR RENOVATION WORKS AT KV, TEHRAN
TENDER NOTICE No. 001 DATED 13.06.2019

On behalf of Chairman and VMC, Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV), Tehran, the Principal, KV, Tehran, invites sealed tenders from registered and well-reputed companies for renovation works at KV, Tehran. The works will be carried out in accordance with General Financial Rules, Government of India.

Eligibility: Prospective contractor(s) must have valid registration with tax authorities and technically fulfil all requirements, with 3 years experience of similar works.

Method of Procurement: Two Envelop (Technical & Financial). To be submitted separately.

Submission: Last date of submission will be 3rd July 2019 (Wednesday) at 14:00 Hrs.

For information on scope of work and other details, please visit www.kvtehran.ir/

Address: No. 24, Saad Avenue, Qayedi Avenue, Noor Mohammadi Street, Darvish Avenue, Tehran

E-mail id: kvtehran@yahoo.com

Tel: (+98 - 21) 7753 4640/7753 1183

Principal, KV, Tehran

Kushner as a colonial administrator: let's talk about the 'Israeli Model'

By Ramzy Baroud

ANTIWAR — In a TV interview on June 2, on the news docu-series "Axios" on the HBO channel, Jared Kushner opened up regarding many issues, in which his "Deal of the Century" was a prime focus.

The major revelation made by Kushner, President Donald Trump's adviser and son-in-law, was least surprising. Kushner believes that Palestinians are not capable of governing themselves.

Not surprising, because Kushner thinks he is capable of arranging the future of the Palestinian people without the inclusion of the Palestinian leadership. He has been pushing his so-called "Deal of the Century" relentlessly, while including in his various meets and conferences countries such as Poland, Brazil and Croatia, but not Palestine.

Indeed, this is what transpired at the Warsaw conference on "peace and security" in the Middle East. The same charade, also led by Kushner, is expected to be rebooted in Bahrain on June 25.

Much has been said about the subtle racism in Kushner's words, reeking with the stench of old colonial discourses where the natives were seen as lesser, incapable of rational thinking beings who needed the civilized "whites" of the western hemisphere to help them cope with their backwardness and inherent incompetence.

Kushner, whose credentials are merely based on his familial connections to Trump and family friendship with Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is now poised to be the colonial administrator of old, making and enforcing the law while the hapless natives have no other option but to either accommodate or receive their due punishment.

This is not an exaggeration. In fact, according to leaked information concerning Kushner's "Deal of the Century," and published in the Israeli daily newspaper, "Israel Hayom", if Palestinian groups refuse to accept the US-Israeli diktats, "the US will cancel all financial support to the Palestinians and ensure that no country transfers funds to them."

In the HBO interview, Kushner offered the Palestinians a life-line. They could be considered capable of governing themselves should they manage to achieve the following: "a fair judicial system ... freedom of the press, freedom of expression, tolerance for all religions."

The fact that Palestine is an occupied country, subject in every possible way to Israel's military law, and that Israel has never been held accountable for its 52-year occupation seems to be of no relevance whatsoever, as far as Kushner is concerned.

On the contrary, the subtext in all of what Kushner has said in the interview is that Israel is the antithesis to the unquestionable Palestinian failure. Unlike Palestine, Israel needs to do little to demonstrate its ability to be a worthy peace partner.

While the term "US bias towards Israel" is as old as the state of Israel itself, what is hardly discussed is the specific of that bias, the decidedly condescending, patronizing and, often, racist view that US political classes have of Palestinians – and all Arabs and Muslims, for that matter; and the utter infatuation with Israel, which is often cited as a model for democracy, judicial transparency and successful "anti-terror" tactics.

According to Kushner a "fair judicial system" is a *conditio sine qua non* to determine a country's ability to govern itself. But is Israeli judicial system "fair" and "democratic"?

Israel does not have a single judicial system, but two. This duality has, in fact, defined Israeli courts from the very inception of Israel in 1948. This *de facto* apartheid system openly differentiates between Jews and Arabs, a fact that is true in both civil and criminal law.

"Criminal law is applied separately and unequally in the West Bank, based on nationality alone (Israeli versus Palestinian), inventively weaving its way around the contours of international law in order to preserve and develop its (illegal Jewish) settlement enterprise", Israeli scholar, Emily Omer-Man, explained in her essay "Separate and Unequal".

In practice, Palestinians and Israelis who commit the exact same crime will be judged according to two different systems, with two different procedures: "The settler will be processed according to the Israeli Penal Code (while) the Palestinian will be processed according to military order."

This unfairness is constituent of a massively unjust judicial apparatus that has defined the Israeli legal system from the onset. Take the measure of administrative detention as an example. Palestinians can be held without trial and without any stated legal justification. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been subjected to this undemocratic "law" and hundreds of them are currently held in Israeli jails.

It is ironic that Kushner raised the issue of freedom of the press, in particular, as Israel is being derided for its dismal record in that regard. Israel has reportedly committed 811 violations against Palestinian journalists since the start of the "March of Return" in Gaza in March 2018. Two journalists – Yaser Murtaja and Ahmed Abu Hussein – were killed and 155 were wounded by Israeli snipers.

Like the imbalanced Israeli judicial system, targeting the press is also a part of a protracted pattern. According to a press release issued by the Palestinian Journalists Union last May, Israel has killed 102 Palestinian journalists since 1972.

The fact that Palestinian intellectuals, poets and activists have been imprisoned for Facebook and other social media posts should tell us volumes about the limits of Israel's freedom of press and expression.

It is also worth mentioning that in June 2018, the Israeli Knesset voted for a bill that prohibits the filming of Israeli soldiers as a way to mask their crimes and shelter them from any future legal accountability.

As for freedom of religion, despite its many shortcomings, the Palestinian Authority hardly discriminates against religious minorities. The same cannot be said about Israel.

Although discrimination against non-Jews in Israel has been the *raison d'être* of the very idea of Israel, the Nation-State Law of July 2018 further cemented the superiority of the Jews and inferior status of everyone else.

According to the new Basic Law, Israel is "the national home of the Jewish people" only and "the right to exercise national self-determination is unique to the Jewish people."

Palestinians do not need to be lectured on how to meet Israeli and American expectations, nor should they ever aspire to imitate the undemocratic Israeli model. What they urgently need, instead, is international solidarity to help them win the fight against Israeli occupation, racism and apartheid.

What does the White House hide? The republicans' fears of reducing the popularity of Trump

By Saeed Sobhani

As much as we get closer to presidential elections next year, more surveys about the popularity of the president of the United States are published. Donald Trump believes most of these polls (where we see the decline in the popularity of Trump) are false! However, important news have recently been published in the US! The news that Trump's entourage are also concerned about the decline in U.S. President's popularity in key states. In other hand, After the Biden official announcement of the 2020 presidential election, many Democrat voters prefer to vote for Biden from him and other party candidates. That's what Biden has made clear to his victory in the Democratic primaries. He is now focusing on the final competition with President Donald Trump of the United States.

Donald Trump is currently analyzing the US electoral and political situation. Undoubtedly, the former vice-president of the United States will focus on social services, including health insurance, in the 2010 presidential election race. In this case, Biden can bring the middle and poor Americans. It should not be forgotten that Trump in the field of foreign policy is not well placed in the polls, and only about 40 percent of American citizens confirm their policies in the face of the international system. Biden, meanwhile, specializes in foreign policy, and his vision is more than approved by American citizens. Meanwhile, Biden's only concern is the Trump control in the economy. The former vice president of the United States is trying to get support from Barack Obama.

Controversial poll in the United States Yesterday saw an important poll in the United States. ABC News on Friday published the results of an internal poll conducted by President Donald Trump's reelection campaign in March, a survey that Trump himself denied even existed. Data from President Donald Trump's first internal reelection campaign poll conducted in March, obtained exclusively by ABC News, showed him losing a matchup by wide margins to former Vice President Joe Biden in key battleground states. Trump has repeatedly denied that such data exists.

The polling data, revealed for the first time by ABC News, showed a double-digit lead for Biden in Pennsylvania 55-39 and Wisconsin 51-41 and had Biden leading by seven points in Florida. In Texas, a Republican stronghold, the numbers showed the president only leading by two points. ABC News did not obtain the poll's early matchups against other candidates. The New York Times was first to report the existence of the internal polls. When presented by ABC News with these numbers, the Trump campaign confirmed the data saying in a statement that the numbers were old and that they have seen huge swings in Trump's favor.

"These leaked numbers are ancient, in campaign terms, from months-old polling that began in March before two major events had occurred: the release of the summary of the Mueller report exonerating the President, and the beginning of the Democrat candidates defining themselves with their far-left policy message," Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale told ABC News in a statement. "Since then, we have seen huge swings in the President's favor across the 17 states we have polled, based on the policies now espoused by the Democrats. For example, the plan to provide free health care to illegal immigrants results in an 18-point swing toward President Trump."

Attorney General Bill Barr's summary of special counsel Robert Mueller investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election was released on March 24. While the Trump campaign's full poll, which canvassed 17 states,



was already in the field, it was well underway for four additional days after the release of Barr's letter to the public. The poll was conducted from March 15 through March 28.

The Trump campaign did not provide the results of the full 17 state poll, matchups against other candidates nor any updated polling figures. Mueller's report did not find a conspiracy between Trump's campaign and the Russian government. The special counsel did not reach a conclusion about whether the president obstructed justice, and specifically did not exonerate him on that front.

Earlier in the week, the Trump campaign referenced "new data" that they claimed showed the president has a "lead in every state" they polled, according to a statement provided to ABC News by Trump campaign communications director Tim Murtaugh. The campaign is claiming the new poll "tested the issues the Democrat field is running on" and produced a more favorable result for the president in head to head match-ups against 2020 Democrats when tied to issues like providing free healthcare to illegal immigrants.

Early polls are often subject to change, but it's notable that the new poll the campaign is now touting tested "issues" tied to 2020 opponents – meaning the Democratic candidates were politically defined by the campaign. "The President is correct that we have no current polls against defined Democrats – at all – that show him losing in any of the states we have tested. For example, the President leads in Florida by 8 points. He holds leads in all other states we have polled," Parscale's statement said. "Again, these months-old numbers are meaningless because they are pre-Mueller and pre-Democrat messaging, and should not be given any weight when discussing the current state of the race."

In the recent days the president has continued to lash out against reports that his campaign's internal polling showed him trailing in key battleground states, slamming the numbers as "phony polling information." Trump has called his internal poll numbers "unbelievable" and that he was "the strongest I've ever been."

Speaking with ABC News Chief Anchor George Stephanopoulos on Tuesday during an exclusive interview, the president said his internal polling showed that he is "winning everywhere." When Stephanopoulos mentioned reports of polls commissioned by the Trump campaign that showed Biden ahead of him in key states, the president said "those polls don't exist."

"Nobody showed you those polls because those polls don't exist, George. Those polls don't exist. I'm losing in 15 out of 17 states? Those polls don't exist," Trump said. "I just was given a meeting with my pollster who I frankly don't even believe in pollsters if

you want to know the truth, you just run a campaign and whatever it is, it is, but I just had a meeting with somebody that's a pollster and I'm winning everywhere, so I don't know what you're talking about."

A day later, the president took to Twitter and again claimed internal polling showing him behind in battleground states didn't exist. "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. They reported Fake numbers that they made up & don't even exist," the president tweeted.

What is certain is that Trump will not have an easy path to win the upcoming presidential election. Public opposition to the policies of Donald Trump, the controversial president of the United States, is still on the rise. Polls conducted in the United States indicate that many of the American citizens who voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential elections, are now regretting their choice.

Biden, Warren, Sanders Lead 2020 Field Monmouth University Polling Institute reported that Former Vice President Joe Biden is the front-runner among likely Democratic caucusgoers in Nevada while Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren takes second place, just ahead of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. The first Monmouth University Poll of Silver State Democrats in the 2020 cycle finds that Warren has a particularly positive rating in Nevada compared to her standing elsewhere. Health care tops the list of concerns for Democratic voters, but the poll finds that immigration is more of a factor for choosing a nominee in Nevada than it is in other early states.

In a field of 24 candidates, Biden holds a clear lead with 36% support among registered Democrats and unaffiliated voters who are likely to attend the February 2020 Nevada caucuses. He is followed by Warren at 19%, Sanders at 13%, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg at 7%, and California Sen. Kamala Harris at 6%. Other candidates registering at least 1% in the poll are former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke (2%), New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker (2%), entrepreneur Andrew Yang (2%), former cabinet secretary Juli'n Castro (1%), Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (1%), Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar (1%), and author Marianne Williamson (1%). The remaining 12 candidates earn less than 1% or were not chosen by any respondents in the poll.

Biden maintains a strong lead among voters who consider themselves moderate or conservative – 47% support him compared to 11% for Warren, 9% for Sanders, 6% for Harris, and 4% for Buttigieg. Biden also leads Warren among somewhat liberal voters but by a narrower margin of 31% to 24%, with Buttigieg coming in at 12%, Sanders

at 8%, and Harris at 5% among this group. Among very liberal voters, though, the contest is between Warren (27%) and Sanders (26%), with Biden garnering just 19% along with Harris at 7% and Buttigieg at 7%. Very liberal voters make up about one-quarter of likely caucusgoers.

About 1-in-5 voters (21%) say 2020 will be the first Democratic caucus they participate in. Among these first time caucusgoers, nearly half (48%) prefer Biden, with 16% supporting Sanders, 6% for Buttigieg, and 4% each for Warren and Harris. Among those who have attended a Nevada caucus in the past, 33% support Biden, 23% are for Warren, 12% for Sanders, and 7% each for Harris and Buttigieg.

The race appears to be only somewhat tighter among Latino voters for Biden (27%), Sanders (19%), and Warren (11%), followed by O'Rourke at 6% and Yang at 5%. A sizable 20% of Latino voters do not have a candidate preference at this time. It is important to note, though, that this subsample has a larger margin of error that ranges from 7 to 10 percentage points for the top three candidates. Among white non-Hispanic voters, Biden leads Warren 37% to 23%, with Sanders at 13%, Buttigieg at 10%, and Harris at 5%. Among all other voters, the majority of whom are African-American, Biden has a clear lead of 42% with Harris (14%), Warren (12%), and Sanders (6%) trailing.

"Nevada is the first state on the Democrats' 2020 calendar with an ethnically diverse electorate. Latino voters seem to be particularly up for grabs right now," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The top issues that Nevada Democrats are thinking about in choosing a presidential nominee are health care (41%), followed by environmental concerns (17% climate change and 7% environment in general), immigration (19%), jobs (17%), reproductive rights (15%), and beating Trump (14%). Other issues that are important to voters include education (8%), civil rights (8%), income inequality (8%), foreign policy (7%), social security (5%), competence and experience (5%), taxes (5%), honesty and integrity (5%), gun control (4%), and a number of other issues named by 3% or less. Immigration and the combination of jobs and income inequality are more important issues for Nevada Democrats than they are in other early states polled by Monmouth. Specifically, immigration is named as a top issue by 19% in Nevada, compared to 9% in New Hampshire last month and 14% in Iowa two months ago. Jobs and income inequality are named by 25% in Nevada, compared to 15% in New Hampshire last month and 15% in Iowa two months ago. Health care has been the top issue mentioned in all three states – 41% Nevada, 41% New Hampshire, and 51% Iowa – while climate change and the environment have also been important for Democrats in all three states – 24% Nevada, 24% New Hampshire, 29% Iowa. In Nevada, health care is the top concern for all demographic groups except Latino voters, for whom immigration (37%) and health care (37%) are equally mentioned as a top issue in their choice of a presidential nominee.

The Monmouth University Poll asked caucusgoers to rate 24 announced candidates in the race. Biden holds the most positive rating at 78% favorable to 13% unfavorable. However, the ratings for Warren (70% to 11%) and Harris (67% to 9%) are nearly as strong. Other relatively well-known candidates include Sanders (65% to 20%), Booker (61% to 9%), O'Rourke (54% to 16%), Buttigieg (56% to 8%), New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (38% to 16%), and Klobuchar (43% to 10%). New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is well-known but has a net negative rating of 25% favorable to 33% unfavorable.

