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## Stockpile of enriched uranium to surpass 300 kg by June 27



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## IMIDRO to establish consortium to accelerate exploration projects

**TEHRAN** — Head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) said the organization is planning to establish a consortium in order to accelerate exploration projects in the mining sector.

"The consortium is going to help us in areas like exploration and identification of new mines and minerals," ILNA

quoted Khodadad Gharibpour as saying on Monday.

According to the official, based on the mining potentials and research and academic capabilities of the country's provinces, 10 mining regions have been defined in order to manage projects and also utilize the country's academic potentials in this industry. **→4**

## If Iran does something it will 'bravely' announce it, military chief says

**TEHRAN** — Iran will "bravely" announce it if it does something, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri announced on Monday in response to accusations by the United States that Iran is behind the attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman.

On Thursday, two tankers -- one carrying oil and the other transporting chemicals -- were attacked near the strategically

important Strait of Hormuz. Roughly 30% of the world's sea-borne crude oil passes through the strategic choke point.

Talking with Fox News on Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed it is "unmistakable" that Iran carried out the attacks with a "clear intent to deny transit through the Strait". Pompeo made such a claim on Thursday. **→2**

## Poll shows Trump trailing democrats in hypothetical matchups

**TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump's reelection campaign may be mad that some of its internal numbers leaked showing the commander in chief trailing former Vice President Joe Biden in critical states. But they're hardly the only ones seeing bad numbers for the president. A Fox News poll shows Trump coming behind

five Democratic hopefuls in hypothetical matchups.

According to Fox News poll, the one who has the biggest advantage over Trump is former Vice President Joe Biden who is ahead by 10 points, 49 percent to 39 percent. Next up is Sen. Bernie Sanders who has a nine-point advantage over the president—49 percent to 40 percent. **→13**

## Israel in possession of close to 100 nuclear warheads: SIPRI

**TEHRAN**— A new report reveals that the Israeli regime is in possession of approximately 100 atomic warheads which it refuses to confirm or deny as part of its policy of nuclear ambiguity.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said Monday Tel Aviv has 30 gravity bombs which can be delivered by fighter jets -- some of which are believed to be equipped for nuclear weapon delivery.

Israel also possesses close to 50 warheads that can be delivered by land-based ballistic missiles such as Jericho III, said to have a range of 5,500 km, the global security think tank said.

The institute said Israel has modified its fleet of German-built Dolphin-class submarines to

carry nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles, giving it a sea-based second-strike capability.

Israel is the only possessor of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, but its policy is to neither confirm nor deny having atomic bombs.

Last week, managers of the Israeli Dimona nuclear reactor admitted that there has been leakage of radioactive materials from the plant in recent years.

The leak was revealed after Freedi Tawil, a former employee in the plant, sued Dimona to get paid in recompense for getting cancer.

According to Press TV, Back in April 2016, the Israeli daily Haaretz reported that the nearly 53 year-old aluminum core at the nuclear facility had more than 1,500 defects.

Syria's UN Ambassador Bashar al-Ja'afari

in May lambasted Western states for helping Israel establish the Dimona nuclear center and offering it related substances, experience and technology.

Israel has never allowed any inspection of its nuclear facilities and continues to defy international calls to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, whose aim is to prevent the spread of nuclear arms and weapons technology.

The regime has a long history of aggression, occupation, militarism and state terrorism among other international crimes and is in perennial wars with the regional countries.

In August 2018, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened Iran with "atomic annihilation" right from the regime's secretive atomic weapons facility.

## Egypt behind UAE to counter attempts to destabilize Persian Gulf

**TEHRAN** — Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi has reaffirmed his support for the UAE as it confronts attempts to destabilize the Persian Gulf.

Last week the U.S. Navy's fifth fleet evacuated the crew members of two crude oil tankers after receiving distress calls from the ships which were located in the Persian Gulf of Oman.

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia have blamed Iran for the attack last Thursday and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman has said the kingdom "won't hesitate to deal with any threat to our people, our sovereignty, our territory, our vital interests."

Yesterday, British Foreign Minister Jeremy

Hunt said Britain was "almost certain" Iran was behind the attacks.

At a recent event in Cyprus UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan said that the Emirates along with other countries presented evidence to the UN Security Council that the attacks were state sponsored.

Iran has denied any involvement.

A month ago four other boats were targeted off the UAE coast. During a press conference in Bulgaria Al-Nahyan said: "For us, the attacks on four oil tankers in the UAE's territorial waters are evidence that we, alongside our various partner countries, have identified as underwater explosions,

utilising sophisticated technologies."

"These capabilities are not present in illegal non-state actors or groups. These are disciplined processes carried out by a state. However, until now, there is insufficient evidence to point to a particular country."

During a meeting yesterday with Al-Nahyan, Al-Sisi said he is following with concern developments in the Persian Gulf region and reaffirmed that Persian Gulf security is an integral part of Egypt's national security.

The UAE, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are close allies, enforcing the boycott on Qatar, propping up the Military Transitional Council in Sudan and backing the Libyan Commander Khalifa Haftar as he bombards Tripoli.



## EDITORIAL

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## Fox news' role in possible removal of John Bolton

**F**ox news, an agency closely affiliated with hardline republicans in the United States, has recently announced that based on the latest polls, Donald Trump will probably lose in the upcoming 2020 presidential elections.

The Fox polls, conducted between June 9 to 12, showed former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden leading Trump by 49% to 39% among all registered voters nationwide, while Senator Bernie Sanders held nearly the same advantage over the president, at 49% to 40%. Three other democrat nominees (Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, and Mayor Pete Buttigieg) were also ahead of Trump.

It is surprising that Fox News releases such a report, because this agency's policies are majorly shaped by Trump supporters.

Up to now, Fox news had conducted many similar surveys but the results were either falsified or never released to the public.

Before the Fox news report, Donald Trump's own reelection campaign also released the results of an internal poll to the ABC news. Based on this report, Trump was far behind Joe Biden in key battleground states; namely Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Florida where Trump had the lead in 2016 elections and have a strong republican base.

It seems that the media that were close to Trump's campaign used to censor the polls and surveys that revealed Trump's likely failure in the upcoming presidential elections, but now, all these media, with one accord, are trying to send Trump a unanimous warning!

The question is how much trump will publicize these warnings and act on them, and what is happening behind the scenes. It seems that a very complicated plan has been devised so that Trump can remove John Bolton and even Mike Pompeo from his cabinet.

According to this scheme, Trump will pretend that he was "forced" to fire John Bolton so that his supporters cannot accuse Trump of abandoning his own National Security Advisor. It is no secret that Trump's popularity has substantially reduced over the last months, especially after his policies led to higher tensions with Iran and failure in many U.S. foreign policy issues; however, the real question is why U.S. media, especially the ones close to the White House, such as Fox news, have started to expose Trump's unpopularity.



## ARTICLE

**Maryam Qarehgozlou**

Head of the Tehran Times  
Social Desk

## Is inter-basin water transfer a remedy to quench dry lands?

**I**nter-basin water transfer or trans-basin diversion -man-made conveyance schemes which move water from one basin where it is available, to another basin where water is less available- is frequently referred to as an option to alleviate water scarcity in arid provinces of the country.

Waster transfer projects might solely aim at providing sufficient drinking water to the residents of an arid area or being used for industrial, and some agricultural practices as well.

In some cases agricultural and industrial uses may possibly produce enough economic value to compensate for the expenses involved constructing facilities such as canals, pipelines, and pumping stations. Nonetheless, when water is removed from an area it inevitably causes economic and environmental impacts.

That's why inter-basin transfers are often considered as controversial practices, as the environmental and socio-economic consequences for the donor basin can be catastrophic, and at the same time difficult to foresee. Therefore, it must be strictly regulated in many areas, and even banned in others.

Therefore in case of implementation some certain conditions should be met, for example: only a limited amount of water can be transferred, water right of the donor basin must be observed, and environment conservation plans should be drawn up for both donor and recipient basins.

In order to divert water from the donor to the recipient watershed pipes and canals must be constructed and this highly entails technical expertise.

For instance, pipes, canals and other equipment should be regularly checked, dredged and repaired if necessary, to limit potential water loss and ensure maximum efficiency of resource use.

In areas facing critical water shortages, water transfer schemes can lead to groundwater recharge in the recipient basin and mitigate the adverse effects of water scarcity in the region.

Socioeconomically speaking the increase in water supply in the recipient basin can promote agricultural, domestic, and industrial practices as well as power generation. **→12**



Tehran Times / Majid Asgarpour

## Iran's flood-hit regions in photos

Tehran City Council member Ahmad Masjed-Jamei (L) and Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi (C) visit an exhibition of photos of Iran's flood-stricken regions at Eyvane Entezar, a display space in Tehran's Vali-e Asr Square, on June 15, 2019.