U.S. short-sighted in politicizing business issues

By Hu Weijia

GLOBAL TIMES — A dispute over patent fees between Huawei and US carrier Verizon has suddenly taken center stage following US President Donald Trump's restrictions on the Chinese telecom giant. As the US-China trade war escalates, Washington should avoid intervening in and politicizing commercial disputes.

Huawei has told Verizon that the carrier should pay licensing fees for more than 200 of its patents, the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported on Wednesday, citing people familiar with the matter. No further details were released but the case has aroused widespread concern among people who are following the trade war.

A Verizon spokesperson was quoted by the WSJ as saying that the issue is a potential legal matter. The patent fee dispute should be resolved based on international laws and practice, without intervention from either Washington or Beijing. We believe it's what both American and Chinese companies want to see, because the politicization of an economic issue can do nothing but complicate the situation.

It is not clear yet whether the patent licensing issue will involve more US companies such as wireless carriers Sprint



Corp, AT&T Inc and T-Mobile.

As of March, Chinese companies accounted for 34 percent of worldwide applications for major patents related to 5G technology, the Nikkei Asian Review reported, citing statistics from Germany-based IPLytics.

If the US government bans Chinese-brand equipment

from the country's 5G networks, how should US companies use patented technology in their products?

The question should be answered based on the rule of law rather than the rule of geopolitics.

The case may create a demonstration effect for latecomers. If Washington unilaterally intervenes in a commercial dispute, or ignores international laws and relies on domestic regulations, China should be prepared to take countermeasures to protect the legitimate interests of Chinese enterprises. If the issue is mishandled by Washington, we may see an escalation of the trade war.

We don't want this scenario to become reality, especially ahead of the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan, later this month in which trade issues are likely to be highlighted. The licensing fee dispute is only a demand for patent fees and shouldn't be used as part of the geopolitical battle between China and the US.

Despite a substantial rise in trade tensions, we still hope US companies and Huawei can achieve common development because the Chinese giant's alliance with the US telecom industrial chain is indivisible. The short-sighted US actions to exclude Huawei from its 5G construction will hurt both itself and others.

Intel. Community reluctant to accept U.S. hypothesis aiming to boost its military presence in ME: Zaccara

1 → However, the international community is reluctant to accept the American hypothesis. Simply, the false accusation against Iraq regarding its military nuclear program that justified the 2003 invasion is a clear precedent of the failure of the preventive war doctrine, and nobody in the region would be interested in starting a new war just because the US intelligence is pointing to Iran.

Q: Is it rational for Iran to commit such an action, while the Japanese PM is visiting Iran?

A: The attacked vessels were related to Japan, and one of them was transporting goods coming from Qatar, one of the few states that are actually in good terms with Iran in the region. As mentioned by most of the analysts in the recent days, it would be 'shooting on its own foot' if Iran conducted such an action in the middle of Abe's meetings with Rouhani and Ayatollah Khamenei. Iran is the country that would lose the most if this incident proved to be done by any Iranian affiliated group, and it would provoke the total



isolation from the international community, something that Rouhani's government has been trying to prevent since he assumed

office in 2013.

Q: In fact who is the biggest beneficiary of the provocative incidents taking place in the

region that threatens world energy security and route? Can any instability in the region affect EU interests?

A: I don't believe any regional actor would be benefited from the increasing instability of the Persian Gulf, despite the fact that the oil price increase can definitively benefit most of the producing countries, including Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates. A war atmosphere will certainly harm all the economies in the region, mainly Qatar and Iran, but also the rest of the PGCC states. I wouldn't dismiss the hypothesis that a non-state actor may be linked to this incident that can only spark tension and a possible war. On the other hand, neither of the oil consuming countries, including the EU, Japan, India, China and Korea, are happy with this situation that may disrupt their oil purchases. Still trying to escape from recession and just ending the crisis started in 2007, the EU is the region that would suffer the most with the disruption of oil supply or the dramatic increase of the oil price.

The immigration-bigotry-war nexus

By Thomas R. Eddlem

ANTIWAR —Americans increasingly view Muslims as a threat to their security, especially Republicans. According to a Pew Charitable Forum survey in 2017, 65 percent of Republicans believe there is a "natural conflict between Islam and democracy." Amusingly, 56 percent of Americans polled by CivicScience in 2019 said American students should not be required to learn Arabic numerals (i.e.: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,0) as part of their educational curriculum. A 2018 Chapman University poll noted that — although prejudice against Muslims had fallen somewhat between 2016 and 2018 — more than 60 percent of Republicans believed "Muslims are more likely to engage in terrorist activity than non-Muslims" and nearly 40 percent said America should end immigration from all Muslim countries. None of those attitudes are an accident. Nor are they the result of the rare blowback from America's interventions abroad.

The attitude of a fundamental struggle between the Muslim world and the West is being engineered, and it is not a result of a natural conflict among the Muslim people with democracy. Muslims have seen their popularly elected governments repeatedly overturned in U.S.-based coups d'état, from Syria (1949) to Iran (1953) to Egypt (2013). Instead, the "Muslim terror threat" is being manufactured with millions of dollars in donations to virulently anti-Muslim hate-groups from establishment sources with deep ties to the Military-Industrial-Surveillance Complex (MISC).

Only through the propagation of negative stereotypes about Muslims (and, to a lesser extent, Hispanics) can wars in the Middle East and coups in Latin America remain politically sustainable. If Americans see immigrant Muslims from Middle Eastern countries as fellow human beings who act logically (if, at times, desperately) as a result of U.S. government military malfeasance abroad, their fears will likely fade and aggressive US wars become politically untenable.

Key Islamophobia Foundations and Financiers

Donors to organizations promoting war-hype-related immigrant-phobia, particularly in the form of Muslim immigration, include former AIIPAC board member Nina Rosenwald and her family foundation (The Abstraction Fund), hedge fund billionaire Robert Mercer and his family foundations, Donors Capital Fund and Donors Trust the Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundations and Charitable Trust, the giant evangelical National Christian Fund, and establishment Wall Street "charitable" funds such as Vanguard Charitable, Goldman Sachs Philanthropic Fund and Schwab Charitable. Though many of these foundations are hardly household names, through them the Islamophobic industry is made flush with cash and is backing up public opinion for war (or at least public indifference to war).

As a result, organizations funded by these donors can continue to promote fake news that hypes the alleged Muslim threat to America, such as:

Gatestone Institute (Muslim refugee rape crisis in Sweden)
Daniel Pipes' Middle East Forum (No-go zones in European refugee areas)

The Clarion Project (Muslim extremist camps in the US)
Donors Trust: The Fear-Funding Front

Donors Trust is the granddaddy funnel for all anti-immigrant and pro-war funding sources. The organization boasts of doling out \$1.1 billion since its 1999 founding, and it acts as a sort of anonymizer for big political donors for a host of right-wing/Republican issues, from climate change skeptics to Koch Brothers foundations to anti-immigrant causes.

Donors Trust operates as a shell foundation for the super-rich, through which they can designate funds for their pet causes. One of the key causes anonymized by Donors Trust is fear of immigrants. Among the recipients of Donors Trust funds are Daniel Pipes' Middle East Forum, Numbers USA, the Center for Immigration Studies, the Federation for Immigration Reform, Frank Gaffney's Center for Security Policy, The Clarion Project, the Middle East Media Research Institute, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), Robert Spencer's Jihad Watch, Concerned Women for America, David Horowitz Freedom Center, and others.

The investigative website Sludge has conducted some important research on this topic, and found that Donors Trust and three other "donor-advised funds" (also including Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund, Schwab Charitable Fund, and Vanguard Charitable) donated more than \$7 million over three years to anti-immigration or anti-Muslim organizations designated hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Sludge also noted in a follow-up report that Goldman Sachs Philanthropic Fund had given \$50,000 to the virulently anti-Muslim Clarion Project in 2015-17, along with donations from Vanguard Charitable (\$875,000) and Schwab Charitable Fund (nearly \$250,000).

While the National Christian Foundation focuses mainly on other issues, it has also funded anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant organizations, according to research by Sludge: "Anti-Muslim groups ACT for America (\$98,000), American Freedom Law



Center (\$40,000), David Horowitz Freedom Center (\$40,000), and Virginia Christian Alliance (\$3,600) have received thousands from NCF since mid-2014, and anti-immigrant nonprofits American Border Patrol (\$100) and The Remembrance Project (\$2,500) also got NCF funding." That's small potatoes when compared to Donor's Trust, which has given tens of millions to the Clarion Project alone in the first decade of this century. But the National Christian Foundation is still a player on the modern day Know Nothing map.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) estimates the total funding of anti-Muslim sources from foundations to be nearly \$1.5 billion over the three-year 2015-17 period. In fairness, the CAIR numbers include hundreds of millions given to Christian fundamentalist groups that have also published anti-Islamic theological statements and are not in the vanguard of promoting war-fever with Muslim countries. In short, Christian-aligned foundations are followers more than leaders in war-fever propaganda.

Interestingly, the Southern Poverty Law Center (which has had internal problems of its own in recent months) doesn't designate one of the most prominent wholesalers of fiction about Muslims a "hate group" (The Gatestone Institute), even though more moderate groups such as the Center for Immigration Studies have made their hate lists.

Gatestone Institute: The Lie Factory

But it's in the Gatestone Institute where the very worst elements of the neo-con warmongers, deep state spy agency officials and the Israeli lobby have coalesced. The Gatestone Institute disseminates the most outrageous lies about Muslim migration as a result of the West's wars in the Islamic Ummah, and they are retailed largely through conservative media organs.

Gatestone hoaxes, such as the phony Muslim rape wave in Sweden (The government's rape statistics hit the stratosphere after a 2005 Swedish government law that designated some consensual sex acts as "rape"), have been reliably copied from Gatestone origins to Breitbart, Alex Jones' InfoWars, the John Birch Society's The New American magazine, and others. The Gatestone Institute has also continued to promote the idea of "no-go zones" in European communities where Muslim immigrants had settled, even though the originator of the phrase, anti-Muslim academic Daniel Pipes, was forced to recant his earlier claims about this myth. Undaunted, Gatestone authors have continued to manufacture lies about the mythical zones of Sharia in Europe. And Gatestone has also hyped an alleged "crime wave" in Germany — which has admitted a large number of Muslim refugees — although the country has experienced the lowest crime rates since reunification in 1992. Despite record-low crime rates, Gatestone authors continue to beat the drums of an immigrant crime wave in Germany.

The transmission of Islamophobic lies from Gatestone to Breitbart is a natural distribution, as it was part of a vertical corporate merger of sorts in the war-hate industrial alliance. Hedge fund billionaire Robert Mercer sold his interest in Breitbart to his daughter Rebeckah beginning in 2018, who sits on the board of the Gatestone Institute. This makes for a more reliable and direct channel for anti-Muslim, pro-war propaganda making its way onto the Breitbart platform.

The founding force behind the Gatestone Institute is Sears & Roebuck heiress Nena Rosenwald. Rosenwald's family foundation is The Abstraction Fund, and she is a former board member of AIIPAC, the most powerful Israeli lobby in the United States. Gatestone gets its money from Rosenwald and her foundations, Long Island real estate developer Lawrence Kadish, the Mercer family foundations (complete donations in 2014), and Daniel Pipes' Middle East Forum.

But the Gatestone Institute has strong ties to Deep State military and intelligence agencies, with its past Chairman John Bolton now serving as Trump's National Security Advisor. Longtime Defense Department employee Harold Rhode also sits on the board; he was a key part of Bill Kristol's "Project

for a New American Century" that ginned up the case for war against Iraq in the early years of Bush the less. Former Bush-era Attorney General Michael Mukasey and Clinton-era CIA Director R. James Woolsey also serve on the Gatestone board, along with Richard Kemp, a former British soldier and intelligence officer.

And it's not just through neoconservative/Republican/right-wing platforms where Gatestone disseminates its anti-Muslim hysteria. Kadish, though a top Republican Party donor for decades, has been published in the Huffington Post repeatedly. So has Moroccan journalist Ahmed Charai, who is also on the Gatestone board of directors. The massive fear of immigrants generated by establishment "think-tanks" such as the Gatestone Institute is what makes wars in the Middle East politically sustainable over time.

The establishment wants Americans to fear immigrants. The more Americans fear their fellow human beings as a sub-human native criminal class, the more power it gives the Military-Industrial-Surveillance Complex.

If the war party wanted

to gin-up a war against Britain or France by telling the American people about the threatening British and French nuclear programs, or about Franco-hate against America, they'd be laughed out of office, measured for straight-jackets and escorted to the nearest sanitarium. But after tens of millions of dollars in propaganda deriding Muslim as vicious America-haters, it's a different story. Too much of the US general population is unfamiliar with Muslims as people and has become inoculated against opposition to attacking nations — like Iran — that have never attacked the United States.

Nativists have been using the same playbook for 180 years. The charges against Muslims and Latin Americans today are identical to the claims against Irish Catholic immigrants by the Know Nothings of the 1840s: Immigrants are prone to crime and terrorism, they're both lazy and take American jobs, they go on the dole too much, they don't assimilate, they're not loyal to the United States because of their religion, etc. There is some good news. Chapman University polls show a decline in fear of Muslims from 2016 to 2018. And the Chapman University poll data showed that more Americans are afraid of the US President than immigrants.

Insidious U.S. entraps HK with new Act

GLOBALTIMES — The US Senate introduced the bipartisan Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act on Thursday, while the House of Representatives' bill is expected to be approved on Friday. The act requires the US government to reaffirm Hong Kong's autonomy, human rights and democracy every year, and re-evaluate whether Hong Kong warrants a special status as a separate customs territory by Washington.

In other words, the current China-US tariff war has no direct impact on Hong Kong unless the region is stripped of separate customs territory treatment.

The US Congress' insidious act is to turn Hong Kong into a new tool to add pressure on the Chinese mainland. Meanwhile, the US is trying to incite complaints among Hong Kong residents against the mainland and create a fake impression that Beijing is threatening Hong Kong's special status. Washington is inflaming Hong Kong's situation.

Some Western politicians have never really thought of Hong Kong's welfare since its return to the motherland. As a child of China, Hong Kong was like being forced to be adopted, or abducted, by others. When the child was returned to its birth parents, what should people do if they really care about the child?

First, give the child good conditions. The UK may have had such an intention during its negotiations with China over the return of Hong Kong, although what it really cared about was maintaining its interests in Hong Kong. To some extent, the "one country, two systems" policy considered Hong Kong's experience of being adopted, and the Basic Law endowed Hong Kong with much better democratic conditions than the so-called democracy during British rule. Hong Kong's British governors were sent by the UK, but today Hong Kong's chief executive is elected according to the law.

Second, if Western countries regard themselves as Hong Kong's then adoptive parents, they should tell the child to get along well with its birth parents and adapt to the new environment, if they really love the child.

But the UK had been trying to sabotage Hong Kong's relations with its motherland. The last British governor of Hong Kong Christopher Patten created a series of incidents to incite Hong Kong's confrontation with the mainland when he left the region. After Hong Kong's return, the US continued to interfere in Hong Kong's affairs. This shows their dark mindset: If Hong Kong does not belong to the West, turn it into China's problem.

The US Congress has created a systematic threat to cancel Hong Kong's separate customs territory status, and this is like using a baby to threaten the parent: Promise me my conditions or I'll drop the baby. The US is ruining Hong Kong and is trying to make the mainland look cold-hearted.

Hong Kong's interests are tied to the mainland. We expect Hong Kong's promising future and feel hurt to see the disturbance. But US politicians will do anything to worsen Hong Kong's condition.

The global situation is changing profoundly. The US now regards China as its major strategic rival, so how can it be in the mood to care about Hong Kong's welfare? It only wants to use the region to restrain China. If people of Hong Kong are not vigilant against this, they will fall into the US trap as pawns.

It's time for Hong Kong and the mainland to unite in opposition to US strategic plots and manipulation. We should together maintain Hong Kong's prosperity, which concerns the interests of Hongkongers as well as the whole country. Hong Kong compatriots, please do not fall in Western elites' trap and be abducted by the few radical opposition forces. The mainland and Hong Kong are family. Facing international upheavals, we have no choice but to unite like a fortress.

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Apollo-era tech built foundation, but private industry now leads space innovation

Space travel technology may seem to have stalled since the Apollo and space shuttle eras, but private industry is now fueling rapid innovation.

Reusable rockets, commercialized by SpaceX and under development by others in the last few years, have dramatically lowered the cost of reaching space, along with other advances. Lessons learned from 135 shuttle missions and almost 20 years at the International Space Station have boosted knowledge about working and living in space.

The surge of innovation leading to the Apollo 11 moon landing 50 years ago was unprecedented, historic and fueled by the Cold War. As the nation looks back on five decades of space exploration since then, many have wondered why we aren't on the moon or even Mars.

"The innovation is coming along now because private industry is coming along now," retired shuttle astronaut and businessman Sid Gutierrez said. "Now you have people like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos who got in there and shook things up. After they shook it up, that opened the door for more people to come in."

Few people alive have Gutierrez's grasp of the evolution in rocket technology. Not only has he flown to space on top of a rocket, but he's also CEO of a new company called Rocket Crafters. And his father was part of the U.S. Army's special operation to recruit German rocket scientists after the Nazi defeat in World War II.

The Germans were the first to reach space with their V-2 rocket, designed to bomb Allied cities. Operation Paperclip is what brought the leader of Apollo rocketry, Wernher von Braun, from Germany to the United States.

"War is historically what drove innovation," Gutierrez said. "In the Cold War, we didn't really care that much about cost or even safety after launch if it was carrying a weapon. And money was essentially unlimited for the Apollo program."

Apollo's Saturn V rocket system was entirely disposable. Stages of the rocket either burned up in the atmosphere, crashed into the ocean, crashed into the moon or entered orbit around the sun or Earth.

The space shuttle was all about being reusable, but the shuttle never got to the frequency of launches that was originally envisioned,



and the main fuel tank was never reusable -- it simply dropped into the atmosphere and burned up into small pieces over the ocean. Shuttle boosters were reusable, but only after they fell into the ocean, which added a lot of other risks of damage.

In 2015, Blue Origin and SpaceX perfected landings of rocket boosters that actually fly back to Earth and land, making them less expensive and quicker to refurbish and turn around for another launch. SpaceX says its Falcon 9 Block 5 can be refueled with little need for any refurbishment.

In a 2017 presentation, Musk said throwing away rockets after one use is crazy.

"It is really crazy that we build these sophisticated rockets and then crash them every time we fly," he said. "This is mad. I cannot emphasize how profound this is and how important reusability is."

Today, a launch on a SpaceX Falcon Heavy, essentially three Falcon 9's strapped together, is advertised for \$90 million. That compares to \$350 million for a launch on its main competitor, a Delta IV Heavy by United Launch Alliance.

ULA says its long-standing success record for launches makes the extra cost worth it. But it also is developing a new rocket, the Vulcan, that will include reusable engines.

NASA, meanwhile, is developing the Space

Launch System with an SLS rocket, solid rocket boosters and the Orion spacecraft.

"The good thing about the new space companies and the venture capital involved is you are now putting a lot of new money into it," said Mitchell L. R. Walker, professor of aerospace engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

SpaceX has proven regular, commercial usage of concepts with which others had tinkered, including the landing of a first-stage booster and use of supercooled liquid oxygen, Walker said. Recovering a second stage is proving more difficult, although Musk tweeted out ideas in 2018 for an inflatable heat shield.

"It's great, but they're still on the path to proving total reusability over the long haul, and with a reliability needed to carry people," Walker said. "It has the potential to save taxpayers a lot."

The liquid fuel used in rockets hasn't changed much since the Apollo era. The basic liquids involved are liquid oxygen, liquid hydrogen and rocket-grade kerosene.

To make oxygen usable in a rocket, it has to be condensed and cooled below -297 degrees Fahrenheit. SpaceX took that one step further by cooling it more into "deep cryogenic" liquid oxygen. That makes it more dense, so it would take up less room in the

rocket, leaving it lighter or with more room for other things, Walker said.

Methane now is being included in development of next-generation rocket engines -- the BE-4 from Blue Origin and the Raptor from SpaceX -- in a bid for more efficiency. Methane also is considered to be something that could be produced on Mars -- the working target for a new generation of space exploration.

Seetha Raghavan, associate professor of aerospace at the University of Central Florida, noted that the shuttle had several reusability problems -- like heat shield tiles that needed to be replaced repeatedly.

"We've definitely come a long way," she said. "Rocket technology is more efficient and manufacturing is more cost-effective. Reusing a booster by having it fly back to the launch pad, without having to recover it, is very big."

Other advances have been made in learning about the surface of the moon and asteroids, allowing the moon to be a stopover on the way to Mars, Raghavan said.

"The combustion process is not that much different, but there's more going on than you can see," she said. "We know more about how these materials behave in extreme environments now, and we have a lot of experience and technology to help us test them."

The drawback to chemical, liquid rockets is painfully obvious looking at the history of rocketry: explosions.

Hybrid fuel systems are being attempted by Gutierrez's Rocket Crafters and by Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic. They use a solid fuel with a liquid oxidizer.

Rocket Crafters' solid portion is basically Lego-type plastic mixed with powdered aluminum, which only burns under precise conditions. The company says it is far more stable and less dangerous than a liquid-only rocket system.

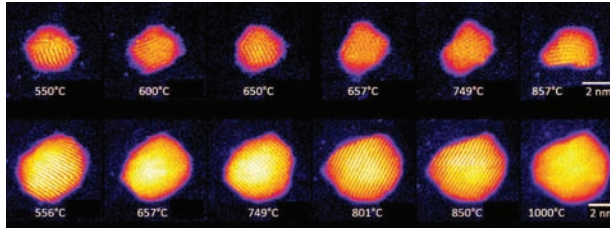
"SpaceX is doing a lot of nice innovation," Gutierrez said. "But given that they are still using liquid bi-propellant, there may be only so far they can go with that."

Mitchell also said he thinks more than chemical rockets will be needed if Mars really is a target.

"We need to get an electrical propulsion system with higher power to start pushing stuff off to Mars," he said.

(Source: UPI)

Research reveals liquid gold on the nanoscale



The research published in Nature Communications set out to answer a simple question - how do nanoparticles melt? Although this question has been a focus of researchers for the past century, it still is an open problem - initial theoretical models describing melting date from around 100 years, and even the most relevant models being some 50 years old.

Professor Richard Palmer, who led the team based at the University's College of Engineering said of the research: "Although melting behavior was known to change on the nanoscale, the way in which nanoparticles melt was an open question. Given that the theoretical models are now rather old, there was a clear case for us to carry out our new imaging experiments to see if we could test and improve these theoretical models."

The research team used gold in their experiments as it acts as a model system for noble and other metals. The team arrived at their results by imaging gold nanoparticles, with diameters ranging from 2 to 5 nanometers, via aberration corrected scanning transmission electron microscope. Their observations were later supported by large-scale quantum mechanical simulations.

Professor Palmer said: "We were able to prove the dependence of the melting point of the nanoparticles on their size and for the first time see directly the formation of a liquid shell around a solid core in the nanoparticles over a wide region of elevated temperatures, in fact for hundreds of degrees."

"This helps us to describe accurately how nanoparticles melt and to predict their behavior at elevated temperatures. This is a science breakthrough in a field we can all relate to - melting - and will also help those producing nanotech devices for a range of practical and everyday uses, including medicine, catalysis and electronics."

(source: eurekalert.org)

India plans to launch own space station



India will look to create its own space station following the completion of the country's first manned mission into space in 2022, its space agency chief said on Thursday.

The space station, where astronauts can stay for 15 to 20 days, would be placed in an orbit of about 400 kilometers (km) above the Earth, K. Sivan, chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) told a news conference.

The space station would weigh 20 tonnes, Sivan said.

The ISRO would take about five to seven years to launch the proposed space station after its first manned mission is completed in 2022, Sivan said. That mission, announced last year, will carry either two or three crew members to space for five to seven days in a craft placed in a low earth orbit.

On Wednesday, India also announced its second lunar mission which, if successful, would make it the fourth country to perform a "soft" landing on the moon and put a rover on it.

India is cultivating a reputation as a low-cost space power, after the 2014 launch of an unmanned Mars mission at a cost of \$74 million.

(Source: Reuters)

Scientists ask the public to help search for a rare breed of black hole

If you have a computer and a few spare moments, you can help search the cosmos for an elusive breed of black hole that astronomers once thought didn't exist.

Black holes come in two main types: stellar mass black holes, which generally have about 10-24 times the mass of our sun, and the much heavier variant known as super-massive black holes, which can be billions of times more massive. But astronomers have also found a handful of so-called intermediate mass black holes that fall between the two extremes.

Now a group from the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences is calling on the public to help detect more of these rare in-betweeners, which could yield insights into how the more common supermassive black holes form.

Volunteers simply need a computer with internet access and a mouse. After a brief tutorial on the project website, they are shown photos of spiral galaxies from around the universe and asked to trace the arms, a process that generally

takes about a minute or less. The scientists will then combine the tracings from 15 different volunteers to get a composite trace for each image. Ultimately, the goal is to find galaxies that are wound looser than normal, a shape that suggests an intermediate mass black hole may lurk at the center.

If the crowd sourced effort is fruitful, the researchers plan to use additional telescope observations and a different type of relationship -- between black hole mass and the scattering of stars near the galactic center -- to confirm the initial hints of an intermediate mass black hole.

Humans are better than computers at discerning patterns in difficult-to-interpret images of spiral galaxies, such as those with low contrast, broken lines, or other imperfections, said Patrick Truthardt, an astronomer at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. He spoke about the project at a press conference this week at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society in St. Louis.

(Source: Inside Science)



Out of their eggs, into the sky: how baby pterosaurs may have taken flight

Modern nature teaches us that flying isn't child's play. Newborn birds spend their early days in the nest, and bat pups don't take off for weeks on end, often requiring prodding from their mothers.

But what about baby pterosaurs?

Some researchers think the young of these flying reptiles that lived in the time of the dinosaurs also stayed on the ground for a while, tended by adults. Others argue the opposite: Young pterosaurs could immediately fend for themselves, hatching and heading straight for the skies.

A paper published Wednesday in Proceedings of the Royal Society B supports this stirring vision, marshaling evidence from all known pterosaur embryos to argue that the prehistoric creatures were flight-ready from birth.

The researchers took advantage of a fossil cache unearthed in northwest China in 2017. Sometime between about 145 and 100 million years ago, a flood rushed through the area and buried an entire colony of pterosaurs, said David Unwin, a paleobiologist at the University of Leicester in England and the study's lead author. The site has "adults and juveniles, and it's got lots and lots of eggs."

Over 300 have been found there so far, 16 with embryos preserved inside. But attempts to figure out the stage of development each embryo had reached have been "kind of ad hoc -- just look-at-it-and-guess," Dr. Unwin said. He and Charles Deeming, a zoologist at the University of Lincoln in England, set out to standardize the process.

The pair used fossils from that site, along with eggs and embryos from Argentina and



elsewhere in China. They first looked at limb lengths, along with egg size and shape. The researchers found that in general, smaller, narrower eggs represent early-stage embryos, while larger and rounder ones indicate a later stage.

Next, they examined patterns of bone ossification, or hardening, looking at embryos along with young pterosaurs, called flaplings. Overall, they compared data from specimens of nine pterosaur species, from Hamipterus tianshanensis -- the type in the flooded colony, which had a crested snout and a wingspan of up to 11-1/2 feet -- to the swallow-sized and stubby-tailed Anurognathus ammoni.

Because bones harden in a particular order, they can serve as "developmental markers," Dr. Unwin said. They then

matched these patterns to those observed in quails and alligators, both considered modern analogues of pterosaurs. This helped to sort the pterosaur embryos, from newly laid to about to hatch.

Along the way, they noticed something about one bone, the manus digit IV. Equivalent to our ring finger, this is a pterosaur's "wing finger," the long, flexible appendage that is attached to its wing membrane and allowed the animal to fly. In most vertebrates, that bone is one of the last to harden. Pterosaurs, though, "ossify it very early," he said.

To Dr. Unwin, this -- along with similarly early ossification of other important flight-related bones -- is further evidence that pterosaurs could get airborne right out of the egg.

A pterosaur from the species Ningchenopterus liuae, with a wingspan of around 6 inches, was probably only a few days old when it drowned in a lake in what is now Inner Mongolia. Dark stains around the arm and body are fossilized remains of its wing membranes.

"It's extremely unlikely that they would equip themselves with a flight apparatus if they were not going to use it," he said. He says it follows that these babies didn't require much oversight: "What do you need mummy and daddy for if you can do everything yourself?"

The study supports the idea that pterosaurs "required minimal parental oversight, if any, as hatchlings," said Luis Chiappe, a paleontologist at the Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County who was not involved in the research.

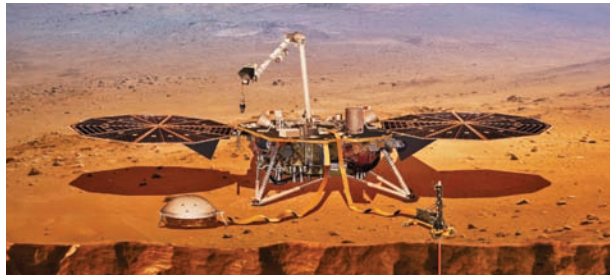
Other experts were convinced by the paper's assessment of embryo development, but not its behavioral conclusions.

In order to prove those, the study would need to compare the pterosaurs with megapodes, chicken-like birds from Australia that can fly from birth, said Edina Prondvai, a postdoctoral researcher at Ghent University in Belgium and the MTA-MTM-ELTE Research Group for Paleontology in Budapest. Kevin Padian, a biologist at the University of California, Berkeley, called the idea that hatchlings could support their own body mass in the air "quite a stretch," based on studies of birds.

Dr. Unwin replied that he would have liked to compare pterosaurs with megapodes, but could not find enough data, and that "pterosaurs are not birds."

(Source: New York Times)

NASA tries to get Martian "mole" working again



Scientists and engineers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), Pasadena, have a new strategy to get a troubled Mars instrument working again. The Heat Flow and Physical Properties Package was provided by the German Aerospace Centre (DLR) for the InSight Mars lander. The instrument's heat probe, known as the mole, should dig itself down as far as five meters into the Martian ground but came to a standstill on 28 February, having burrowed just 30cm (12 inches) below the surface.

It was first thought the mole may have hit a rock but several months of testing a replica on Earth have suggested a different reason. The mole uses a hammering action to push it deeper. Tests suggest the Martian soil is not providing enough friction for the probe to push against, so the probe is bouncing in place.

NASA now plans to lift the mole's support structure to see what is going on underneath. There is a risk, however, as they must be careful not to pull the mole out of the ground.

If successful, they could then press down on the area with the spacecraft's robotic arm to increase friction around the mole. The delicate procedure is scheduled to begin near the end of this month.

(Source: The Guardian)

67 fields of handicraft being practiced in Kashan

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Of 290 fields of handicraft, which are known in Iran, 67 are currently being practiced in Kashan, tourism chief of the oasis city said on Thursday.



More than 1000 citizens of Kashan are routinely engaged in 67 fields of handicrafts, Mehran Sarmadian said, ISNA reported. Over the past decade, a total of 12 high-quality works by natives of Kashan have been inscribed on the list of UNESCO Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts, and 33 have been honored with the national seal of excellence, he added. Many travelers opt to pass Kashan on their journeys between Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Yazd. The ancient city, which is one of most alluring destinations in the country, is sprawled on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir, a large desert lying in the middle of the Iranian plateau.

Man discovers snake in his bag after flying from Florida to Hawaii

A 20-year-old man flying from Fort Lauderdale to Hawaii got the shock of his life when he found he accidentally brought a teeny, tiny, slithery stowaway with him on his journey, MSN reported on Friday.

The Associated Press reported the man was unaware a southern black racer snake had found its way into his backpack somewhere along his route. He didn't discover the creature until he arrived all the way at his rental property in the community of Pukalani.

The non-venomous snake, officials told the AP, measured in at about a foot long and a quarter inch in diameter. Luckily, this one seemed to be fairly tiny — as NBC reported, the species can grow up to 6 feet in length.

After the snake slithered out of the man's bag the property owner reportedly informed the visitor that snakes are illegal in the state. The owner then alerted the police, who were able to capture the snake with a little help from the Department of Land and Natural Resources. The team is expected to transfer the snake to Oahu.