Over 80 works by 51 photographers will be on view at the exhibition until June 25.



## Russia to boost trade with Iran with easy visa procedures

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levan Dzagharyan said that his country is eager to further boost trade and business ties with Iran, adding that Moscow will ease the procedure for issuing visa for Iranian entrepreneurs, industrialists, businessmen and economic activists.

Addressing the 2nd Conference on Perspective for Business and Cultural Cooperation between Iran and the North Caucasian Federal District of the Russian Federation, underway at Tehran's Espinas Palace, Dzagharyan said late on Sunday, "Issuance of visa to economic activists and entrepreneurs will help develop and improve bilateral relationship between Iran and Russia."

Russia's trade representative office in Tehran also expressed its readiness to help Iranian traders and businesspersons in relevant issues, he said, adding, "Iranian traders and merchants can take advantage of their experiences and knowhow for the development of activities."

Presently, establishing trade and business ties between the two countries has been eased in a way that economic activists of the two countries can exchange their views optimally, the ambassador stated.

Earlier on the day, the Russian diplomat said that it is up to Tehran, Beijing and Moscow to form a strategic trilateral cooperation to defy the U.S. unilateral measures against the landmark nuclear agreement of 2015.

Iranian and Russian officials, businessmen, and economic activists simultaneously started two 3-day economic events in Iranian cities of Tehran and Isfahan on Sunday, in a bid to find ways for materializing the two sides' will for expanding bilateral economic relations.

The 15th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Cooperation Commission and 2nd Iran-North Caucasian Region Business Forum will be held for a period of three days in Tehran and Isfahan provinces from today in the presence of senior public and private sectors officials of the two countries.

The opening ceremony of the 2nd Trade, Historical, Cultural and Scientific Forum between Iran and North Caucasus Region will be held in Tehran on June 17 in the presence of Minister of Energy Reza Ardakanian.

On the sidelines of 15th summit of Iran-Russia Joint Economic Commission, a number of nine Working Groups and three specialized committees will be held in the presence of a great number of public and private sectors of the two countries in the fields of industry, energy, transport and ICT (information and communication technology).

## Germany urges Iran to uphold nuclear deal

By staff and agency

A spokeswoman for the German Foreign Ministry urged Iran on Monday to uphold to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Reuters reported.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) announced on Monday that Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium will exceed 300 kilograms by June 27.

"From today the countdown has started and it means that by Tir 6 (June 27) the production of enriched uranium will exceed the 300 kilograms," AEOI spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi told reporters at the site of the Arak heavy nuclear reactor.

He also said after June 27 Iran will speed up its uranium enrichment activities beyond 3.67 percent.

"After surpassing 300 kilogram, we will increase the speed of producing enriched uranium above 3.67 percent," Kamalvandi stated.

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.

## If I were Iran, I would want to pull out of the JCPOA as well: Mogherini's adviser

By staff and agency

Nathalie Tocci, special adviser to the EU's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, has said if she was an Iranian decision maker, she would leave the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"I think, and all I can say about this is, putting myself in Iranian shoes, and if I were an Iranian decision maker I would probably be making these threats rightly so. I mean, it's clear that if one side of a contract lives up to their commitments, meaning Iran and the other side, meaning the other E3+3, and obviously this includes Russia as well, it's only fair for one side to say, Hang on, you know, if you continue acting this way I'm going to pull out," he told RT in an interview published on Monday.

She added, "Now having said that, I also think that it would be actually fairly irrational for Iran to leave the JCPOA before 2020 simply because it is basically a year and a few months time before there could be a change in the United States...Or not. And indeed if the answer is not, then indeed if I were Iran I would probably not stick with the JCPOA because indeed, as I said, the social contract can only hold if both sides live up to the bargain."

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# If Iran does something it will 'bravely' announce it, military chief says in response to accusations of oil tanker incidents

Bagheri says if necessary Iran will fight the U.S.

**1 →** Iran has vehemently rejected the claim, calling it "ridiculous" and "dangerous".

"If the Islamic Republic of Iran has any will to block the export of oil from the Persian Gulf it will fully realize that will and declare that openly," Major General Bagheri told a ceremony at Imam Hussein University in Tehran.

The top military commander went on to say if there would be a need Iran will enter war with the enemies including the United States "openly".

"In case of need we will openly confront the enemies including America in the region."

In that case the armed forces will fight "in a very large area", he added.

Bagheri said today Iran is facing "unprincipled", "untruthful" and "deceitful" enemies like the United States which on the one hand is pressuring on Iran and on the other is speaking about negotiations.

The top general said powerful Iran will see no need to act "secretly or deceitfully",



**Armed Forces chief says Iran is facing “unprincipled”, “untruthful” and “deceitful” enemies like the United States.**

## Iran's Stockpile of enriched uranium to surpass 300 kg by June 27

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"After surpassing 300 kilogram, we will increase the speed of producing enriched uranium above 3.67 percent," Kamalvandi stated.

Iran is scaling back its nuclear commitments as the parties to the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, have failed to shield the country from sanctions reimposed by the United States.

The decision to partially and gradually remove limits on nuclear activities was taken on May 8, exactly one year



after President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the multilateral agreement and reimposed sanctions on Iran.

However, Iran has said if the remaining parties to the JCPOA, including the European Union, take immediate steps to offset sanctions it will stop its moves.

Under the JCPOA, Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium

should not exceed 300 kg.

Talking at a conference of Asian leaders in Kyrgyzstan on Saturday in which the Russian and Chinese presidents were also present, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Iran cannot remain committed to the nuclear deal unilaterally.

China, Russia, E3 countries (France, Germany and Britain) and the European Union are the remaining signatories to the JCPOA.

**■ 'Europeans have still time'**

Kamalvandi said that the second phase of reducing JCPOA commitments will start when Iran's top officials decide, noting Europeans have still time to save the agreement.

He noted that Iran will not wait more if the Europeans delay taking practical actions to preserve the JCPOA.

"The Europeans should know that if the first phase took time, the second phase will take one or two days, especially in increasing enrichment to over 3.67 percent," he said.

Elsewhere, he noted that the country will not let any harm to the nuclear industry.

## EU unconvinced by U.S. claim Iran is behind tanker attack

By staff and agency

The European Union foreign ministers have remained unconvinced by U.S. allegations that Iran was behind last week's attack on two tankers.

There was strong support among EU countries for an independent UN investigation and calls for more evidence, Independent reported on Monday.

Heiko Maas, the German foreign minister, said the EU states "continue to gather information".

"We know the findings of the American and the British intelligence services, which assume that you can be almost certain. We are comparing this with our information. I think you have to proceed very, very carefully on this," Maas said.

Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg's foreign minister, said: "I believe that the main task of foreign ministers is to avoid war. We have to do that today."

Pekka Haavisto, the Finnish foreign minister, said it was important that EU states have "the full evidence" before reaching any conclusion.

"I support very much the line of the UN Secretary General Mr. Guterres, that a proper investigation [to put] all the facts on the table and then we can look what really has happened, who is behind this," he said.

Italy's Foreign Minister Enzo Moavero said, "We do think that there is room for finding a way for peace and stability in the world."



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.

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."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi rejected on Friday Pompeo's anti-Iran accusations, saying the suspicious nature of the attacks is not funny or ridiculous but alarming.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible for ensuring the security of the Strait of Hormuz, and we showed this by rushing to save the sailors of the incident-hit vessels in the shortest time possible," he said.

"Pinning the blame on Iran for the suspicious and regrettable incident for the oil tankers seems to be the easiest and most simplistic thing Mr. Pompeo and other U.S. statesmen could do," he noted.

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt issued a statement on Friday blaming Iran and the Islamic Revolu-

tion Guard Corps for the attacks.

He claimed no other state or non-state actor could have been responsible. The UK official, however, did not present any evidence for his claim.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry has summoned British Ambassador to Tehran Robert Macaire over the accusations

In a late Saturday meeting with the British ambassador, Assistant Foreign Minister for Europe Mahmoud Barimani conveyed Tehran's strong protest to the British government's "unfounded allegations" and "unacceptable" anti-Iran stances.

The Iranian official said the accusations have been levelled without any proof, saying such remarks by Hunt are in line with Washington's position.

Hamid Reza Asefi, a former Iranian diplomat, has said the Zionist regime is to blame 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.

## SNSC secretary reveals Iran's discovery, annihilation of CIA's cyber network

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani declared that the country has discovered and destroyed an extensive cyber network launched by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to spy on the country and a number of other states.

"It is interesting to know that a while ago, the Iranian intelligence apparatus discovered and cracked down on one of the most complicated cyber networks of the CIA which was used for cyber spying and was an important part of the CIA's operational capacities in the countries targeted by the U.S.," Shamkhani said in an interview with the IRIB on Monday.