Although the man appeared to have no know how the snake got in his bag, he could have gotten into serious trouble.

Transporting illegal pets is a felony in Hawaii, according to the AP, with fines up to \$200,000 and 3 years in prison.

Oddly enough, this isn't the first (or second or third) time a snake has accidentally hitched a ride on a plane.

In 2017, a passenger found a five-foot-long snake hiding under a duffel bag after its owner left it behind. In February of this year, a woman found a python hiding in her shoe that had escaped Australia with her. And, in 2018, scientists reported that brown tree snakes were purposefully boarding planes from Guam to Hawaii all on their own. Because really, who doesn't love a vacation in Hawaii?

Next time you pack, maybe check your bags, shoes, and anywhere else a snake could be hiding. At the very least, ask it to cover its share of the airfare with you.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Itsukushima Shinto Shrine

A UNESCO World Heritage, the Island of Itsukushima has been a holy place of Shintoism since the earliest times. Itsukushima is situated in the Seto inland sea of Japan.

The first shrine buildings here were probably erected in the 6th century. The present shrine dates from the 13th century but is an accurate reflection of the 12th century construction style and was founded by the most powerful leader of the time, Taira no Kiyomori.



A UNESCO World Heritage site, the property covers 431.2 hectares on the Island of Itsukushima, and the buffer zone (2,634.3 ha) includes the rest of the island and part of the sea in front of Itsukushima-jinja.

The buildings of Itsukushima-jinja are in the general tradition of Japanese Shinto architecture, in which a mountain or natural object becomes the focus of religious belief to be worshipped from a shrine, generally constructed at the foot of the mountain.

The harmoniously arranged shrine buildings in the property are located on the sea and the scenery, with a trinity composed of the man-made architecture in the center, the sea in the foreground, and the mountains in the background, and have become recognized as a Japanese standard of beauty.

The sites reveal great artistic and technical skill and are unique among extant shrine buildings in Japan.

(Source: UNESCO)

Suitcase trade exports of handicrafts fetches Iran \$99m in year

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran earned some \$99 million from exporting handicrafts via suitcase trade (allowed for customs-free and tax-free transfer) during the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended March 20), the deputy director of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, said on Monday, CHTN reported.

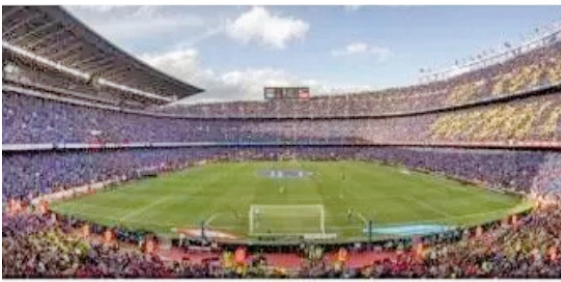
In addition, the country's handicrafts exports through customs reached \$289 million in the year 1397, showing three percent growth year on year, Pouya Mahmoudian said.

Iraq is the leading importer of Iranian

handicrafts and it also re-exports some of them to some countries, such a trend is also underway in the UAE, the official stated.

The United States is one of the destinations for suitcase trade exports of handicrafts, in particular traditional jewelry, personal-ornamentation, and handmade textile, she said.

Traditional ceramics, pottery vessels, handwoven cloths, precious and semi-precious gemstones, glasswork and woodwork are amongst Iranian handicraft exports to Germany, Armenia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, the Netherlands, France, Italy, South Africa and the Persian Gulf



Tourism Tech
ADVENTURES

UNWTO seeks to cement sports tourism sector

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) seeks to cement sports tourism sector, setting up an initiative that is aimed to identify projects and innovations that can transform sports tourism sector in the near future.

The UN body has announced the launch of the 1st UNWTO Sports Tourism Start-up Competition in close in collaboration with Spain's Barca Innovation Hub (BIHUB) and with the support of the Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC), according to a press release from the Organization.

"The 1st UNWTO Sports Tourism Start-up Competition, launched by UNWTO and BIHUB, with the support of QNTC, is looking for start-ups with disruptive ideas focused on

solving real needs and addressing knowledge gaps in the growing sports tourism sector."

Increasing demand from tourists and the growing influence of sports on destinations' popularity have combined to make sports tourism one of the segments with the greatest potential for socioeconomic development opportunities, attracting growing levels of government interest, the report said.

In all, 20 start-ups will be shortlisted by a panel of international experts and sports and tourism stakeholders, drawn from the public and private sectors, academia and civil society.

As part of the partnership with QNTC, the winning ideas will also be considered for implementation in Qatar, which is gearing up to host the FIFA World Cup 2022.

Rosewater festivals attract travelers to northern Iranian villages



HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Every year, by early June, rosewater festivals take center stage in Gildeh and several neighboring villages, attracting hundreds of travelers to Shaft county of the northern Gilan province.

Shaft embraces some six hectares of very sweet smelling kind of roses, best known as Mohammadi roses in the country.

The county, however, is little-known when it comes to such festivals that are more established in the oasis city of Kashan or its surrounding villages in central Iran.

Visitors may revel in lush flower gardens or witness how locals make rosewater step by step from harvesting to steaming damask rose petals. They usually buy bottles of fresh rosewater and other household products.

Golab or rosewater is a fragrant distillate of the roses which is used nationwide in diverse traditional dishes to flavor them or consumed as a religious perfume as well. Distillation ceremonies are locally called "Golab-giri".

Almost every 30 Kg of rose petals plus 80 liters of water are poured into each pot that is connected to metal pipes for the steam moving through to obtain the hydrosol. The waste of distillation is used for feeding livestock or composting.

Many believe traditionally distilled rosewater is of higher quality from that of produced in factories probably due to shorter time interval between the harvest and distillation practices.



Ancient Afghan citadel collapses, cultural heritage sites at risk

GHAZNI, Afghanistan (Reuters) — An ancient tower dating back 2,000 years in the historic Afghan city of Ghazni collapsed last week, local officials said, raising concerns about the vulnerability of the country's cultural heritage and the government's ability to protect them.

The old citadel known as Ghaznain Fort originally had 36 towers, but 14 of the towers had collapsed in recent years due to decades of war, heavy rain and neglect.

The fort is one of dozens of unique historic sites in Afghanistan - ranging from the pre-Islamic Buddhist center in the Bamiyan valley to the 12th century minaret of Jam in a remote area of Ghor province - in urgent need of protection.

Officials in Ghazni, which nearly fell to the Taliban last year in some of the heaviest fighting seen in the war, said the tower collapsed on Tuesday following heavy rain. A short video posted on social media shows it crumbling but local residents say negligence also contributed to its collapse.

"The government paid no attention to the sites and didn't build canals to divert flood water," said Ghulam Sakhi, who lives near the citadel.



"We have warned the government about the dire condition of the citadel but no one visited," Sakhi said.

Mahbubullah Rahmani, acting director of culture and information in Ghazni, said heavy rain and recent fighting had contributed to the tower's collapse but said the gov-

ernment was working on a plan to protect the site from complete destruction.

He said a German archaeologist had worked at the site as recently as 2013.

Ghazni, a strategically vital center on the main highway between Kabul and southern Afghanistan and two hour drive from the capital, is home to a range of cultural and archeological artifacts, some of which date back to pre-Islamic period.

The province and its cultural heritage was officially declared as Asian Capital of Islamic Culture in 2013 by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, a Morocco-based body created in 1981, supported by UNESCO.

The collapse of the tower in Ghazni follows concern over the condition of the 900-year-old Minaret of Jam, in Ghor, which has been on the UNESCO List of World Heritage Properties in Danger since 2002.

The Taliban during their austere regime from 1996-2001, before they were toppled by the U.S. and coalition force in late 2001, blew up two giant Buddha statues in central Bamiyan province, calling them idols.

Ancient Egyptian fortress built by Ramses II reveals its secrets

An ancient Egyptian fortress built by the Pharaoh Ramses II is revealing its secrets to archaeologists.

Researchers discovered the remains of two new buildings at the fortress site in Beheira Governorate northwest of Cairo, Egypt Today reports.

The circular-shaped buildings were used as stores, according to a Facebook post by Egypt's Ministry of Antiquities. Animal bones were found within the silos.

Ramses II, also known as Ramses the Great, ruled Egypt from 1279 BC. to 1213 BC. He is credited with expanding Egypt's

reach as far as modern Syria to the east and Sudan to the south.

Egypt continues to reveal fresh details of its rich history. Archaeologists recently uncovered an ancient cemetery near the famous Giza pyramids just outside Cairo.

In a separate project, experts uncovered the 2,500-year-old remains of a powerful high priest in dramatic fashion.

The secrets of a mysterious "Tomb of the Warriors" were also recently revealed in a PBS documentary, and solving an ancient puzzle, archaeologists discovered the wreck of an extremely rare vessel that traveled the

Nile around 2,500 years ago.

In another project, archaeologists recently found a large ram-headed sphinx that is linked to King Tutankhamun's grandfather. In other projects, a teenage girl's skeleton was discovered in a mysterious grave near the Meidum pyramid, south of Cairo.

In April, experts announced the discovery of dozens of mummies in ancient desert burial chambers. Archaeologists also recently explained the strange brown spots on some of the paintings in King Tutankhamun's tomb.

In January, archaeologists announced the discovery of ancient tombs in the Nile

Delta north of Cairo. In a separate project, two ancient tombs dating back to the Roman period were uncovered in Egypt's Western Desert.

In another project, archaeologists discovered a stunning sphinx statue at an ancient temple in southern Egypt.

Last summer, experts unlocked the secrets of a mysterious ancient 'cursed' black granite sarcophagus. The massive coffin, which was excavated in the city of Alexandria, was found to contain three skeletons and gold sheets with the remains.

(Source: Fox News)



Foreign travelers browse handicrafts at a Tehran crafts exhibit.

littoral states to name a few.

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

A total of 7.8 million foreign nationals

visited Iran during 1397 that shows a 52.5 percent increase year on year, and outbound passengers added up to 7 million during the same year, according to official data compiled by the CHHTO.

Times rankings: Top Iranian universities on the list

1 -> University of Guilan (501–600), Iran University of Science and Technology (501–600), Isfahan University of Technology (501–600), Sharif University of Technology (501–600) and University of Tehran (501–600) are on the list.

The Iranian universities Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, University of Mazandaran, Shahid Beheshti University, Shiraz University, Shiraz University of Technology, University of Tabriz, University of Zanjan rank between 601–800 at the table.

Alzahra University, University of Birjand, University of Isfahan, Kharazmi University, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Shahrood University of Technology, Urmia University and Yazd University rank 801+ on the table.

Engineering and technology
A total of 21 Iranian universities are named at the 2019 Times Higher Education World University Rankings table for engineering and technology subjects.

The 2019 engineering and technology ranking is expanded to include 903 universities, up from 501 last year.

According to the table recently released, the universities assessed in different fields of general engineering, civil engineering, chemical engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical and aerospace engineering.

Babol Noshirvani University of Technology and University of Tehran are top amongst the Iranian universities ranking 251–300. They are followed by the Sharif University of Technology, University of Mazandaran, University of Kashan and University of Guilan (301–400).

Amirkabir University of Technology and Isfahan University of Technology rank 401–500. Shiraz University of Technology, Shiraz University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad and University of Tabriz rank 501–600.

Shahid Beheshti University, University of Zanjan, Urmia University, Shahrood University of Technology, Kharazmi University, University of Isfahan and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University rank 601–800 and on the bottom of the list are Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman and Yazd University with 801+ ranking.

The University of Oxford leads the table for the first time, after overtaking Stanford University and the California Institute of Technology. Meanwhile, Harvard University joins the table in third place.

Life sciences
Eleven Iranian universities are on ranking table for life sciences, which includes agriculture and forestry, biological sciences, veterinary



science and sport science subjects.

The 2019 life sciences ranking has expanded to include 751 universities, up from 502 last year. Isfahan University of Technology is the only Iranian university, which ranks from 501–600.

The Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, University of Guilan, Iran University of Medical Sciences, University of Isfahan, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Shahid Beheshti University, Shiraz University, University of Tabriz, University of Tehran and Urmia University are ranked +601.

Harvard University tops the table for the third year in a row, while the University of Cambridge remains in the second, and the University of Oxford holds on to third.

Computer science
Nine Iranian universities are amongst top universities worldwide in computer science, which has expanded to include 684 universities, up from 301 last year.

The University of Oxford leads the table for the first time, after overtaking Stanford University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, while ETH Zurich is now in second place.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Isfahan University of Technology, Shiraz University, University of Tabriz and University of Tehran are in the table with 401–500 ranking.

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, K.N. Toosi University of Technology and Shahid Beheshti University ranking 501–600 are on the table followed by University of Isfahan with 601+ ranking.

Clinical, pre-clinical and health
Five Iranian universities are named on the clinical, pre-clinical and health university ranking which includes medicine, dentistry and other health subjects.

The 2019 clinical, pre-clinical and health ranking has expanded to include 721 universities, up from 501 last year.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences is on top of Iranian universities with 401–500 ranking level followed by Iran University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences and University of Tabriz (501–600). The Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences is on the list with 601+.

The University of Oxford leads the table for the eighth consecutive year, while UCL joins the top 10 at eighth place, up from 12th.

Business and economics
University of Tehran (301–400) and University of Isfahan (501+) are on ranking table for business and economics amongst 585 universities, up from 200 last year.

The subject highlights the universities that are leading across business and management, accounting and finance, and economics and econometrics subjects.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology has overtaken Stanford University to claim first place in this year's business and economics table.

Arts and humanities
In arts and humanities, the University of Tehran with 401+ ranking is the only Iranian university in the list. The ranking has is expanded to include 506 universities, up

from 401 last year.

The subject highlights the universities that are leading across art, performing arts, design, languages, literature, linguistics, history, philosophy, theology, and architecture and archaeology subjects.

Stanford University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology take the top two places in the table for the second year in a row, while the University of California, Berkeley joins the top 10 at ninth, up from 11th.

Education
The University of Tehran is the only Iranian academic center with 301–400 ranking in the education ranking list.

The subject highlights the issues that are leading across education, teacher training and academic studies in education subjects.

The 2019 education ranking has also expanded to include 428 universities, up from 100 last year.

Stanford University tops this year's education table for the second consecutive year, while Harvard University maintains second position. The University of California, Berkeley completes the top three in third place, up from fifth.

Social science
With 401–500 ranking in social sciences, the University of Tehran is the only Iranian academic center in the table, which is expanded to include 666 universities, up from 400 last year.

The social science highlights the universities that are leading across sociology, geography, politics and international studies, and communication and media studies subjects.

The University of Oxford tops this year's social sciences table for the second year in a row, after becoming the first university of UK to take pole position in the table last year.

Higher education agenda for five decades

Times Higher Education is the data provider underpinning university excellence in every continent across the world.

The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, founded in 2004, provide the definitive list of the world's best universities.

The overall THE World University Rankings, featuring 1,000 institutions, are accompanied by a series of subject-specific rankings to help students determine where to study arts and humanities, business and economics, computer science, education, engineering and technology, law, life sciences, clinical, pre-clinical and health, physical sciences, psychology and social sciences.

A center for cultural, tourism startups to be established in Tehran

TECHNOLOGY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Innovation House, a center active in the field of media and blockchain, and the Abbasabad Lands Rehabilitation Company signed an agreement to establish a center in Tehran's Abbasabad neighborhood for startups active in the field of culture and tourism.



The Innovation House plans to use virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) techniques at the Ab-o-Atash Park in Abbasabad for children, the head of Innovation House's accelerator center announced.

Mehdi Sedaqat said that they plan to initiate Business-to-Consumer (B2C) model which can be used by families.

The Innovation House supports entrepreneurs to commercialize their ideas and create networks to connect startups to investors. It also holds courses on e-business and provides co-working space for new emerging businesses.

Could digital assistants be our personalized toxicity filters for social media?

Social platforms have struggled to contain the rising tide of toxicity and hate that have made them increasingly less welcoming and inclusive. Their go-to solution to date has been to chase quick-fix filters that target only the most egregious hate speech, while ignoring the far more prevalent casual toxicity. Could our future digital assistants act as personalized toxicity filters for social media, shielding us with custom tailored blockades against the hate and horrors that affect each of us the most?

Today's go-to solution for social media's toxicity is the hate speech filter, designed to target an extremely narrow range of the most egregious statements. While an important first step, these filters address only a microscopic fraction of the total social toxicity.

Platforms are loathe to move much beyond selected topics like overt hate speech because of fears that banning all harmful content would actually remove much of the informality and stream-of-consciousness speech that has made social media so commercially successful. After all, if users could not use profanity, sarcasm or emotionally-laden diatribes, how would they express themselves online?

Making the toxicity filtering problem far harder is the simple fact that we are not all alike. We each have unique traumas and sensitivities that might make one person's desired content another's pain.

A couple who has just experienced a miscarriage will today be barraged with endless cheerful advertisements for products, toys, services and experiences for the child they will never meet. As they turn to social media to seek solstice and comfort from friends and family, the algorithms powering those platforms will be entirely oblivious to their loss and will bombard them with ads that cause horrific pain.

Even if that couple knows that Facebook has a specific setting to turn off ads for child products and has the composure in their moment of grief to wade through menu after menu to find it, they will likely still confront countless child-related ads, making it impossible to escape their grief.

Similarly, someone recovering from alcoholism might not wish to see endless advertisements for boozy weekends and winery outings.

Beyond such obvious examples, traumas can manifest themselves in far more complex ways from our unique lived experiences. Someone who almost drowned as a child might suffer panic attacks from being confronted with summertime ads for pools in their area, while someone who almost died from a food allergy might be traumatized by endless images of that food item in their news feed from well-meaning friends that don't know about their allergy or experience.

Today's social filters are designed around the idea of banning universally toxic topics like hate speech. Ironically, for platforms that intimately personalize their content streams, the major platforms have yet to roll out personalized toxicity filters that would learn from the sensitivities of their users and allow fine-grained customization.

Perhaps that is the role our digital assistants of the future could play.

Imagine a digital assistant that could curate all of the social posts arriving in our news feeds in real-time, scanning each against a personalized model that removes posts that would be traumatic to us, regardless if to others they might be acceptable or even welcome.

Our assistant could learn through our behaviors and feedback over time what kind of content is harmful to us individually, becoming ever better at protecting us and even adapting to new traumas in our lives. The death of a beloved pet would cause our assistant to proactively immediately filter out the pet ads and happy pet posts we once embraced, until the pain of our loss has subsided.

Such a personalized toxicity filter would not entirely strip away the reality of the world to present a caricature of a "happy" utopia. Rather, it would merely filter the toxicity that affects us directly, allowing us to experience the world's negativity without becoming traumatized and without confronting hateful attacks directed at us personally or our demographics.

Putting this all together, perhaps someday the social networks will build customized toxicity filters that learn our unique vulnerabilities and create a more welcoming and inclusive environment. At best, however, each platform would have its own filters with differing abilities and knowledge about us, creating an uneven filtering landscape that is reset each time we join a new network.

In the meantime, perhaps the coming era of more advanced digital assistants might offer a world of universal filtering, protecting us from the internet's worst.

(Source: forbes.com)

How to use technology to work more effectively

Efficiency is something that we wish to avail not just on professional grounds, but even also on the personal front. With every changing technology and constant introduction of new innovations, it will not be wrong to commit that technology has created a huge impact on both sides of coins of our lives.

While for some, the modern day smartphone is the easiest way to reach their eventual goals, for few it's a device that can distract you while working. But the truth is that with proper discipline and efforts, technology can be used to work more effectively in all aspects of lives.

Be it your home, office, school, college, meeting a doctor, bringing in grocery, or any other thing, if you follow it the right way then technology can help everyday processes to be streamlined and hence increase the efficiency.

So, if you are still not able to figure out the proper ways of using technology to work more effectively in various spheres of life, then here we present you the best ways to use technology. With these ways, you will not increase your productivity, but will also learn to streamline things using technology and eventually reach your final goals in a hassle-free manner.

Using the right technology is the key
The very aspect to consider while using any technological device is to employ the right type of technology. This decision greatly impacts that whether the technology is a boon or a curse to your productivity.

Just analyze the area of your life where you wish to use the technology and identify that if the tool is appropriate to fill the gap or not.

Switch to automation tools
One easy way to use technology to work more effectively is to switch to tools that can automate everything. Whether you need to pay your bill or need to schedule an appointment or update your contact list, if you have that one perfect tool that can automatically do all such tasks then think how wonderful it would be!

Using automation tools will reduce all your efforts to more than half and will offer you an easy way to digitize processes that you are doing manually. This will make everything so effortless for you and will surely enhance your overall productivity.

Use technology where you need it the most
No need to depend totally on technology. I don't want you to just become a rusted machine. Rather use technology for carrying transactions and in areas where you need them the most.

For example, rather than going to the grocery store or getting milk from the dairy, you can always rely on your mobile apps to get necessary things right at your door. In another example, you can use elements like Headspace and Evernote to keep a track record of your stuff, which most of the time you need to do writing on a pad or a page.

Presently, there is a promising technological solution to almost every problem. So, just select the areas where you need technology the most and you will get time to focus on more important things and increase your efficiency.

Using chrome extensions is an intelligent way
Everyone wishes to get more tasks done in less time. This is the truth. One of the best ways for this is to use Chrome



extensions that allow you to access things faster.

There are multiple chrome extensions available online that have been designed to add ease to your everyday work, particularly on the professional front. Using such extensions is very easy and moreover, you will considerably save lots of time. So, if you want to know an easy solution to increase your productivity, then this is one of the best ways.

Use a calendar app for organizing your time
If you are not able to identify the best way to use technology to work more effectively, then this one is just perfect for you.

No need to stick to too many apps or devices. All you need to do is to use the latest calendar app for organizing your stuff. You can use these apps to get reminders for important things, numbers, events, meetings, and other schedules.

If all such data is saved in the app, then your mind will have lots of free space to do other important things. This way you will not just be able to do all things on time, but will also be able to obtain increased productivity.

Take benefit of free applications
From the customer point of view, free applications are always welcomed and the pocket-friendly way to meet more solutions at less cost. So, wait no more. Take benefit of the free applications to make your life more efficient!

Grocery apps, home electronics monitoring apps, pickup and drop cab apps, and other such applications are just a few examples that charge no money to install and offer service for free of cost. You only have to pay for the products or services which you use, like the grocery you purchase, or the cab fare.

Don't fluff yourself with technology
It is true that workflow yields and automation of procedures can lead to greater efficiency. But this may work only if you use it intelligently and precisely.

Hence, make sure that you don't use too much of technologies and devices on one hand. This might make you confused and land up in a situation where everything is messed. Just be thoughtful, decisive, and intelligent while making an appropriate decision so that you don't end up in a troublesome situation, which is the case with most of the individuals out there.

Begin with easy-to-use technological means:
The best way to increase your efficiency with technology is, to begin with, an easy-to-use technological plug-in or device. The easiest way is to begin optimizing the existing programs. For example, you can use Boomerang for your Outlook emails

and reminder system. This tool will help you to manage your Outlook in a better way and to clean up the inbox by archiving the vital messages and bringing them when you require them.

Get consistent access to data
Another way to use technology for better productivity is to get uninterrupted access to data and information. You can develop a reliable and secure network on the basis of intelligent routers and let all your employees access that information.

This will ensure that the members of your organization are always aware of challenges and changes that need to be done and to react instantly to external changes.

Use video-conferencing while you are traveling
If you are a person who travels a lot and wants to keep in touch with your employees, customers, and other related professionals, then using video-conferencing is a great technique.

This is a way to give them a level of personal service that they must be expecting from you. At the same time, you can communicate with anyone and from anywhere without actually reaching to them virtually.

With this technology, you can talk to your client and other professionals via PC and have a face-to-face conversation with ease.

Offer your customers with round-the-clock support and service

These days the customers have become more demanding than ever. All they demand is timely and round-the-clock service for all sorts of products and services.

The best way to fulfill this request is to create a website that offers the option of FAQs, forums, comments, feedback, and others. Your website will act as a direct tool of communication between you and your customers.

The best thing about creating a website is that, it can be built at very competitive prices and can also serve you as a platform to showcase your offerings to your customers.

Use technology to market your products and offerings

Your sales and marketing team must be using a lot of materials and colorful brochures to promote your company's products and offerings. This is a great expense to any organization.

An efficient way to reduce such expenses is to use technology and to create a sales and product presentation that can be emailed to the clients.

With a professional presentation comprising interactive pages, video clips, multimedia sound, and company's information, it will be easier and cost-effective to present your offerings to the customers.

Use technology to reach places faster
Whether you need to reach to your office, or home, or any other place, you can always use technology to reach to your places at a very faster pace.

Google Maps, Waze, Beat the Traffic are some of the applications that can help you identify the faster route to any location quickly. Such apps make traveling simpler and easier for you. Even using these apps can help you avoid stuck in traffic. Hence technology can be used to reach places faster and without experiencing issues.

(Source: wisestep.com)

Iranian cyclists to ride around the world planting trees, promoting peace

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Two Iranian cyclists, Keramat Azizzadeh and Abdollah Mesbah, have started their trip around the world on their bikes to plant trees and promote peace, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

The two cyclists have marked the beginning of their journey by planting trees at Department of Environment with environment chief Issa Kalantari in attendance.



Azizzadeh, and Mesbah are ambassadors of peace and environmental activists who dedicated 17 years of their life to travel around the world and convey peace messages on their bikes.

Azizzadeh told IRNA that “we have so far planted 2,010 saplings in 5 continents, in an attempt to promote protection of the environment, healthy living and encouraging cycling to tackle air pollution around the world.

“We start our trip in Iran by touring 7 provinces of Alborz, Qazvin, Gilan, Ardabil, East and West Azarbaijan, and plant trees in those provinces,” he added.

“After these provinces, we will travel to Georgia, Armenia, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Austria, Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and South America, to cultivate 1,400 trees.

The journey will take 6 months, he concluded.

Bermuda land snail: An animal ‘back from the dead’

Thousands of critically endangered snails have been released into the wild after being rescued from the edge of extinction, with a little help from a British zoo.

The greater Bermuda land snail was thought to have disappeared for many years until an empty shell turned up in the territory’s capital city, Hamilton.

Live snails were then found among litter in a nearby alleyway. Some were flown to Chester Zoo for a unique breeding programme.

More than 4,000 snails raised at the zoo have now been taken back to the island and released.

Many more captive snails will soon be returned to their homeland to help give the species a new lease of life.

Mark Outerbridge, a wildlife ecologist for the Bermuda government, said the snail was a “Lazarus species”, which was considered extinct not so long ago.

Then, in 2014, a man walked into his office in the capital, Hamilton, holding a fresh snail shell.

“It turned out that, yes, this was in fact the greater Bermuda land snail, a species that we thought had gone extinct 40 years earlier,” he said.

“He came back the next day with a fresh one, a live one in his hand, and that’s how I was thrust into this conservation project.” A small but thriving population of land snails was discovered behind a restaurant. The gastropods were living among litter - specifically inside thrown-away plastic bags - in a “dark wet alley”, surrounded by four-storey buildings.

(Source: BBC)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Seabirds: back from the edge of extinction

(July 27, 2000)

Six pairs of Chinese crested terns have been seen rearing chicks on a tiny islet which is visited by fisherman hunting for eggs. It had been thought that this bird was extinct. BBC Science reporter Toby Murcott reported.

The last confirmed sighting of the Chinese crested tern was in 1937 - but after more than sixty years **classified** as extinct the **species** has returned from the dead. The birds were **spotted** by a tourist, who sent photographs to the Wild Bird Federation, Taiwan, part of the global Birdlife International. The excited **ornithologists** carefully examined the photos and confirmed that the tern is alive and well. The exact location of the **islet** where the birds have been found nesting is being kept a closely guarded secret to prevent them being disturbed. Egg **poaching** probably contributed to their decline in the first place.

But it will be a challenge to protect the few remaining birds, as so little is known about these **elusive creatures**. One idea that’s worked in other areas of **conservation** is to encourage people living nearby to benefit from protecting the species; fishermen could take birdwatchers to see these rare seabirds rather than collecting their eggs. With the rate of extinction **estimated** at around one hundred species per day, conservationists are taking at least a **glimmer** of hope from this one species still hanging on to life - just.

Words

classified: if things are classified they are divided into groups so that those with similar characteristics are in the same group

species: a class of animals or plants whose members have their main characteristics in common

spotted: if you spot something you notice it even though it may not be obvious

ornithologists: bird expert

islet: a small island

poaching: hunting, trapping or catching animals or eggs illegally, without permission on someone else’s land

elusive creatures: a creature that is hard to find

conservation: the preservation and protection of the environment

estimated: if you estimate an amount or a quantity, you calculate it approximately or say what it is likely to be

glimmer: a glimmer of something is a faint sign of it

(Source: BBC)

Human-animal interactions: Hospitable locals play host to storks for ages in Iran

1 → Mousa Madhajji, an environmental expert told ISNA that the greatest population of storks and storks’ nests in the country is in southwestern Khuzestan province, as this year 57 active nests have been identified in the province, which belong to white storks.

Temperate species like the white stork, black stork and yellow-billed stork live in Iran who undertake long annual migrations in winter, he said, adding, stork population started to decline in the country and some areas which were once home to flocks of storks are not witnessing even a pair of them such as Ahvaz city.

Although, there have been times when the population had fallen to fewer than some pairs in the entire country, even in places identified with the white stork for centuries, conservation measures successfully increased the population of birds thanks to the locals’ efforts, he stated.

The nests are typically used for years, so nest change is often related to a change in the pairing and failure to raise young the previous year, and younger birds are more likely to change nesting sites, he noted.

Dezfool city currently holds the highest number of active nests in the province,



Years ago, storks have managed to find a way of living with humans, preferring human settlements and rooftops for nesting to more natural habitats like treetops, and surprisingly, humans also have rarely attacked or persecuted them.

Iran to implement food safety program

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A food safety document will be approved and implemented in the future in the country, Vahid Mofid, an official with the Food and Drug Administration has stated.

The document is under review and must be approved by the health commission of the Majlis (Iranian Parliament), which is hoped to soon go into effect, he said, IRNA reported on Friday.

The document is consisting of standards through which food safety is best ensured; the whole food production process from cultivation to markets will be under control, it also identifies and controls hazards in the production, manufacturing and handling of food rather than relying on end product standards alone, he explained.

The standards enable the country to oblige food businesses to meet the document principles, they will be subject to periodic observations by a suitably qualified food safety auditor, he added.



He went on to note that the amount of toxins consumed, the types of fertilizers used and the ways food is distributed,

11m ha of plains require aquifer, watershed management

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Some 11 million hectares of the country’s plains need watershed and aquifer management plans, so they must be prepared in this regard, director of watershed management at Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization has said.

Watershed management aims at the sustainable distribution of its resources and the process of creating and implementing plans, programs, and projects to sustain and enhance watershed functions that affect the plant, animal, and human communities within the watershed boundary.

Features of watershed that agencies seek to manage include water supply, water quality, drainage, storm water runoff, water rights,

and the overall planning and utilization of watersheds. Landowners, land use agencies, storm water management experts, environmental specialists, water use surveyors and communities all play an integral part in watershed management.

The vision of the aquifer management is to identify and map aquifers at the micro level, to quantify the available groundwater resources, and to propose plans appropriate to the scale of demand and aquifer characteristics, and institutional arrangements for participatory management.

Over the past 10 years, the country experienced 11 millimeters of rainfall decline while evaporation rate increased by 54 millimeters, ISNA quoted Khoshroo Shahbazi as saying on Thursday.



He went on to add that this led to a reduction in groundwater level; one of the scientific solutions to offset this deficit is the implementation of watershed and aquifer plans, which must be conducted on over 11 million hectares of the plains across the country.

Last year, a total budget of \$200 million from the National Development Fund ear-

which are mainly set up on the power towers, he stated.

He went on to say that due to the birds’ tendency to nest on high settlements specially electricity towers or lamp posts, electricity distribution companies can turn to bird-friendly associations and build them safer man-made nests on the power towers.

This can flourish the stork’s population in the province of Khuzestan and to expand in other areas favorable to these species, he highlighted.

With the start of summer, locals started to build tens of nests for storks in the western city of Marivan, Kordestan province, which attracted many of the storks to stay during the warm season.