He added that given the cooperation between Iran and a large number of world states within the framework of counter-espionage at international level, Tehran has provided its partners with information about the CIA cyber network, which also led to the capture of the members of the network and its eventual annihilation in those countries.

Shamkhani said evidence is available on the operation of the CIA project, adding that parts of the case have also been revealed by the CIA before.

The Washington Post reported in June 2012 that the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA), its spy service CIA, and Israel's military had worked together to launch Stuxnet against Iran's nuclear facilities.

In late 2015, Iran's then Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari called the attacks that came in 2011 "illegal," saying Tehran had never responded with "reciprocal cyber-attacks."

Iranian Minister of Information and Communications Technology Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi revealed that Tehran had developed an indigenous firewall securing its sensitive industrial facilities against Stuxnet, a cyber-weapon widely believed to be made by the U.S. and Israel and used in the past to target the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program.

The firewall, he said, has been designed and developed by young Iranian scientists, and successfully tested on



industrial automation systems.

The firewall "practically neutralizes industrial [acts of] sabotage, such as (those potentially launched by) Stuxnet, in electrical grids and suchlike," he wrote, adding, "By relying on (our) youths, we will turn threats into opportunities."



# Clock is ticking on Europe to save nuclear deal, Rouhani warns

## Rouhani receives credentials of four ambassadors

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Monday separately received credentials of the new ambassadors of France, China, Poland and Tajikistan.

Meeting with new French Ambassador to Tehran Philippe Thiebaud, Rouhani said the clock is ticking on Europe to save the 2015 nuclear deal after Washington's withdrawal in May 2018.

"The current situation is critical, and France can still work with other signatories of Barjam (nuclear deal) and play a historic role to save Barjam in this very short time," Rouhani noted, according to President.ir.

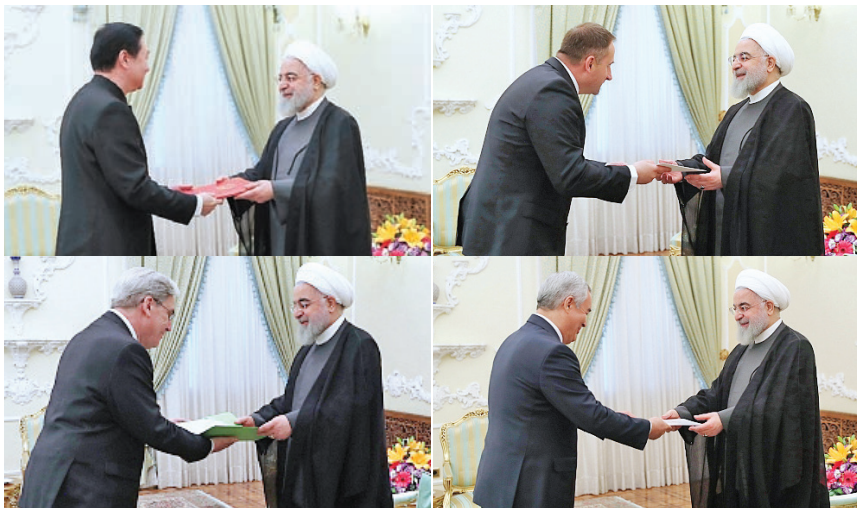
He warned that the collapse of the deal would not be in the interests of Iran, France, the region and the world.

He also said no factor should be allowed to prevent the expansion of Tehran-Paris ties.

■ **'Iran, China can cooperate to root out terrorism'**

In his meeting with Wang Hua, China's new ambassador to Tehran, President Rouhani said Tehran-Beijing cooperation is not limited to any field and that the Islamic Republic is ready to boost its relations with China in all areas.

"The two countries share common views on regional and international issues and their relations are continuously growing,"



he remarked.

He said the two sides oppose unilateralism, which is a "wrong" and "dangerous" path for the region and the international community.

"Iran and China can cooperate to completely root out terrorism in the region and Asia," Rouhani stated.

■ **'Tehran-Warsaw relations have been expanding'**

Speaking with new Polish ambassador to

Tehran Maciej Falkowski, Rouhani said that in the recent years, Tehran-Warsaw relations have been expanding and "we hope to witness more vigor in the relations."

Pointing to the historic relations between Iran and Poland, he said Iran has shown its fondness of the Polish people in sensitive points in history.

"The two nations have had close, friendly relations for centuries and we are interested

in expanding these relations in all fields," said Rouhani. "Our will is to maintain good relations in all fields with Poland."

■ **'Tehran ready to boost ties with Dushanbe in all fields'**

In a meeting with the new Ambassador of Tajikistan to Tehran Nizomoddin Zohidi, Rouhani said that Tehran is ready to develop its relations with Dushanbe in all fields of mutual interest.

The president highlighted the common historical, linguistic, cultural and religious roots of the Iranian and Tajik nations, saying, "Relations between the two countries should deepen to serve both nations as a basis for further development of relations."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the promotion of cooperation with the government of Tajikistan in all economic, cultural and international fields, considering these ties beneficial for both nations and the region," he remarked.

Iran's new ambassadors to Greece, Indonesia and Algeria also met with the president on Monday before leaving Tehran to start their tenure in the aforementioned countries.

During the meeting, Rouhani wished the new ambassadors success and tasked them with making every efforts to boost Iran's ties with the three countries.

## MP: Tehran to mull exiting NPT if Europe fails to save nuclear deal



**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Chairman of the Majlis Nuclear Committee Mojtaba Zonnour said on Monday that Iran will mull over leaving the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in the event the European parties to the nuclear deal fail to salvage the pact before the 60-day deadline set by Iran.

Zonnour also said Europe has no will to preserve the nuclear pact and pay the price for such action, Mehr reported.

He maintained that in such circumstances, Iran would increase uranium enrichment to whatever percentage necessary for peaceful purposes, and bring the Arak reactor back on stream.

"We could also stop the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol and reconsider the level of our cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," the MP stated.

"The volume of our economic transactions with Europe at best is \$20 billion in a year, whereas the volume of economic transactions between Europe and the U.S. is something between \$900-1,000 billion. Of course, Europe would not sacrifice \$1,000 billion for \$20 billion," he said.

Zonnour argued that maintaining the status quo with regard to the 2015 deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), benefits Europe because "they only want to control Iran, and make sure that we won't gain anything from the agreement."

On May 8, exactly a year after U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, Iran revealed countermeasures to the move, giving the other remaining parties to the JCPOA 60 days to comply with their commitments, particularly those regarding Iran's economic interests in the banking and energy sectors, before reducing portions of its own commitments to the agreement stage by stage.

Iran argues that its decision to reduce commitments to the JCPOA, given the current status of the deal, is within its rights under the agreement.

## Shamkhani set to attend international security forum



**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Ali Shamkhani, Iran's secretary of Supreme National Security Council, is set to participate in the 10th international security forum in the Russian city of Ufa on Tuesday.

Shamkhani is scheduled to attend the forum upon the official invitation of his Russian counterpart Nikolay Patrushev, IRNA reported.

High representatives in charge of security issues from around the world are to meet in the southern city of Ufa on June 18-20.

In the two-day forum, the representatives from all five continents will discuss international security issues of common interests.

Talks and bilateral consultations to review joint political, military and security initiatives with some participating countries on the sidelines of the forum, with the aim of managing security challenges and threats are on the agenda of the Iranian security official.

## Iranian, Russian, Azeri presidents to meet in Sochi

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Azeri President Ilham Aliyev will hold their trilateral summit in Russia before the end of the year, Russian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Mikhail Bocharnikov said on Monday.

"The summit will be held before the end of the year," RIA Novosti news agency quoted Bocharnikov as saying.

"It is Russia's turn to host it, so the summit will be held on the Russian territory. The exact date of the summit will be announced officially," he said, adding that the participants of the summit will discuss all the aspects of their cooperation.

Putin had said in a meeting with his Azeri counterpart that the next meeting of Iran-Russia-Azerbaijan presidents will be held in Russia in August.

Meanwhile, Azeri Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov had announced that the three presidents will meet in Russia.

He described the trilateral meeting as a good and effective initiative for exchanging views and discussing regional and international issues. He noted that Tehran, Moscow and Baku officials are supporting this procedure.

The first and the second trilateral meetings were held on August, 2016 in Baku and November, 2017 in Tehran.

## Bolton: U.S. willing to talk to Iranian leaders

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton has said his country is willing to talk to Iranian leaders to ease tensions but also is set for retaliatory action against what he called Iranian military provocations.

In an interview with the Washington Free Beacon published on Monday, Bolton claimed that intelligence reports over the past month warned of covert attacks in the Middle East and South Asia by Iranian proxies, including the Quds Force, Iranian intelligence operatives, and other Tehran surrogates.

"It's a very precarious situation," Bolton said during a meeting in the White House West Wing when asked about the standoff with Iran.

Bolton's call for talks come less than a week after Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed U.S. President Donald Trump as a person not worthy of exchanging messages, stressing that negotiations with Washington cannot help solve any problem, citing the international 2015 nuclear deal as an example which the United States

quit and ordered the harshest ever sanctions against Iran.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday that Washington does not want to go to war with Tehran, while repeating his baseless accusations that Iran was to blame for the oil tanker attacks in the Sea of Oman last Thursday.

"President Trump has done everything he can to avoid war. We don't want war," Pompeo said in an interview with Fox News.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington escalated again after the U.S. accused Iran of being responsible for the attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday.

In an interview on Fox News on Friday, Trump blamed Iran for the attack without providing any solid evidence, as did Pompeo, a day before.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani said on Sunday that the United States may have carried out acts of sabotage against the oil tankers to blame them on Iran.

Larijani also said, "The satirical part of the story lies within Pompeo's remarks in which he advised Iran to use



diplomacy in response to diplomatic moves," adding, "Such comment, coming out of Mr. Pompeo's mouth, is really cute."

## EU reiterates support for the nuclear deal

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — The European External Action Service (EEAS) issued in a statement on Monday saying that the visit to Iran by EEAS Secretary General Helga Schmid is a token of the EU support for the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Schmid visited Tehran on Saturday for talks with Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Aragchi, a senior negotiator in crafting the JCPOA along with other diplomats from the EU and 5+1 countries — the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

"Secretary General Schmid also used this opportunity to reiterate the EU's continued commitment to the JCPOA which is key to increasing stability and security in the Middle East and a crucial element of the global Non-Proliferation Treaty," the statement said.

According to IRNA, it added: "JCPOA has been working and delivering on its primary goal which is to ensure that Iran does not acquire material or equipment to develop a nuclear weapon."

The statement by the EEAS confirmed that the UN nuclear watchdog in its quarterly reports have repeatedly endorsed Iran's



commitment to the terms of the nuclear agreement.

"The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed in 15 reports that Iran abides by its nuclear related commitments."

Under the Trump administration, the United States withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018 and ordered sanctions on Iran.

It also threatened to punish any country or company that do business with Iran.

To circumvent the U.S. sanctions, in January the EU introduced a financial mechanism, known as INSTEX, for trade with Iran. However, the EU has so far failed to implement the mechanism.

"In particular, Secretary General dis-

cussed in Iran current EU efforts, together with other European partners, to enable the continuation of legitimate trade with Iran, making operational the Special Purpose Vehicle 'SPV'."

In a meeting on Saturday with chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Parliament Marielle de Sarnez, Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani criticized the European countries, including France, for inaction towards implementation of INSTEX.

Larijani criticized the performance of Paris regarding implementation of the JCPOA, saying that INSTEX is still "on paper".

Larijani also protested to France's Total Company for withdrawing the Iranian project in South Part following the U.S. sanctions.

When there are no banking relations between Tehran and Paris, establishment of economic relations is not possible, Larijani added.

Abusing the Society of the Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), the U.S. Department of Treasury cut off banking ties of the Central Bank of Iran. The act amounted to a declaration of war against the sovereign government of Iran.

The UN Security Council is responsible to hold inquiry into abuse of SWIFT by the U.S. administration.

## Trump's Iran approach has blown America's credibility: CNN

Samantha Vinograd, a CNN national security analyst who served on President Obama's National Security Council from 2009 to 2013, say that approach that President Donald Trump has taken toward Iran, including his disdain for the intelligence community that Iran was not building nuclear arms, has undermined the U.S. credibility.

Following is an excerpt of the article she wrote on the CNN on Sunday:

Trump has sown mistrust by questioning his own intelligence community, withdrawing from critical international coalitions and spreading disdain for the media.

As tensions with Iran escalate, doubts over whether to trust the intelligence community are percolating. But this isn't a new phenomenon. Last month, the State Department withdrew personnel from Iraq, citing an increased threat from Iran. Shortly after the announcement, there were questions, including from members of Congress, about whether the intelligence cited held water.

Now, fresh debate has ensued regarding Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's rapid assessment that Iran was responsible for recent attacks on commercial vessels in the Gulf of Oman. The United Kingdom has supported the U.S.

assessment, while other allies, like Germany, have taken a more cautious approach.

But the truth is, much of this doubt existed even before Trump became President. Ever since the Iraq War, when

**Trump called his own intelligence community "extremely passive and naive" when they assessed that Iran was not taking steps toward a nuclear bomb and that North Korea will not denuclearize.**

the United States launched a military invasion and roped our allies into it based on faulty intelligence, the trust deficit over U.S. intelligence has been high when it comes to the Middle East.

Of course, Trump has not helped matters. He has openly

questioned the intelligence community's assessments on numerous occasions. And his doubts make convincing our allies to trust us that much harder.

Here's just a few examples.

He called his own intelligence community "extremely passive and naive" when they assessed that Iran was not taking steps toward a nuclear bomb and that North Korea will not denuclearize.

Trump hasn't just sown mistrust of the intelligence community -- he's also sown mistrust of American reliability.

Trump's own track record of wielding big sticks when it personally suits him, and then putting them down based on his mood that day, we are no longer viewed as a trustworthy partner. Since assuming office, Trump has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Accord, the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty -- just to name a few.

One of Trump's favorite hobbies is urging distrust of the mainstream media. Just this weekend, Trump accused the New York Times of crimes that are punishable by death, tweeting that the New York Times engaged in "virtual treason" when it published a story on our cyber operations against Russia.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	238160.9
IFX	3018.14

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,127 rials
GBP	52,908 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$61.35/b
WTI	\$51.95/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.51/b
Gold	\$1,336.10/oz
Silver	\$14.84oz
Platinum	\$796.50/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran elected as vice-president of PIANC’s marine engineering committee

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The chairman of the board of Iranian Coastal and Marine Structural Engineering Association (ICOMSEA) Babak Bani-Jamali has been selected as the new vice-president of the marine engineering committee of the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure (known as PIANC).

As reported by Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), the decision was made in the 2019 Annual General Assembly of PIANC which was held in Japanese city of Kobe during June 3-7.

The World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure is an international professional organization founded in 1885.

PIANC’s mission is to provide expert guidance and technical advice on technical, economic and environmental issues pertaining to waterborne transport infrastructure, including the fields of navigable bodies of water (waterways), such as canals and rivers, as well as ports and marinas.

The governing body in the organization is the Annual General Assembly, which is composed of delegations from the member countries.

IMIDRO to establish consortium to accelerate exploration projects

**1 →** Gharibpour noted that in the framework of the country’s Sixth National Five-Year Development Plan (2016-2021), efficiency, productivity and maximum utilization of the capacities of the country’s mining industry have been given great importance and so should be considered in every step from exploration up to the production processes.

“In all areas including human resources, this [efficiency] should be taken into account. For example, we are far behind in employee education in the coal sector. Many of the work-related accidents in this sector are due to the lack of education... that is why efficiency and productivity is a priority in all the IMIDRO agreements,” he said.



In late May, Gharibpour had said that the country’s mining sector currently requires 18 billion euros of investment. “The mining sector is one of the country’s most profitable areas for investment so that 30 percent of the profits in the capital market is pertained to the mining and

mineral sector,” he said. IMIDRO currently has \$3 billion worth of projects underway and it also intends to renovate 5,000 industrial units using 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) of investment during the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

‘Shares of some large state-run companies to be divested in coming days’

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Privatization Organization (IPO) will offer shares of some large state-run companies to the private sector in the coming days, the organization head announced on Monday.

Mir Ali Ashraf Abdollah Pouri-Hosseini also said that it will be the biggest privatization process in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), IRIB reported.

As previously reported, in its planned budget for the current Iranian year, the Iranian government expects to earn some 106 trillion rials (about \$2.5 billion) of income from divesting shares of state-run companies to the private sector.

In Iran, implementation of privatization plan aimed at more productivity, investment making, job creation, promotion of trade balance, more competition in domestic economy, and reducing financial and management burden on the government has been under the spotlight over the past decade.

The law on implementation of the general policies of the Article 44 of Iran’s Constitution on privatizing state-owned companies was declared in 2006 in a bid to downsize the government and



promote the private sector’s role in the national economy.

The government envisioned a large privatization program in the Fifth Five-Year National Development Plan (2010-2015), aiming to privatize about 20 percent of the state-owned firms each year. Under the present interpretation of the Article 44, some state-owned companies have been privatized to reduce their financial burden on the country’s budget and also increase their productivity.