Bird population increase over time mostly demonstrate a direct relationship between the flourishing of bird species with human flourishing; storks are also likely to expand whenever the buildings and human-inhabitation expands, however, there have been cases that human population raise have resulted in bird species population decline, yet historical ecology may be a reminder to realize that how much blessing “birds” can bring us and how human must reconcile with nature.

the quality of water and the irrigation methods are defined in the food safety document, as these factors affect the quality of the food products.

Food policy is cross sectoral, so the document emphasizes on a focused integrated policy, according to which related devices are obliged to well cooperate for the best food quality, he concluded.

Food safety is important as it helps to protect consumer from the risk of food borne illnesses. It also helps to prevent consumers from risks of health –related conditions such as allergy and even death.

It also protects food processing establishments from product recalls which results in financial losses due to unsafe products. Other issues due to unsafe products which can impact a business include: rejected products, possible lawsuits and business closure by the public health authorities due to reports of unsafe product sold to the general public.

Climate change: Arctic permafrost now melting at levels not expected until 2090

Permafrost hs begun thawing in the Canadian Arctic more than 70 years early because of climate change, according to new research.

A “series of anomalously warm summers” has dramatically accelerated melting rates at three sites despite average annual ground temperatures remaining low. Ponds and hillocks have formed as a result.

It had been thought that the permafrost - ground that remains frozen for at least two years - would remain until at least 2090.

But the study found thawing levels were above 150 to 240 per cent above historic levels.

Researchers called this a “truly remarkable amount”.

Mould Bay on Prince Patrick Island was the worst-affected site, according to the study, published on the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

There, permafrost thawing levels were 240 per cent higher than historic levels and the ground sank 90cm over the course of the study which ran for over 12 years, between 2003 and 2016.

Researchers also recorded thawing at depths not expected until air temperatures rose to levels that the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted it would reach in 2090.

Along with Mould Bay, researchers observed thermokarsts - a type of land surface that occurs when the ice melts in permafrost, characterised by uneven ground with low rounded hills and small ponds - at three sites along the 430 mile section of the high Arctic in Canada they were monitoring.

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → C

20,000 residential units to be constructed for the deprived

The Welfare Organization and the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to construct 20,000 housing units for the financially struggling families, Mehr reported.

Alireza Tabesh, the Foundation’s head, and Vahid Qobadi Dana, the Organization’s head, inked the MOU during a meeting held in Tehran on Monday. As per the agreement, 20,000 housing units will be provided to breadwinners with disabilities, breadwinner women, and the ex-addicts under the Organization’s coverage residing in villages with a population of less than 25,000, Qobadi Dana explained.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“deka-, deca-, dec-”

■ **Meaning:** ten

■ **For example:** The academic *decathlon* is a team competition wherein students match their intellects with students from other schools.

PHRASAL VERB

Hem somebody/ something in

■ **Meaning:** to make someone feel that they are not free to do what they want to do

■ **For example:** They hem in the child with endless rules and restrictions.

IDIOM

Bulldoze someone into doing something

■ **Explanation:** a person who is bulldozed into doing something is forced to do it, especially by being bullied or intimidated

■ **For example:** The immigrants were bulldozed into accepting the work.

احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسكونی برای محرومان

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر تفاهم نامه مشترک برای احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسكونی برای محرومان بین بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و سازمان بهزیستی کشور منعقد شد.

تفاهم نامه احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسكونی روستایی با حضور علیرضا تابش رئیس بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و وحید قبادی دانا رئیس سازمان بهزیستی کشورروز دوشنبه به امضا رسید.

قبادی دانا گفت: این تفاهم نامه به منظور ساخت ۲۰ هزار واحد مسكونی برای معلولین سرپرست خانوار، زنان سرپرست خانوار، و بهبودیافتگان از بلای اعتیاد که در روستاها و شهرهایی با جمعیت کمتر از ۲۵ هزار نفر ساکن و تحت پوشش بهزیستی هستند؛ منعقد می‌شود.

Top Bahraini court upholds jail terms against dozen anti-regime activists

TEHRAN — Bahrain's supreme court of appeals has upheld jail terms, ranging from life imprisonment to three years in prison, against a dozen anti-regime activists.

On Friday, the Court of Cassation upheld life terms for four convicts and sentenced seven others to between three and 10 years in jail. The last defendant was handed a six-year sentence.

The defendants were found guilty of "planting an explosive device underground in a sand yard in the northern village of Kar-rana, luring police forces to the area and then detonating the bomb."

Meanwhile, a Bahraini inmate has launched a hunger strike in protest at harsh prison conditions and mistreatment at the hands of prison authorities.

Female human rights campaigner Ebte-sam al-Sa'eq wrote on her Twitter page that 29-year-old Hussein al-Tawil has been on hunger strike since Monday, and his family is fearing for his life as the detainee suffers from diabetes and serious blood sugar fluctuations.

"Taweel is dying a thousand times a day due to symptoms of the disease. His eyesight



is affected by unstable blood sugar levels, and irregular treatment doses," Sa'eq said. Bahraini officials have reportedly leve-

led terror charges against Taweel based on his confessions. Confessions, however, are said to have been extracted under duress

and torture.

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the Al Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

Scores of people have lost their lives and hundreds of others sustained injuries or got arrested as a result of the Al Khalifah regime's crackdown.

On March 5, 2017, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

Bahraini monarch King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3, 2017.

U.S. warns Israel against deepening business ties with China

TEHRAN — The United States has warned Israel, a staunch ally in the Middle East, against deepening business ties with China, citing "security implications."

In its latest military budget bill, the Senate warned Israel not to allow China to run the port of Haifa, a long-time docking point for the U.S. Sixth Fleet and a place where joint American-Israeli drills have been held.

The Shanghai International Port Group, which has signed a deal with Haifa, is slated to operate its port for 25 years, beginning in 2021.

"The United States has an interest in the future forward presence of United States naval vessels at the port of Haifa in Israel but has serious security concerns with respect to the leasing arrangements of the port of Haifa," according to a draft text of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.

Washington also urged "Israel to consider the security implications of foreign investment in Israel," which has awarded several key infrastructure contracts to

Chinese companies.

The bill was passed on Thursday by the Senate Armed Services Committee and it is likely to pass a full Senate vote.

Last year, U.S. officials warned the Israelis that "the United States could not be friends with a country for which China was building ports."

Dealings with China have had repercussions for Israel in the past too. During the administration of former President George W. Bush, the strategic dialogue with Israel was suspended for three years until Tel Aviv agreed to allow Washington to review any Israeli military sales to China.

According to Press TV, Mark Dubowitz, the director of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a pro-Israel think tank, reacted to the new deal on Twitter, saying, "This is serious and Israel's strongest supporters are losing their patience."

This comes amid an ongoing trade war between the US and China, the world's two major economic powers.

No decision to move Israel embassy, top Romanian official says

TEHRAN — State Secretary in the Romanian Foreign Ministry Maria Magdalena Grigore says her country is committed to its historic position and that of the European Union on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the so-called two-state solution, dismissing reports that Bucharest is planning to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem al-Quds.

Speaking in a meeting with Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi in Amman on Thursday, Grigore stressed the absence of any decision to shift the Romanian embassy to Jerusalem al-Quds.

She then praised Jordan's role in enhancing security and stability in the Middle East, emphasizing the importance of the Aqaba meetings.

The Aqaba meetings are reportedly a series of international meetings launched by Jordanian King Abdullah II in 2015 to bolster security and military cooperation, coordination and exchange of expertise among regional and international partners to counter terrorism.

Safadi, for his part, said settlement to

the Palestinian issue lies on the two-state solution, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital.

Back on March 24, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis said the statement by his country's Prime Minister Viorica Dancila was false, and that the Romanian embassy would not move to Jerusalem al-Quds.

Iohannis wrote on his official Twitter page that the decision "was not even sent" to him, stressing that the "final decision about moving the embassy" is with him and that the prime minister is "ignorant of foreign affairs." Dancila had vowed in Washington that her country would move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem al-Quds, breaking with both the European position and apparently with her own country's president.

According to Press TV, the Romanian prime minister made the announcement before the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) — an influential pro-Israel lobby.

Mortars slam into Iraqi base home to U.S. troops

TEHRAN — The Iraqi military says unknown militants have launched three mortar shells into an air base just north of the capital Baghdad, where American trainers are present.

The military said in a statement that the attack on Balad Air Base, located 64 kilometers (40 miles) north of Baghdad, took place early on Saturday and caused small fires in bushes on the base, The Associated Press reported.

The statement added that the projectiles did not cause any casualties, and the fires were extinguished immediately.

An Iraqi army general, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the assault occurred shortly after midnight Friday, adding that American trainers are stationed at the air base.

The attack comes only two days after the Iraqi satellite television channel Afaq TV, citing a report published by Arabic-language Ababel news agency, said several explosions had been heard near the US embassy in Baghdad's

heavily-fortified Green Zone.

The report said the diplomatic mission sounded sirens following the blasts, which rocked areas adjacent to its premises.

No official statement confirmed the report and no further details were released.

On May 19, two Iraqi security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said an explosion had been heard in Baghdad's Green Zone.

A source told Arabic-language Shafaaq news agency that the explosion was believed to have been caused by a Katyusha rocket slamming into the area.

According to Press TV, the Green Zone is one of the world's most high-security institutional quarters. Located in the center of the Iraqi capital, it houses parliament, the prime minister's office, the presidency, other key institutions, top officials' homes and embassies.



The American embassy in Baghdad, the world's largest, lies within the fortified neighborhood, also known as the International Zone, which is surrounded by concrete walls.

Trump says 'it doesn't matter' if Xi attends G20

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday "it doesn't matter" if Chinese leader Xi Jinping attends the Group of 20 summit later this month in the Japanese city of Osaka, predicting a trade deal with Beijing would occur at some point anyway.

"We're going to see. Eventually they're going to make a deal," Trump said in an interview with Fox News Channel.

Trump repeatedly said he would meet with Xi at the summit, although China has not confirmed the meeting. The two men last

met at last year's G20 summit in Argentina, and agreed to a pause to their trade war.

Trump also said China manipulates its currency in order to avoid the squeeze of U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods.

"They're paying hundreds of billions in dollars. I have 25% on \$250 billion ... They're manipulating their currency in order to pay for it," he said.

The United States and China have been embroiled in trade tensions since last year marked by tit-for-tat tariffs on each other's

imports as Washington seeks for Beijing to make changes to its business policies.

The two countries were engaged in talks in order to reach a detente, but those ended in May without a deal. Washington has accused Beijing of renegeing on several promises, which China has denied.

China has ramped up its rhetoric since last month, promising to "fight to the end" in the trade war and neither give in to pressure nor compromise on its principles.

In a commentary on Saturday, an

influential and widely-read state media social media account said certain people were "creating talk of a so-called 'leaders meeting'" in the run-up to the G20 summit, Reuters reported.

If the United States can return to the consensus reached at the leaders' meeting in Argentina and earnestly seek to resolve China's core concerns, then it's quite possible the Osaka summit could mark a turning point, said Taoran Notes in a WeChat account run by the Economic Daily.

U.S., NATO war game in Baltic mirrored by Russian maneuvers

TEHRAN — The United States and its NATO allies have kicked off naval exercises near Russia's western border to counter what they describe as "Russian threat".

Thousands of U.S. and European forces and some 50 ships on the Baltic coast near Russia participated in the exercise dubbed BALTOPS, which is part of the largest U.S.-led war games in the past five years.

The annual maritime-focused exercise, which involves 18 allied and partner nations, was kicked off on Wednesday and will last until June 21.

This is the first time in four decades that the drill is being led by the U.S. Navy's 2nd Fleet, which operates in the North Atlantic and became known during the Cold War for several maneuvers.

Back in 2011, the administration of Former president Barack Obama disbanded the fleet over what it described as a diminished Russian threat.

The fleet, however, was revived in 2018 "in response to Russia's growing naval activity in the Atlantic," according to the U.S.-led NATO military alliance.



This is also the first deployment of the new U.S. fleet in Europe.

Vice admiral and commander of the fleet, Andrew Lewis, said the fleet was "reestablished in response to a changing security environment globally." He noted that "It was not specifically aimed at a country."

"Russia is a Baltic nation and we respect that," he said.

"But we, NATO, have a responsibility to maintain that international free use of the seas ... we're looking for deterrence and peaceful coexistence," he added.

■ **Russia conducts its own war game**

Meanwhile, Russia is not only watching the U.S.-led maneuver along its borders, but mirroring the drills along its own side of the border.

On Wednesday, the Russian navy trained for the sinking of an "enemy" submarine in the Baltic Sea.

A missile strike on "enemy" ships was also simulated in the Kaliningrad region.

This has raised concern over a potential accident between the NATO and Russia in the region.

according to Press TV, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov warned that the lack of trust between the U.S. and Russia as well as a lack of military-to-military contacts, have created a dangerous situation for both of them.

Russia has warned the U.S.-led NATO alliance over its decision to beef up military presence in the strategic Baltic region, saying such a move would further increase tensions.

London's costly mistake in following U.S. foreign policy

➔ It is no surprise that many U.K. citizens are constantly protesting against the government and ask them to stop following Washington in their international policies. Undoubtedly, regarding U.K. notorious history in their political, economic and diplomatic relations with Iran, this kind of accusations will be a "risky regional policy" for Britain to take.

U.K. doesn't have the right or capacity to get itself into these kind of challenges, and with continuing this behavior, it will only make itself more vulnerable to political and economic risks and promote the already negative worldview about the country's long-standing interference in Middle East.

Yemen army says missiles can hit Tel Aviv

➔ Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah news website said Saudi warplanes pounded the Bani Hushaish district in Sana'a late Friday. Saudi media confirmed the air raids.

Saudi state TV claimed that the airstrikes targeted military positions, including air-defense systems, in the Yemeni capital.

The Saudi warplanes also conducted air raids on the city of Harad in the province of Hajjah on Friday, al-Masirah said.

There were no immediate reports on possible casualties as a result of the air raids.

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

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

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

Yemen's army and allied popular committees have carried out various attacks on Saudi positions in retaliation for the kingdom's fatal aggression against their country.

Ship insurance costs soar after Middle East tanker attacks

➔ On May 17 the London insurance market's Joint War Committee extended the list of waters deemed high risk to include Oman, the United Arab Emirates and the Persian Gulf after separate ship attacks off Fujairah.

Jonathan Moss, head of transport and shipping with law firm DWF, said the extent of geopolitical turmoil had not been seen since the U.S. war in Iraq in 2003, when underwriters increased premiums on fears of claims arising from collisions, groundings and attacks on ships and oil facilities.

"This coming year will see a drive by insurers to raise premiums in the face of a cocktail of instability in the region," Moss said.

Rate increases for hull, machinery and war risks are likely to be between 10% and 20%, he added.

"Once again the international shipping industry finds itself caught in the middle of a geopolitical conflict over which it has no control," tanker association INTERTANKO said.

Bowing to pressure, Hong Kong leader suspends extradition bill

TEHRAN — Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam on Saturday indefinitely delayed a proposed law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China, in a dramatic retreat after anger over the bill triggered the city's biggest and most violent street protests in decades.

The extradition bill, which would have covered Hong Kong's seven million residents as well as foreign and Chinese nationals there, was seen by many as a threat to the rule of law in the former British colony.

Around a million people marched through Hong Kong last Sunday to oppose the bill, according to organizers of the protest, the largest in the city since crowds came out against the bloody suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations centered around Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

Demonstrations continued through the week and were met with tear gas, bean bag rounds and rubber bullets from police, plunging the Asian finance hub into turmoil and piling heavy pressure on Lam, Reuters reported.

Putin gives Xi ice cream on his 66th birthday

TEHRAN — Chinese President Xi Jinping celebrated his 66th birthday on Saturday with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who Xi considers a close friend and who gave Xi ice cream as a present, Chinese state media reported.

The discussion of senior leaders' private lives is extremely rare in China, and the exact birth dates of most of them are not revealed publicly, as they are considered a state secret.

State television showed pictures of Xi and Putin holding up champagne glasses to toast Xi's birthday at the hotel he is staying at in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, where they are both attending a regional summit.