Downsizing the government is on the agenda, but a number of factors has been hindering privatization trend in the country, among them government’s high interference in the management of the transferred companies is a challenging one.

‘Expansion of economic ties with neighbors a priority in sanctions time’

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Development of economic relations with the neighboring countries is a priority for Iran under the sanctions condition, IRNA quoted Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian as saying on Monday.

Making the remarks in the third session of Iran-Russia provincial cooperation working group in Tehran on Monday, the Iranian minister, who is the co-chairman of Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee, stressed that Iran’s expansion of its economic ties with the neighbors specially Russia, which is also facing the sanctions, could be effective.

The session of the mentioned working group was held on the sidelines of the 15th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting and the second Iran-North Caucasus trade conference that kicked off in Tehran on Sunday and will wrap up in Isfahan on Tuesday.

Strengthening economic and trade ties with the neighbors and boosting non-oil exports to these countries has been put on agenda by the Iranian government.

In a press conference on Saturday, Saeed Zarandi, the deputy industry, mining and trade minister for planning,



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.”

He said that of the total \$46 billion worth of non-oil exports in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019), some \$23.4 billion was to 15 neighbors.

In mid-April, Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said the country plans to double its exports to the neighboring countries by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (which starts in March 2021).

First Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 98-03/111

**Tender Holder:**  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

**Subject of Two-Stage Tender:**  
Purchase of Equipment for Infrastructure, Storage, Communication Processing of IRIB Data according to the tender documents.

**Deadline of Receiving Documents:**  
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Monday June 24, 2019**.

**Place of Receiving Documents:**  
Secretariat of Tenders’ Commission, Technical Purchasing (KALA) Dept., Media Technology and Development Deputy Office, Bldg. No. 2, IRIB, Jam-e Jam St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran

**Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:**  
The amount of **USD 43,196** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

**Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:**  
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than **15 p.m. on Saturday July 27, 2019** and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

**Time and Place of Opening Envelopes**  
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m. on Monday July 29, 2019** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.  
It should be noted that bidders should hold license from the authorized bodies.

For more information, please contact the following phone numbers: **0098-21-22166313**  
It is obvious that cost of publishing two advertisements shall be borne by the winner of tender.  
**Public Relations Dept. of IRIB**

First Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 98-03/110

**Tender Holder:**  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

**Subject of Two-Stage Tender:**  
Supplying HD Transmission Equipment for TV Channels according to the tender documents.

**Deadline of Receiving Documents:**  
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Monday June 24, 2019**.

**Place of Receiving Documents:**  
Secretariat of Tenders’ Commission, Technical Purchasing (KALA) Dept., Media Technology and Development Deputy Office, Bldg. No. 2, IRIB, Jam-e Jam St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran

**Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:**  
The amount of **USD 35,544** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

**Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:**  
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than **15 p.m. on Saturday July 27, 2019** and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

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**Public Relations Dept. of IRIB**







## Regional efforts needed to ensure peace in Afghanistan



**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Even though the U.S. war was launched over 17 years ago, the situation in Afghanistan remains unstable due to occupation and increasing insecurity, and rise in deadly attacks by the extremist and militant groups.

Reports of air strikes, kidnappings, ambushes, killings, rocket attacks and bomb explosions in Afghanistan have been coming almost daily.

The year 2018 witnessed an 11-percent increase in civilian deaths as compared to that in 2017. While the negotiations between the US and Taliban are continuing, the conflict has actually escalated with recurrent deadly attacks killing hundreds of civilians and security personnel. Which is to say regional cooperation is needed and not US peace process.

So ensuring sustainable security and peace in Afghanistan is a great challenge facing the regional community which needs to shed its ambivalence and evolve a concerted strategy to curb terrorism and extremism in and around Afghanistan by stopping their sources of funds, arms, logistics and training and ideological motivation.

The future of Afghanistan with guarantees of peace, security and well-being of its people hinges upon the withdrawal of US troops and the success of reconciliation between rival ethnic/regional Afghan political groups and commanders, emergence of a balanced and broad-based stable government representing diverse ethnic, regional and minority interests, the setting up and effective functioning of law enforcement agencies, strengthening the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, the speedy implementation of reconstruction of social, economic and education infrastructure, and elimination of drugs and arms trafficking from Afghanistan.

In its initial year of establishment, the SCO members met in Shanghai in June 2001 and signed Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism on June 15, 2001.

This was followed up by the conclusion of the Agreement on Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in 2002. RATS was established to collect, collate and exchange information about terrorist movements, draft counter-terrorism policies and laws and also to maintain relations with the concerned institutions of the member states dealing with extremism, terrorism and separatism.

RATS can be turned into an effective institutional mechanism to deepen cooperation between the SCO member countries in dealing with the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism, besides drug trafficking, organized crime, cyber crime, etc. Each of these has great relevance for Afghanistan.

Recognizing the near- and long-term importance of stability in Afghanistan to the SCO region, the organization created a SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group (SACG). Formal cooperation between Afghanistan and the SCO began in 2005 with the establishment of SACG aimed at fighting terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking. The SCO organized a special conference on Afghanistan in March 2009 in Moscow.

Recognizing the challenges in Afghanistan and the region, the conference underscored the importance of sustained international efforts to achieve a stable, peaceful, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan.

A joint statement issued by the SCO member states and Afghanistan during this conference called for the "adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism as well as the elaboration of regional counter-terrorism legal instruments."

Any attempts at peace and reconciliation should not be rushed and should preserve the Constitution process and other gains of the last 18 years. It should also ensure independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Such process should be based on principles of shunning foreign occupation, violence and severing ties with international terror networks; accepting the Afghan Constitution; and honoring the rights of weaker sections of Afghan society, ethnic-religious minorities, women and children.

In the current environment we have a situation where while a dialogue process between the US and Taliban is underway, they both have also launched fresh offensives. The role of the SCO assumes importance in this context and it needs to reflect how it can provide support to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation.

The SCO member countries, and SCO observer member Iran remain concerned over the cross-border movement of extremists, armed militants, refugees, drugs, arms and organized crime from Afghanistan into their countries. Several countries including Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan which have physical borders with Afghanistan are also worried about the spillover of the conflict, terrorism and extremism from Afghanistan to their own territories. It would, therefore, be necessary to let the Kabul Process for Peace and Security in Afghanistan work out the negotiations and dialogue between various stake holders within Afghanistan without any external pressure or inducement.

While the peace process should be aimed at engaging and bringing together all the Afghan groups, it should isolate the extremist and terrorist networks which are bent upon recreating the Caliphate/Emirate in Afghanistan, which would be catastrophic for the SCO region, given the past experience of instability and conflict in various Central Asian countries.

As such, SCO and RATS have a distinctive role to play by working out definite agreements/arrangements between the member states including Afghanistan to (i) negotiate bilateral extradition agreements, (ii) take regular stock of the radical extremists and terrorists operating in the region, and exchange such information, (iii) identify the sources of terror-financing and take necessary steps to block these channels, (iv) and to engage and seek cooperation of the Islamic clergy/Ulema for rejecting foreign occupation and the hate ideology of the terrorists and extremists in the name of jihad, Wahhabism and Salafism.

# Will UK leave the European Union this year? Boris Johnson is near the Downing Street

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — The story of Britain's departure from the European Union has become a complex puzzle for European analysts. On the other hand, there are secret and obvious attempts to hold a referendum on the withdrawal of Britain from Europe. However, some analysts believe that, if Boris Johnson is at the head of the British political and administrative equations, this issue will come about (British withdrawal from Europe). Brexit has long been a foggy point in the security, political, social, and economic equations in Britain and the United Europe. Conflicts and debates over Brexit have increased in the UK, and opponents of the Britain's exit from the European Union are about to hold a referendum again.

Two years has passed since the referendum was held over the Brexit, which ended up in the victory of the proponents of the UK exit from the EU. But the details of this departure remains ambiguous among the British authorities, and this ambiguity seems to be intensified in 2019. Here, we will review the latest reports and news on the Brexit:

Johnson's rivals vie to offer their visions for post-Brexit Britain

As Guardian reported, The five men vying to take on Boris Johnson in the Conservative leadership race made a slew of promises to tackle illiteracy, fix the broken social care system and reunify Britain after Brexit as they clashed in the first televised debate. Johnson was attacked by the foreign secretary, Jeremy Hunt, for failing to appear in Sunday night's debate, at which he was represented by an empty lectern. "If his team won't allow him out to debate with five pretty friendly colleagues, how is he going to cope with 27 EU countries? He should be here to answer that very question," said Hunt.

Much of the leadership contest so far has been dominated by the issue of Brexit, which produced some of the strongest clashes in the Channel 4 debate. But nine years after the Conservatives came to power in coalition with the Liberal Democrats, all five men also used the platform to set out their priorities for renewing their country and their party.

Hunt, who was health secretary for six years, said fixing Britain's broken social care system was "unfinished business", and promised to tackle what he called the "national blind spot" of illiteracy, saying: "A quarter of primary school leavers are unable to read or write properly."

Rory Stewart, who came seventh in the first round of voting last week, also highlighted the state of social care. "It's a real disgrace: it's the unfinished revolution of our society," the international development secretary said. "It is that on which our civilisation should be tested – and it is that which I would make my central priority." Michael Gove said he wanted to do more for children in care, and raised concerns about young people leaving university burdened with debt, suggesting the student loans system should be "looked at".

"It seems to me tragic that when I think of the next generation of children, that they will leave university with debt, they will find it more difficult to have a home of their own; it seems as though their horizons are narrowing just as the world is opening up," the environment secretary said. And in an echo of Tony Blair's "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" catchphrase, Gove suggested: "Our approach to knife crime should not just be about law and order – it should be about love and hope."

Sajid Javid praised public services, saying: "Like 90% of the population, I relied on public services to get me where I am." The home secretary also called for more investment in education. Dominic Raab said he would boost degree-level apprenticeships and cut taxes for the lowest-paid.

And despite the public pleas of the chancellor, Philip Hammond, for candidates not



to abandon the Tories' reputation for fiscal prudence, no one mentioned tackling the deficit. Raab was repeatedly challenged by all four of his rivals for refusing to rule out suspending parliament if he considered it necessary to press ahead with a no-deal Brexit – something he said must be kept on the table. "The minute we telegraph to the EU that we're not willing to walk away at the end of October, come what may, we lose the best shot at a deal," the former Brexit secretary said.

But Javid told him: "You don't deliver democracy by trashing democracy – we're not choosing a dictator, we're choosing a PM." And Hunt said the idea was a "fundamental misreading of what parliament stands for, and what the people in this country would accept".

Javid, who will need to win over extra support if he is to remain in the race after Tuesday's second round of voting, painted himself as a fresh face from a different background who could communicate better with non-Tory voters. "It's important to have someone that can unite people – and my own background, my life experience is very different from Conservative leaders of the past," he said. "I'm not from central casting."

Stewart, whose quixotic campaign has involved walking around Britain meeting the public, received a warm response from the studio audience of floating voters, including when he complained that the contest has become a "competition of machismo" over Brexit. He also took a swipe at Johnson by saying of his rivals in the studio: "I hope it's one of us who becomes prime minister." And after the debate, he won the backing of business minister Margot James, who had previously supported Matt Hancock. She described him as "energetic, determined and embracing the centre ground".

Stewart claimed he was the candidate who could win over backers of other parties at a future general election. "I'm not ashamed of the fact that Labour and Lib Dem voters say they would vote for me," he said. "I think that's something to be proud of, and I think we need to work to listen to each other, and above all to bring this country together." One member of the audience asked the candidates about their greatest weakness. Raab called himself a "restless soul", Javid said he was too stubborn, and Gove that he was too impatient.

Johnson, who is the overwhelming front-runner, had declined an invitation to take part in the debate, and is not expected to join a hustings with Westminster journalists on Monday either. But he will join a BBC debate on Tuesday evening, after the second round of voting, when the field will have been slimmed down. The least popular candidate will be eliminated after Tuesday's ballot among MPs – as will any contender who does not

meet a threshold of 33 supporters, set by the backbench 1922 Committee.

Only Johnson, Hunt and Gove achieved that target last week. Others have spent the weekend trying to win over erstwhile supporters of Hancock, who withdrew after scoring 20 votes in the first round. Hancock himself, who pitched himself as the right candidate to "turn the page" on Brexit, announced on Sunday night that he was backing Johnson after holding meetings with all the other candidates on Friday and Saturday. Writing in the Times, Hancock said he felt Johnson had the best chance of uniting the party and the country and would lead as a one-nation prime minister because "that's how he ran London – consistently – for eight years". He added: "I have repeatedly argued for a strategy of defeating the danger of [Nigel] Farage by delivering Brexit and defeating the danger of [Jeremy] Corbyn by dominating the centre ground thereafter. That is Boris's plan and I wholeheartedly endorse it."

Some moderate Tory MPs had hoped for a "stop Johnson dream ticket", but talks on joining forces foundered. "Rory, Michael, Saj and Matt all agreed they should band together – but each of them thought it was him that people should unite around," said one senior Tory. Further rounds of voting will be held on Wednesday – and on Thursday, if necessary – to weed the field down to just two men, whose names will then go forward to Conservative party members. The result will be announced in the week beginning 21 July.

Boris Johnson might be exactly the Brexit prime minister Brussels needs

Also Luke McGee wrote in CNN that The feared chaos of a no-deal Brexit is suddenly a lot more likely. At least, that's how things seem as week one of the battle to replace Theresa May as the UK's prime minister comes to an end. But some in Brussels, the de facto capital of the European Union, are not so sure things are all that bad. Boris Johnson, the frontrunner in the contest to lead the governing Conservative party, launched his campaign on Wednesday. And in his pitch to the party faithful, he committed to taking the UK out of the EU on October 31, no matter if a deal is in place with Europe or not.

In Brussels, there's a grudging acceptance that the man who led the Brexit campaign and who talks openly about leaving without a deal is who they'll now have to negotiate with. If the EU is taken at its word, the deal that Theresa May struck with Brussels last year remains the only deal on the table. Therefore, Johnson's claim that he will reopen negotiations and secure changes to the Withdrawal Agreement (the formal name for May's deal) are based more on hope than fact.

And taken at his word, if Johnson cannot secure these changes then the UK will simply crash out at the end of October -- the next Brexit deadline. So why are things not all that

bad? Over two years, EU officials watched the UK rub out red line after red line. Talking a big game on Brexit from London is easy. But when it's your neck on the line, things look somewhat different.

The quiet suspicion among some EU types is that when the crunch comes, Johnson's political ambition might kick in as the deadline looms. "When it comes down to it, does Boris, a man who has spent his entire career getting ready for this moment, want to be the shortest-serving prime minister in history? Because that's what will happen if he drags the UK off a cliff and there are no avocados in the shops and no medicine in hospitals," said one EU source with direct knowledge of private conversations taking place between EU officials.

There might have been some clues in Johnson's campaign launch speech. While he committed to leaving the EU at the next deadline and under no circumstances requesting a further extension, he also said unequivocally that a no-deal Brexit was not what he wanted. Tie these threads together, and it suddenly seems plausible that Johnson could end up trying to sell Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement to lawmakers in London, come autumn.

How might this work? The Brexit deal, as it's commonly known, consists of two parts. First, the Withdrawal Agreement, which allows the UK to leave with no immediate consequences. Second, the Political Declaration, which outlines the intentions of both sides as they enter negotiations about the future relationship.

The Withdrawal Agreement contains a section called the Northern Ireland backstop, which, without getting into too much detail, is designed to prevent the return of border infrastructure at the frontier between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It's been the key sticking point for Conservative Brexiters, as it has no end point, and they say it effectively ties the UK to remaining in the EU in all but name.

Johnson claims he can change the backstop; the EU says he can't. But he might be able to get further commitments in the Political Declaration that he could present as a huge victory to lawmakers in the UK. Why would Johnson triumph where May failed? Two reasons.

First, he is far more popular among Conservatives than May. One of the biggest concerns Brexiters had was May being in charge of the second round of talks, given the concessions she made in round one. These were her concessions, not Johnson's. And they are more likely to trust him to hold a hard line in round two.

Second, it cannot be overstated exactly how sick the EU is of Brexit. European diplomatic sources say that there is increasing support among the other 27 EU member states for Emmanuel Macron's view that a no-deal outcome isn't as bad as the ongoing uncertainty. They want Brexit over and done with, but don't want to throw Ireland, the country that a no deal would most affect other than the UK, under the bus.

This means that a few concessions to help the man they loathe get a deal over the line and finally be shot of this mess might not be the worst price to pay. Should this happen, the politics of it would be very messy. Johnson, the darling of the Brexiters, will try forcing a deal through parliament that he effectively quit May's government over. And if he fails to get a new deal approved, then it comes back to no deal or requesting a further extension.

All three outcomes -- deal, extension, no deal -- could spell the end of a Johnson premiership merely months after the 54-year-old finally achieves his dream of calling 10 Downing Street home. But this kind of brinkmanship, high-risk politics has defined the Brexit crisis ever since the Brexit vote, three years ago this month. There's no reason that should change now.