While Putin gave Xi Russian ice cream - the flavor was not mentioned - Xi gave Putin back some Chinese tea, the report said.

Xi thanked Putin and said that in China Putin was extremely popular, it added.

Pictures on Chinese state television's website showed the two men inspecting a white cake decorated with red and blue confectionary flowers with the words written on it, in somewhat shaky red-colored Chinese characters, "good fortune double six".

It was not immediately clear if Xi ate any of the cake, Reuters reported.

Brazil win but fans unhappy at lacklustre display

Brazil got the win they wanted in their Copa America opener on Friday but the postmortem of the 3-0 victory over Bolivia was as much about the lack of atmosphere as the lacklustre display.

The 46,342 fans, who turned out to see the match at Sao Paulo's Morumbi stadium were not impressed and the team were booed at halftime with the scores tied at 0-0.

The entire game at the stadium, which was 70% full, was notable for the lack of atmosphere.

Coach Tite admitted the players heard the boos and said it was not realistic to expect supporters to cheer a team that was not playing well.

"We felt it!" Tite told reporters. "Young lads feel it. The coach feels it.

"Having been at big clubs, when you sometimes don't produce, then don't expect the fans to understand. They will boo. When you pass the ball along the back, from full back to central defender to goalkeeper, the first thing you here is BOOOOOOO!"

"We need to understand. If we get forward and create chances then they will applaud."

Crowds in Brazil's two big cities of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are known to be notoriously fickle and captain Daniel Alves hoped the home fans would get more behind their team when they take on Venezuela in his home state of Bahia on Tuesday.

"This is normal in Sao Paulo, there are lot of fans of clubs so it's always complicated playing here, but we showed personality," Alves said.

"There was even a moment when Tite shouted and you could hear it out on the pitch.

"It's different in Bahia. People miss the Brazil team, and the energy that we bring. For sure, things will be more animated than here."

(Source: Reuters)

Lampard stalls Sarri to Juve?

Chelsea could further stall Maurizio Sarri's Juventus appointment after reports Derby County have offered Frank Lampard a new contract.

The situation has been dragging on for a month now and Juve cannot formally hire Sarri until he has terminated his existing contract by mutual consent.

That is proving to be a lot more difficult than anyone anticipated, with Italian reports claiming Chelsea will release him for £1.1m in compensation, whereas English sources put it anywhere from £5-10m.

A two-year contract with option for a third is all ready for Sarri at Juve, worth €6m per season.

Now another problem has emerged, as The Telegraph newspaper claims Derby County have offered a new deal to Coach Lampard, who is the number one choice to replace Sarri.

If the Stamford Bridge giants are unable to find a suitable heir, they may well try to keep hold of Sarri.

After all, he had originally requested an exit in March when fans were constantly insulting him, although some of them have since come round after he took them to third place in the Premier League and to victory in the Europa League.

There also remain a few absolutely adamant Italian reporters who maintain the next Juventus boss will be Pep Guardiola, despite him pledging his commitment to Manchester City.

(Source: Footabll Italia)

Spalletti: 'I've had no offers'

Luciano Spalletti is "honoured to have had the opportunity to train Inter" and fully admits he has received no real offers for next season.

The tactician was fired despite taking Inter to Champions League qualification for two years in a row, replaced by Conte.

"I am honoured to have had the opportunity to train Inter," said Spalletti at a sponsorship event.

"I will dearly treasure all the time we spent together. In trying to build, the club wanted important roles filled by certain people. It's a great team with wonderful fans, but you only really get a grasp of that by living inside that atmosphere, as you have to answer to these supporters."

Max Allegri said he's taking a year off after his Juventus dismissal, but will Spalletti do the same?

"I can't say. I don't think any club really thought about me. I'm happy that Fiorentina kept Vincenzo Montella and what we saw in the last few weeks of the season was not an accurate reflection of the team or the Coach. It's only right they evaluate him on what he does next season when there from the start."

(Source: Sky)

PSG bring back Leonardo as sporting director

Paris Saint-Germain have confirmed the return of Leonardo as sporting director and that Antero Henrique has consequently left the French champions.

On a busy Friday for PSG, the Brazilian's return to Parc des Princes after nearly six years away swiftly followed the news that the Portuguese had parted ways with the Ligue 1 giants by mutual consent.

Leonardo, 49, expressed his delight at re-joining PSG, the club where he laid the foundations for Oryx Qatar Sports Investments' (QSI) lavish project in his previous spell as sporting director, but also played for a productive season between 1996-97.

"I am really happy to come back to PSG once again," Leonardo said in Les Parisiens' official statement. "This club has been so important to me in my football career and in my life. "I had really emotional moments here both as a player in the late 90s and more recently as sporting director along with our chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi on my return to the club in 2011.

"Today, I come back to Paris full of energy to re-join this club that I deeply respect."

(Source: Soccernet)

Froome fractured neck in crash & faces six weeks in hospital

Britain's Chris Froome suffered a fracture to his neck in Wednesday's serious crash, scans have shown.

The four-time Tour de France champion faces six weeks in hospital and is not expected to compete again this year.

Froome, 34, lost consciousness after the crash and also sustained a fractured right femur, a broken hip, a fractured elbow and fractured ribs.

He is likely to spend "at least six months" away from cycling, says the surgeon who operated on him. Froome had a six-hour operation, which has been described as a "success" although chief surgeon Remi Philippot said it was "difficult to be sure" on an exact length of time for his recovery.

He added: "Maybe we will need to do other things. Maybe the rehabilitation will not be as we want."

Doctors have said they are "very happy" with Froome's progress.

The crash happened during a practice ride before stage four of the Criterium du Dauphine in Roanne, France.

In footage captured by ITV4 minutes before the incident, a team-mate tells Froome "you don't have to take risks, Chris" as he takes both hands off the handlebars to put on a jacket.



But moments later, Froome took his hand off his handlebars again to blow his nose and was travelling at 54km/h when a gust of wind caught his front wheel, causing him to hit a wall. "First things first, the surgery was a success," said Team Ineos doctor Richard Usher. "The operation, which lasted for six hours, went very well.

"Chris woke up 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.

"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."

Manchester United do not want to sell, but Pogba only wants Real Madrid



Paul Pogba is clear that he wants to leave Manchester United and join Real Madrid, but the English side are unwilling to lose their star player.

The Frenchman's agent, Mino Raiola, knows that first he must deal with Matthijs de Ligt's future before getting involved in what could be the transfer saga of the summer with Pogba. Zinedine Zidane has never hidden his desire to sign Pogba and, as such, Florentino Perez wants to please his coach by bringing the World Cup winner to the Santiago Bernabeu, though he understands how difficult it is going to be.

What was the midfielder's response to being told that he's going nowhere? To repeat himself and insist with his argument that he wants to join Los Blancos. He said it previously, with the season effectively over for United, but it was the same answer.

What's more, last Wednesday he took a flight to Asia to participate in different Adidas campaigns, which proves that he is one of the five most marketable players in world football right now. People in South Korea and Japan love him. This is known by the marketing department at Real Madrid, who are rubbing their hands with the prospect of his arrival.

The reality is that it is going to be very difficult to sign the 26-year-old, but it is

not impossible. Both Zidane and Pogba are determined to make it happen, but United's leaders realise they cannot afford to lose a player of his quality, particularly given the dearth of talent currently at Old Trafford. It is worth remembering, however, that United missed out on the Champions League places in the Premier League last season, so they will have to make up that lost money somehow. Regardless, the Glazer family are remaining firm and have told Raiola not to negotiate with anyone.

Pogba will stay in Asia for a few more days before going on holiday in Los Angeles. He is aware of everything that is happening and, for the moment at least, he is not willing to force his way out of the club. He wants a solution to be reached through dialogue. In the back of his mind, Pogba knows that Zidane wants him just as much as he wants Zidane.

Amongst all of this, Paris Saint-Germain could be a surprise destination. The Ligue 1 side, who have been monitoring Antoine Griezmann's future and appear to be close to signing De Ligt, are very keen on bringing Pogba to the French capital, the city where he grew up. With two years left on his deal, United may need to act now in order to recoup a large fee for the midfielder.

(Source: Marca)

Sonnen retires from MMA after loss to Machida



For more than 20 years, Chael Sonnen prided himself as a mixed martial artist who would "always make the walk." On Friday, he did so for the final time.

Sonnen, 42, retired in the Bellator MMA cage Friday following a second-round TKO loss to former UFC champion Lyoto Machida. The 205-pound bout co-headlined Bellator 222, which took place inside Madison Square Garden. The announcement brings Sonnen's 22-year professional career to an end. The Oregon native, who also is an MMA analyst for ESPN, finishes with a final record of 30-17-1.

"I had a hell of a lot of fun," Sonnen said in his postfight interview. "I had a good run. I'm walking out. I appreciate the memories, and goodbye."

Sonnen said he had no thoughts of retirement entering Friday's bout, telling ESPN's Ariel Helwani that he "fully expected" to win and had hoped to call out Ryan Bader, who holds Bellator's heavyweight and light heavyweight titles. Sonnen said the loss convinced him that he has "used up all my toughness."

"I'm not as tough as I used to be," Sonnen said. "I don't want it as bad as I used to. I used to walk through stuff like this."

Sonnen, of West Linn, Oregon, has been one of the most popular fighters in MMA for years. He started to earn mainstream

Philippot also told BBC Sport: "Chris was totally awake - he wanted to know when he can cycle again.

"Professional sports people are very good mentally and want to win but maybe I think I have to slow him down because he's very quick and wants to go fast but bone healing needs at least two months so we have to be patient."

British former Olympic cycling champion Dani Rowe, who suffered a training accident in 2014 which left her with broken ribs and a collapsed lung, said returning from such a serious injury is a challenge for the mind as well as the body.

"It is really hard to come back from this kind of accident, I think mentally more than physically," the 28-year-old told BBC Sport.

"There's been some horrific injuries from this crash, but knowing Chris' kind of mental strength and determination, he will definitely be back, I'm sure."

Meanwhile, cycling's governing body the UCI has announced that 2011 Vuelta a Espana champion Juan Jose Cobo had been found guilty of an anti-doping violation.

That could see Froome, who finished second in the race, retrospectively awarded the victory.

(Source: BBC)

Caster Semenya declines Rabat 800m race: organizers

Two-time Olympic champion Caster Semenya will not run her specialist 800m distance at Rabat on Sunday despite having received an invitation to do so, in the latest twist of her bitter court battle over gender rules.

"She received an invitation but is unable to organize her schedule to come to Rabat," organizer Alain Blondel told AFP.

Semenya was cleared to take part in the Diamond League meeting after Switzerland's top court rejected an IAAF request to re-impose rules obliging her to lower her testosterone before competing in certain events.

Organizers of the Morocco event had initially refused to allow the South African to take part but on Friday they "confirmed her invitation".

"After checking the situation of Caster Semenya in the light of the decisions of the Swiss Federal Court, and the Court of Arbitration for Sport, the head of the international athletics meeting in Rabat, Alain Blondel, is happy to confirm the invitation," a statement on the event's official site said.

The Swiss federal court issued their order on Wednesday, explaining "this means that Caster remains permitted to compete without restriction in the female category at this time".

The IAAF had earlier this month opposed a ruling by the court temporarily suspending the federation's rules following an appeal by Semenya who won the women's 800 meters at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics.

The athlete was contesting a decision by the Court of



Arbitration for Sport which previously found the rules were "discriminatory" but "necessary" to ensure fairness in women's athletics.

The rules require women with higher than normal male hormone levels, a condition known as hyperandrogenism, to artificially lower the amount of testosterone in their bodies if they are to compete in races over distances of 400m to the mile.

■ 'I keep winning'

"No woman should be subjected to these rules," Semenya said in a statement Thursday, adding she had "thought hard about not running the 800m in solidarity unless all women

can run free. But I will run now to show the IAAF that they cannot drug us".

The athlete, who underwent a gender test shortly before she won gold at the 2009 Berlin world championships, also dismissed the IAAF's claim that it is committed to the full participation of women in sport.

"I am a woman, but the IAAF has again tried to stop me from running the way I was born," she said in the statement, pointing out the hormonal drugs she had been required to take to compete had made her feel "constantly sick and unable to focus for many years".

"No other woman should be forced to go through this," said Semenya, whose Berlin test allegedly showed she had both male and female characteristics.

Semenya took to the track at the Montreuil meeting in eastern Paris on Thursday in the rarely-run 2,000m.

The 28-year-old duly won that race, taking to social media afterwards to say: "They keep talking, I keep winning. Isn't that beautiful...?"

That tweet, accompanied by emojis of crossed fingers and a talking head, garnered more than 65,000 "likes".

Semenya, who won the 800m in the season-opening Doha Diamond League, is now slated to run the 3,000m at the Diamond League Prefontaine Classic, exceptionally being held held in Stanford, California this year, on June 30.

(Source: AFP)

Iran retain PVAO Men’s Championship title

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran claimed the title of the ParaVolley Asia Oceania Sitting Volleyball Championship with a straight-set (25-21, 25-7, 28-26) win over China at Huamark Stadium in Bangkok, Thailand on Saturday.

Iran retained the men’s title, as Team Melli swept all their matches without dropping a single set.

Iran, having booked their spot to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games after winning the 2018 World ParaVolley Sitting Volleyball World Championship title, gave way for China to claim the available spot as the next highest ranked team in the Asia Oceania zonal championship.

The first set went down to the wire as the two sides traded with strong spikes until they played all square at 19-all. Iran finally got a breather after that as they grabbed the two-point cushion, but China fought back and to bridge the gap. Iran blocked two spikes by China to put them at set point, then a powerful swing from the middle secured the set in their favour 25-21.

Iran got their bearings back in the second set and executed a sound game plan that facilitated a huge advantage, while China struggled to run their plays. The Iranian spikes continued to send through powerful hits that helped them take an easy win 25-7.

In the third set, China have recovered from the setback in the previous set and established a better performance to match the intensity of their rivals. At the tied score of 12-all, China worked their way to take control of the set entering the second technical timeout 16-14. A series of deadlocks and lead changes ensued until Iran’s solid block and an attack error sealed championship victory at 28-26.



Iran start Asian Beach Handball Championship 2019 on high



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran started the Asian Beach Handball Championship 2019 on high note on Saturday.

Team Melli defeated Japan 2-0 (22-10, 16-10) in Weihai, China.

Iran will meet Thailand on Sunday.

The tournament includes two groups of six teams.

“We are well-prepared for the tournament and are going to book a place in the final match. Iran finished in third place last year and we are looking a better place in this

edition,” Iran coach Hassan Eftekhari said.

Group A consists of Chinese Taipei, Vietnam, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Indonesia and Qatar, while Iran are in Group B along with Oman, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Pakistan and Thailand.

The event also serves as a qualifier for the 2020 Men’s Beach Handball World Championships in Italy.

Qatar are the most decorated team in the Asian Beach Handball Championship. They have won the last four titles out of seven editions.

Iran earn hard-fought win over Poland in 2019 FIVB VNL



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran extended their winning run at the third competition week of the men’s 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League in Urmia, West Azarbaijan province on Saturday.

Team Melli defeated defending champions Poland 3-2 (25-20, 21-25, 18-25, 25-17, 15-8) at the Ghadir Hall.

Iran extended their winning run to seven matches as Igor Kolakovic’s team had already seized six wins against Italy, Germany, China, Argentina, Japan and Canada and lost to Brazil. Iran will face Russia on Sunday.

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

The 16 teams compete in a round-robin format with every core team hosting a pool at least once. The teams are divided into four pools of four teams at each week and compete five weeks long, for 120 matches. The top five teams after the preliminary round join the hosts of the final round to compete in the final round.

The reasons behind a poor first season for Alireza Jahanbakhsh at Albion

Alireza Jahanbakhsh has begun with a bang under one new boss.

Now Albion will be hoping a change at the top prompts a more productive season for record signing Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

He opened the scoring for Iran last week in the 5-0 thrashing of Syria, which launched the reign of former Belgian coach Marc Wilmots.

Graham Potter, the new head coach at the Amex, needs to get more out of Jahanbakhsh to justify owner-chairman Tony Bloom’s faith in investing £17 million in the winger last summer.

The cold statistics are damning. Jahanbakhsh joined the Seagulls as player of the season in Eredivisie, the Dutch top flight, after 21 goals and 12 assists in 33 games for Az Alkmaar.

His debut campaign at the Amex ended without a goal or assist in 24 appearances, 17 of them in the starting line-up.

The difference in quality depth between Eredivisie and the Premier League only partially explains the apparent cliff fall.

Events conspired against Jahanbakhsh under Potter’s predecessor Chris Hughton.

The 25-year-old did not arrive last summer until the end of July, having represented Iran at the World Cup.

He was denied a full pre-season to help with the settling in process, often prolonged for players accustomed to a different country, culture and style of football.

Paul Barber, Albion’s chief executive, said: “I think people can sometimes underestimate how difficult it is to adjust to life in the Premier League.



“It’s not just about being a good player playing at a high level, it’s the relentless week in, week out playing at a high level of competition.

“There are no easy games. It’s about a 45-game season if you are doing well in the cups.

“That’s quite different to the Dutch league and so on where the number of games is less, the competition isn’t as intense week to week, moving to a new country, adjusting in some cases to a new language, being away from close family and friends.

“All of those things combined mean sometimes the adjustment can take longer than people would imagine.”

Under Hughton the wingers were required to work backwards as well as forwards. Jahanbakhsh was not used to that at Alkmaar but nevertheless adapted well.

group game as they have yet to hit top form.

“We are definitely even more motivated than usual as we’re up against the defending champions,” said defender Sasaki.

“I think playing against a team from the same country, we know about each player in detail, but [because they know about us], this can be both positive and negative.

“Last year, [their striker] Yuma Suzuki won the AFC Champions League’s MVP award and in my opinion he proves his ability even more when he is playing on the biggest stage.”

Sanfrecce began the tournament with a 1-0 defeat at Guangzhou Evergrande, but

went on to claim more points than any other team in the group stage by winning all of their remaining group games to finish five points clear at the top.

One of the striking features of their campaign has been how many of the younger squad members have stepped to the fore, with Sasaki’s fellow defender Hayato Araki – who scored the winner against Daegu FC on Matchday Four – among those to have taken his chance with both hands.

Sasaki, meanwhile, is one of the more experienced players within the ranks and it was the 29-year-old’s goal against Guangzhou on

Matchday Five that sealed Sanfrecce’s place in the knockout rounds for the first time since 2014.

“We overcame the problems we had in the first game and since then we have been able to get stronger and stronger,” added Sasaki.

“Araki has already played many times in the J.League and, not only does he contribute defensively, he can also score goals.

“Overall we have been really good so far, but we have to keep focusing on every game in front of us. Having the second leg at home [against Kashima] can be an advantage, so we hope we can use it to our benefit.”

(Source: the-afc)

Iranian wrestler Darabi dies in crash

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian wrestler Amir Arsalan Darabi died in a motorcycle accident on Saturday.



He was on his way home from his training in Shahrivar, west of Tehran.

Darabi represented Iran at the 2018 Cadet Asian Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where he finished in fifth place at the 60kg.

The Tehran Times staff offer heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family.

Siamand Rahman One to Watch at 2019 World Championships

World Para Powerlifting has announced the Ones to Watch ahead of the Nur-Sultan 2019 World Championships, set to take place between 12 and 20 July.

There are athletes who have the potential to make headlines, especially with the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games fast approaching.

Iranian powerlifter Siamand Rahman is among the Ones to Watch.

“All eyes will be on the strongest Paralympian on the planet as he tries to set another stunning world record at Nur-Sultan 2019,” Paralympic.org reported.

Rahman, who has won two Paralympic gold medals so far, is going to win his third successive gold at the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Mehdi Rahmati to leave Esteghlal, official says

PLDC — Esteghlal goalkeeper Mehdi Rahmati will leave the team, the club’s head of board of directors Ahmad Sa’adatmand said.

In an interview with a TV program, Sa’adatmand confirmed that Rahmati has reached an agreement with Padideh football club.

“Rahmati is one of Esteghlal’s key players and belongs to our team but his contract has expired with the team. He will most likely join Padideh because has reached an agreement with Yahya Golmohammadi (Padideh coach) to join them,” Sa’adatmand said.

Another Esteghlal goalkeeper Hossein Hosseini has been also linked with Padideh football team.

Iran defeat Hong Kong at AFC U-20 Futsal Championship

Iran defeated Hong Kong 7-3 at the AFC U-20 Futsal Championship 2019 Group A in Pour Sharifi Stadium in Tabriz.

The 12 teams are drawn into four groups of three and Iran is in Group A with Afghanistan and Hong Kong.

Iran will face Afghanistan on Sunday.

“We played very well and of course we were well aware that the conditions in the first match will always be tough, which is natural for the first match of the tournament,” Iran coach Hamid Shandizi said in the post-match news conference.

“As I’ve mentioned before, futsal in Asia is developing and that includes Hong Kong. I applaud Hong Kong for a good game against us,” he added.

(Source: the-afc)

Man United still keen on Longstaff

Manchester United remain interested in signing Sean Longstaff despite the midfielder saying he is happy at Newcastle, sources have told ESPN FC.

Longstaff has been targeted by United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer as he looks to bring in the best young British players in a squad revamp.

In an interview with Newcastle’s TV channel the 21-year-old stated his intention to remain at St James’ Park, but sources told ESPN FC United were still confident of convincing him to move if a fee could be agreed.

“I’m massively flattered to have my name even mentioned in those conversations, but I’m 100 percent focused on Newcastle,” Longstaff said.

“I’ve always wanted to play for Newcastle and I’ve only had a little taste of that, so for me it’s about getting fit [after a knee injury] as soon as I can and getting back on the pitch for Newcastle.”

United’s pursuit of Longstaff has been complicated by uncertainty at Newcastle.

Billionaire Sheikh Khaled bin Zayed Al Nahyan is in negotiations to buy the club from Mike Ashley, while the future of manager Rafael Benitez is up in the air with his contract expiring on June 30.

(Source: ESPN)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

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» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» www.eshtarak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
» Printed at: Hamshahri No. 3 (Roostab) - ISSN: 1017-94



Tehrantimes79



Tehrantimesdaily

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P.O. Box: 14155-4843
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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A friend should not be considered a friend unless he supports his friend on three occasions: in difficulty, in his absence, and on his death.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iran's "Son of the Sea" honored at Annecy film festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Abbas Jalali-Yekta's "Son of the Sea" has won the City of Annecy Award at the 2019 Annecy International Animated Film Festival and Market in France.



"Son of the Sea" by Iranian director Abbas Jalali-Yekta won the City of Annecy Award at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival and Market in France.

The film was screened in the Perspectives Short Films in Competition, Iran's Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) announced on Saturday.

"Son of the Sea" tells the story of a man who lives in a house with his wife and the illusion of their son on the wall! This hallucination gradually creates complications in their lives.

"Starvation", "Trailer" and "Am I a Wolf?" from Iran were also competing in the event.

Over 200 films were screened in the official sections of the festival, which took place in the southeastern French town of Annecy from June 10 to 15.

"Incendies" to go on stage at Tehran theater

A R T TEHRAN — The Cologne-based Iranian director and playwright Alireza KUSHK-Jalali plans to stage Lebanese-Canadian writer Wajdi Mouawad's play "Incendies" (Scorched) at the Qashqai Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex on June 30.



Iranian director and playwright Alireza KUSHK-Jalali (C) is seen with the cast members of his new project "Incendies", which will go on stage at the Qashqai Hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex on June 30, 2019.

Written in 2003, the play follows the journey of twins Jeanne and Simon, as they travel to their mother's native country in the Middle East after her death to uncover her hidden past amidst a bloody civil war.

KUSHK-Jalali has renamed the play "The Singing Lady" that refers to a part of the story, in which the mother, Nawal, sings songs while she is in prison for her cooperation with the resistance movement during the war.

Other prisoners cannot see her but they can hear her singing, which gives them hope and courage. They call her "the woman who sings".

The play was adapted for screen by Canadian director Denis Villeneuve. The film was nominated for the 2011 Academy Award in the Best Foreign Language Film category.

Sima Tirandaz, Farnaz Rahnema, Sam Kabudvand and Mohammad Sediqi are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until August 9.

Arnold Wesker's "Kitchen" to be set up in Shiraz

A R T TEHRAN — Director Hassan Majuni plans to stage British writer Arnold Wesker's 1957 play "The Kitchen" in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz during summer, several Persian news websites announced on Saturday.

Majuni who presides over the Leev Theater Academy took the play on stage with actors from the academy at Paliz Theater in Tehran during autumn 2016 and winter 2017.

According to his new plan, he will select actors from Shiraz for his cast.

He also staged the play at Hamun Theater in the northern Iranian city of Rasht in winter 2018.

"The Kitchen" was Wesker's first work and is his most performed play. It has been produced in sixty cities including Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, Paris — where it was the first widely recognized production by Théâtre du Soleil in 1967 — Moscow, Montreal and Zurich.

The play follows the staff in a café's kitchen during the course of a busy morning.

British filmmaker James Hill made a screen adaptation of the play in 1961.



Members of the Leev Theater Group led by director Hassan Majuni perform Arnold Wesker's "The Kitchen" at Tehran's Paliz Theater on November 7, 2016. (Tehran Picture Agency/Milad Beheshti)

Munich film festival to screen "Tehran: City of Love"



A scene from "Tehran: City of Love" by Iranian director Ali Jaberansari.

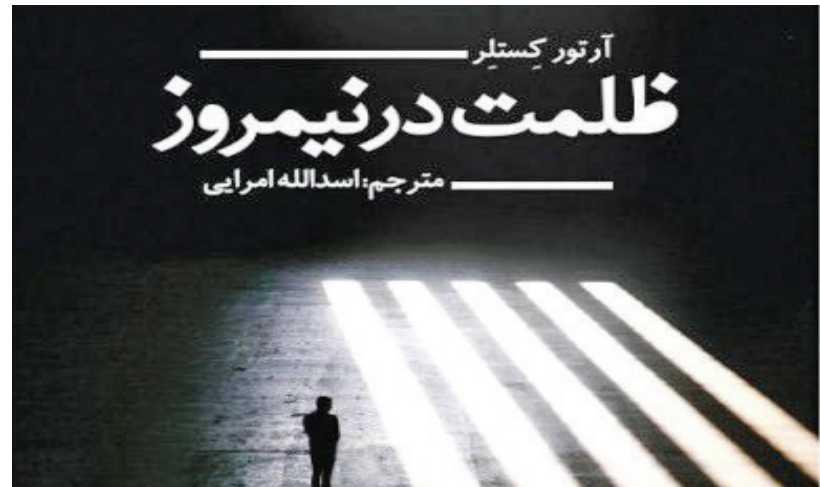
A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Ali Jaberansari's film "Tehran: City of Love" will go on screen at the 37th Munich International Film Festival — Filmfest München.

The film will be competing in the International Independents section of the festival, which will take place in the German city from June 27 to July 6, the organizers have announced.

The film follows the stories of Mina, who is unhappy about her weight, Hessam, a retired bodybuilder who trains older men, and Vahid, who sings at funerals and weddings.

The event, which is the largest summer film festival in Germany, is also scheduled to honor British actor and director Ralph Fiennes and Spanish actor Antonio Banderas with CineMerit Awards.

"Darkness at Noon" appears at Iranian bookstores



Front cover of a Persian copy of "Darkness at Noon" by Hungarian-born British novelist Arthur Koestler.

A R T TEHRAN — Hungarian-born British novelist Arthur Koestler's book "Darkness at Noon" has recently been published in Persian by Nimaj Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Asadollah Amrai, the book is about an aging revolutionary named Nicholas Rubashov, who is arrested, tried and imprisoned for treason against the government that he had helped to create.

Despite being based on real events such as the Stalinist Great Purge and the Moscow show trials, the novel does not name either Russia or the USSR, and tends to use generic terms to describe people and organizations.

Considered as a seminal work of twentieth-century literature and the writer's masterpiece, the book has been previously published by different Iranian publishers.

Croatian opera singer Nadia Bistrovic to perform in Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — Croatian opera singer Nadia Bistrovic will be giving a concert named "Make a Wish" in Tehran on Wednesday.

She will perform in company with Iranian pianist Hasti Safai exclusively for an audience of women at the Niavaran Cultural Center, the organizers have

announced.

A repertoire of classical and folklore songs in different languages has been arranged for the concert. A number of the songs are in Croatian.

Folk songs composed by Iranian musician Sohrab Kashef will also be performed in a special part of the concert.

Ambassador elaborates similarities of Iranian, Danish cinema

Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

TEHRAN — On the occasion of the ongoing European Film Week 2019 in Tehran, Danish Ambassador to Iran Danny Annan discussed similarities of Iran-Denmark cinemas.

In an interview with Mehr news agency, the Danish envoy said that "social consciousness and ambition to raise questions and shed light on how ordinary people live their lives, is, I believe, something Danish and Iranian cinema has in common."

"This is evident in Asghar Farhadi's 'The Salesman', that won an Oscar for best foreign language film in 2016," he said, "Telling stories that change our understanding of the lives and struggles of other people, is an important part of the long and proud Iranian cinema history."

"I believe this shows how much we have in common, and how much we can learn from each other — and about each other — through cultural exchanges," Ambassador Annan underlined.

Addressing Iran-Denmark cultural cooperation, he said that "it is our sincere hope that this Festival, as well as future cultural events, will foster a flow of ideas, thoughts and knowledge between Iran and the European countries."

"We will, on our part, continue to encourage Danish historians, archaeologists, musicians, theater groups, scholars and filmmakers to visit Iran and contribute to the continued cultural exchange between our two

countries," the Danish Ambassador vowed.

Explaining about this year's European film week, he continued to say that "since last year, The European Film Festival has increased number of cities and number of participating countries by 25 percent. This shows the importance that the EUNIC cluster attach to developing cultural ties with Iran and its people."

"We strongly believe that cultural exchange is the key element to deepen our mutual understanding and create opportunities for bridge building," he noted.

Answering a question about this year's Danish contribution to the event Ambassador Annan went on to say that "It was a pleasure for me to participate in the official opening ceremony in Tehran on June 8."

"This year's Danish Contribution: 'A Fortunate Man', directed by Oscar and Golden Globe-winning director Bille August. The movie is based on a novel written by Nobel Prize Winning author Henrik Pontoppidan (won the prize in 1917). It is a social drama taking place in the late 19th century. The story is about the bright young man, who chooses to leave his devout Christian family in the western part of Denmark to go study engineering in the Capital of Copenhagen. The story raises the difficult questions, every person is bound to consider: how to deal with your roots while making your own choices in life — and whether you can, after all, ever completely turn your back on your roots. At the same time, the story is deeply socially



conscious, and lets the spectators reflect upon the significance of social structures and how each person in one way or another must relate to these during their life."

"Social drama and a social consciousness play an important role in Danish cinema, which 'A Fortunate Man' is a great example of. The last two year's contributions to the European Film Festival (The Day Will Come and The Hour of the Lynx) also both exemplify the Danish tradition of social drama and how films can ask the difficult questions and offer new perspectives. These films can change how we relate to ourselves and the societies we live in," he added.

He in the end explained about the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC), who is in charge of running the event in Iran in cooperation with the Art & Experience Cinema Institute.

"Since its founding in 2006, the national clusters of the European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC) have been building trust and understanding between the peoples of Europe and the rest of the

world through culture. Denmark has been a steadfast participant in the European Film Festival here in Iran," he said.

The European Film Week 2019 — that started on June the 8th - includes 19 participating European countries and is taking place in 8 cities, namely: Babol, Isfahan, Kerman, Kish, Mashhad, Tabriz, Tehran and Shiraz.

By pooling together resources and expertise of 23 EU Member States and European partner countries, EUNIC Iran works to build cultural bridges between Europe and Iran, believing that cultural exchange is the key element to deepen our understanding of each other.

This year, Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland are showing cinematic masterpieces from their countries. Furthermore, film makers from Cyprus, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland are holding stimulating workshops that may even lead to innovative collaborations with film makers from Iran.

Compared to last year, the 2019 edition of the European Film Week experienced an increase in both the number of participating countries and in the number of cities by 25 percent, which shows the great importance that the European Union and associated countries, Norway and Switzerland, attach to developing cultural relations with Iran and Iranians.