## U.S. skepticism over A shares eclipses its own investors

By Hu Weijia

**GLOBAL TIMES** — US Senator Marco Rubio has reportedly written to the CEO of global index provider MSCI Inc questioning why the company includes certain Chinese stocks in its widely tracked emerging market index and saying China can no longer be allowed "to reap the rewards of American and international capital markets."

Since the index compiler announced in 2017 it would include stocks listed in Shanghai and Shenzhen in its global emerging-markets gauge, the A-share market has reportedly seen a capital inflow of \$84 billion. MSCI inclusion prompts foreign investors to increase their focus on Chinese shares, but China is not the only beneficiary. The trend of investing in Chinese stocks is driven by a very simple reason: Looking for profits in the A-share market.

Each year, an enormous amount of US dollar-denominated capital crosses borders pursuing profits. This is the basic reason why the US can remain complacent in its financial hegemony. The Chinese stock market offers the chance to make profits, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index having risen more than 15 percent so far this year. Some foreign financial institutions have made big money



by investing in Chinese shares. Now what Rubio suggests American people do, is to cut off all ways of making money from the A-share market.

Rubio's letter reflects a lack of financial knowledge mixed

with an unprecedented hostility toward cross-border capital flows, but the words are coming from a member of the political elite of the US, the world's financial superpower. That's unbelievable! Rubio's story can help people better understand why the superpower has seen its financial status decline.

China has been taking steps to modernize and open up its stock markets to foreign investors, a move that indirectly prompted MSCI to include certain Chinese shares in its emerging market index. MSCI inclusion is a landmark step in China's integration with the global financial system. If the US demands that China further open up its financial markets and offer more opportunities for US financial institutions, this means that China's integration with the global financial system cannot experience any retrogression. It will be extremely dangerous if some members of the US political elite want to cut bilateral financial exchanges to prevent China or the US from reaping the rewards of each other's capital markets. For example, the US will suffer huge losses if China dumps its vast holdings of US government debt.

China has pledged to further open up its financial markets. Hopefully, US political elites won't prevent US investors and pensioners from making money from the A-share market



# Stephen Lendman: Gulf of Oman incident is false flag to blame Iran

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — U.S. columnist Stephen Lendman says False flags are a US tradition since the mid-19th century, with the 9/11 being the mother of them all, stressing that the Thursday attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman has been a false flag operation to blame Iran.

“The Gulf of Oman and May regional incidents were false flags to wrongfully blame Iran for what it had nothing to do with,” Lendman told FNA in an exclusive interview.

Stephen Lendman was born in 1934 in Boston, MA. In 1956, he received a BA from Harvard University. Two years of US Army service followed, then an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1960. After working seven years as a marketing research analyst, he joined the Lendman Group family business in 1967. He remained there until retiring at year end 1999. Writing on major world and national issues began in summer 2005. In early 2007, radio hosting followed. Lendman now hosts the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network three times weekly. Lendman is a 2008 Project Censored winner and 2011 Mexican Journalists Club international journalism award recipient. Lendman lives in Chicago. His new book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”

What follows is FNA's interview with author and writer Stephen Lendman.

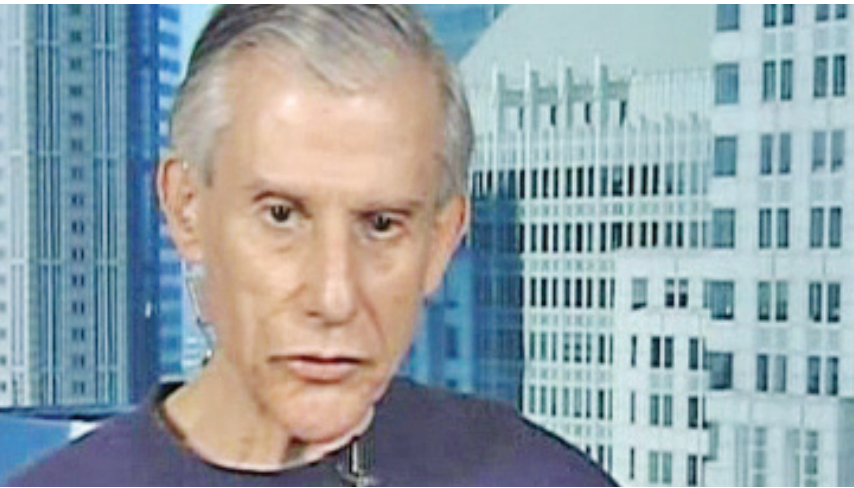
■ What could be the scenario behind the accusations about Iran's involvement in attacking tankers in the Gulf of Oman?

A: I believe there's sharp disagreement between Trump and his geopolitical officials Pompeo and Bolton.

I earlier quoted a Bolton critic saying he never met a country he didn't want to bomb, including Iran, Venezuela, and North Korea.

In contrast, Pompeo I believe favors war by other means on Iran with sanctions and other tough policies, aiming to crush its economy and immiserate its people.

Tough US policies on Iran haven't worked for the past 40 years and won't likely ahead.



My fear about the Gulf of Oman incident and others last month affecting Saudi, UAE and Norwegian tankers, attacking Saudi pumping stations, and a rocket falling harmlessly in Baghdad's Green Zone ups the stakes for possible war.

I believe Trump wants toughness on Iran short of war he doesn't want, prioritizing his reelection next year, fearing war on the country could make him a one-term president over quagmire conditions and dead US service members returning home in body bags.

US media are hostile to him for defeating Hillary Clinton and would likely feature this news.

Key also is the failure of Pompeo and other Trump officials to enlist world community support in condemning Iran for incidents with US and likely Israeli fingerprints all over them.

If this continues as I believe, one or more other incidents similar to the Gulf of Oman will likely follow, maybe something more serious.

False flags are a US tradition since the mid-19th century, 9/11 the mother of them all. The Gulf of Oman and May regional incidents

were false flags to wrongfully blame Iran for what it had nothing to do with.

Cui bono is most important whenever an incident like Thursday attacks on vessels in the Gulf of Oman occurs.

Clearly, Iran had nothing to gain and plenty to lose from the incident. The Trump regime and its anti-Iran imperial partners benefit greatly by blaming the country for an incident no evidence suggests it had anything to do with.

■ The al-Arabiya issued a tweet of the UAE foreign minister alleging that Iran was involved in attacking tankers. Next, Al-Arabiya removed this tweet. What can be the reasons for this?

A: I noticed that al-Arabiya removed the anti-Iran tweet it posted. Very unusual, and I don't know why, other than maybe wanting it changed to portray the Gulf of Oman incident in a different way, still falsely blaming Iran for what happened.

Saudi energy minister Khalid al-Falih called for a “rapid and decisive response to the threat of energy supply, market stability and consumer confidence, which are posed by recent terrorist acts in both the Arabian Sea and the Arabian Gulf, against the major

global energy supply chains” — what Iran had nothing to do with he failed to explain.

■ In this new case, John Bolton was silent. Why?

A: In an article I'll post on Sunday, I explained that a late May NYT report said guests with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort heard him “grousing” about Bolton, “complaining about the advice he was getting and wondering if Mr. Bolton was taking him down a path he did not want to go.”

Despite DJT's hostility toward Iran, the Times said he broke with Bolton on how to deal with its ruling authorities, the same is true for North Korea, Bolton pushing for war on both countries.

Replacing raging hawk Bolton would step back from possible war on Iran. According to the Times “Trump is not fond of Mr. Bolton, according to a half-dozen (unnamed) advisers and associates, and he makes no secret of it in private.”

They “differ sharply over their approach to the world...” “If it was up to John, we'd be in four (new) wars now,” an unnamed Trump regime official quoted him saying.

The Times cited another unnamed figure close to Trump, saying what's going on between him and Bolton resembles how DJT soured on Rex Tillerson.

Bolton's silence is likely over fear of being fired for supporting policies Trump opposes.

■ What is your prediction about the new accusations against Iran?

A: I believe the Gulf of Oman false flag fell flat, so far failing to get world community support to wrongfully blame Iran for the incident

I also believe we'll see more of these incidents ahead as long as Bolton is around, maybe something more serious, the same true for Pompeo unless Trump restrains him, not so far. War is a possibility but not if Trump hardliners can't sell it to the world community and US public.

They failed to do it so far, and that's a positive sign way short of an all clear. The danger exists

## Hacking dirty government secrets is not a crime



By Ted Rall

**ANTIWAR** — British goon cops acting at the request of the United States government entered Ecuador's embassy in London, dragged out WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and prepared to ship him across the pond. After this event last month, most of the mainstream media reacted with spiteful glee about Assange's predicament and relief that the Department of Justice had exercised self-restraint in its choice of charges.

“Because traditional journalistic activity does not extend to helping a source break a code to gain illicit access to a classified network, the charge appeared to be an attempt by prosecutors to sidestep the potential First Amendment minefield of treating the act of publishing information as a crime,” reported a pleased New York Times.

At the time, the feds had accused Assange of hacking conspiracy because he and Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning allegedly discussed how to break into a Pentagon computer.

Bob Garfield of NPR's “On the Media,” a veteran reporter who should and probably does know better, was one of many establishmentarians who opined that we needn't worry because Assange isn't a “real” journalist.

This being the Trump administration, self-restraint was in short supply. It turns out that the short list of Assange charges was a temporary ploy to manipulate our gullible English allies. Now, Assange faces 17 additional charges under the Espionage Act, and a finally concerned Times calls it “a novel case that raises profound First Amendment issues” and “a case that could open the door to criminalizing activities that are crucial to American investigative journalists who write about national security matters.”

Corporate media's instant reversal on Assange — from rapist scum to First Amendment hero within minutes — elevates self-serving hypocrisy to high art. But that's OK. Whatever gets Assange closer to freedom is welcome — even the jackals of corporate media.

**British goon cops acting at the request of the United States government entered Ecuador's embassy in London, dragged out WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and prepared to ship him across the pond. After this event last month, most of the mainstream media reacted with spiteful glee about Assange's predicament and relief that the Department of Justice had exercised self-restraint in its choice of charges.**

May we linger, however, on an important point that risks getting lost?

Even if Assange were guilty of hacking into that Pentagon computer, even if it had been Assange's idea, even if Manning had had nothing to do with it, even if Trump's DOJ hadn't larded on the Espionage Act stuff, Assange should not have faced any charges.

Included in the material Manning stole from the military and posted to WikiLeaks were the “Afghan War Diary,” the “Iraq War Logs,” files about the concentration camp at Guantanamo and the “Collateral Murder” video of the U.S. military's 2007 massacre of civilians in Baghdad.

For the sake of argument, let's assume that Assange, without Manning, had personally hacked into a Pentagon computer and in doing so discovered proof that US occupation forces in Iraq and Afghanistan were guilty of war crimes, including torture and the mass murder of civilians

for fun — and put that evidence of criminal wrongdoing online. Would Assange deserve a prison term? Of course not. He would merit a medal, a ticker tape parade, a centrally located handsome statue or two.

Even if Assange were “guilty” of the hacking charges, so what? The “crime” of which he stands accused pales next to the wrongdoing he helped expose.

Good Samaritan laws protect people who commit what the law calls a “crime of necessity.” If you save a child from your neighbor's burning house, the police shouldn't charge you with trespassing. Similarly, if the only way to expose government or corporate law-breaking is to steal confidential documents and release them to the press a la Edward Snowden, you should be immune from prosecution. That principle clearly applies to the materials Manning stole and Assange released as a public service to citizens unaware of the misdeeds committed under their name and at their expense.

Even among liberals, it has become fashionable to observe that people who engage in civil disobedience must be prepared to face legal punishment. This is a belief grounded in practicality: Individuals who confront the state need to understand that theirs will be a difficult struggle. Over the past few decades, however, what was common sense has become perverted into a bizarre justification for oppression: Snowden/Assange/Manning/Reality Winner violated laws, they knew what they were doing, that's the risk they took, and so — this is the weird part — the left need not defend them.

Yes, these whistleblowers knew (or ought to have known) that they risked prosecution and prison time. But that's the way things are, not the way they ought to be. The project of a left must be to fight for society and politics as they should be, not to blandly shrug our shoulders and accept the status quo. Laws should be rewritten to protect whistleblowers like Manning and journalists like Assange who expose official criminality.

Whistleblowers should never face prosecution.

# A Palestinian response to Jared Kushner's racist remarks

**MONDOWEISS** — In classical racist literature and discourse, black/brown natives are portrayed as lazy groups who cannot run their own affairs; they belong to backward entities that clash with other modern entities. The best intentions of these nations amount in the end to nothing, and whatever they have is brought about by the powers of illusion and Western intervention. The racist ideology of colonialism justifies the occupation of other lands, and then defends the so-called human face of Western colonialism, in general, and Israeli settler colonialism, in particular.

Jared Kushner, Donald Trump's Middle East adviser and son-in-law, has recently raised doubts about the ability of the Palestinians to govern themselves: “That's one that we'll have to see. The hope is that they, over time, will become capable of governing... [The Palestinians] need to have a fair judicial system ... freedom of press, freedom of expression, tolerance for all religions before the Palestinian territories can become ‘investable.’” Of course, Israel, for him, does have all these freedoms, even if he fails to acknowledge that they are exclusive to a particular ethno-religious group.

He went further when asked if Palestinians could expect freedom from Israeli military and government interference by saying that it would be “a high bar!” For him, “what [the Palestinian people] want is they want the opportunity to live a better life. They want the opportunity to pay their mortgage.”

This is racism 101, taken straight from the social Darwinism of the 19th Century.

One classical definition of racism, based on a strictly biological approach, which the likes of Jared Kushner and other white supremacists from South Africa to the

American South to apartheid Israel believe in is that human beings may be distinguished in terms of their biological make-up, and these differences result in essential innate differences in relation to intelligence. This is the rationale for racism. So based on this logic, Palestinians are not as smart as White Ashkenazi Israelis to govern themselves. Let alone the fact that differences between social groupings are a function of material and historical forces. And this applies to the differences between settler-colonists and natives in Palestine.

One wonders whether Kushner has ever heard of Samira Azzam, Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Ghassan Kanafani, Mahmoud Darwish, Toufik Zayyad, Ibrahim Abu Lughd, Hisham Sharabi, Naji Al-Ali, or Fadwa Touqan—to mention but a few Palestinian minds.

Palestinians, for white, rich kids like Kushner, are not genuine and authentic human beings, like Ashkenazi Israelis because they do not produce bombs and machines. Thus, they simply cannot govern themselves. But they are, of course responsible for the tragedy in their lives from 1948 until today. Israel, with the U.S., has been trying to civilize them. Palestinians have a different mentality, inferior to that of Westerners. This is why these primitive, uncivilized Palestinians should be grateful if the Ashkenazi Israeli should be generous enough to carry the burden of governing them.

Kushner's message is clear enough: Since you cannot trust Palestinians to run their own affairs, they should accept the “deal of the century” and their own enslavement to Israelis. Kushner's is an ideology that is not only racist, but also, Islamophobic, and Orientalist. I have no doubt whatsoever



that he would have supported the Jim Crow Laws, and the Apartheid regime since he has no problem whatsoever with the new Israeli Nation-State Law!

Let me end this piece with jewels taken from one of the greatest Palestinian thinkers of the 20th Century, the late Edward Said who noted in Culture and Imperialism that, “the common factor of both colonialism and neo-colonialism, as constituents of imperialism, is the presumption of the superiority of the white/Western colonialist over the Black/Native colonized — and the right of the former to oppress the latter, whose role is only reaffirming the superiority of the former.”

# U.S. needs to realize arm-twisting is futile

By Li Zheng

**GLOBALTIMES** — The U.S. diplomatic doctrine of “America First” and its obsession with absolute victory and security have had unexpected impact on other countries and the international order. Once considered the bellwether of globalization, the US is now strong-arming other countries over trade and undermining trust on which free trade across borders stands. The US calls itself the “world's police,” but it frequently cracks the military and economic whip to aggravate an already tense international situation.

The US government believes such controllable chaos is the key to realizing “America First.” But other countries believe Washington's strategy is shaking the international foundation built during the post-Cold War period and will have long-term consequences. The chaos created by the US may eventually ruin the country's diplomatic credibility achieved over the years.

It seems that the US government wants to keep diplomacy on the boil. It broke friendly trade relations with North America, Europe, Japan and China, and even threatened to withdraw from the World Trade Organization (WTO). The US aims

at renegotiating trade deals to win more preferential treatments for US industry. But what the US is seeking runs contrary to the principles of justice and reciprocity in international trade. The US also withdrew from most international organizations and agreements that went against its stance, and refused to shoulder international responsibility.

In security, the US flexed its muscle at almost all rivals. This was meant to get rid of all external security risks. The US government upped the pressure on North Korea, Venezuela and Iran. Economic sanctions and military deterrence have become the US government's mainstay to resolving international issues.

In technology, the US adopts protectionism and works to change technological connectivity and coordinated development. The current US government thinks the country's technological advantage should not be shared by other countries. The US Department of Commerce expanded export controls by adding artificial intelligence and quantum computing to the list. The US government's crackdown on Huawei and ZTE Corp and its unfriendly moves over Chinese students in American universities are proof of such technological protectionism.

The US pursues absolute security and dominance. Although the strategy that follows the law of the jungle and winner takes all affects the international society, the US academic community and think tanks generally agree with Washington.

As a result, the US government may give full play to such absolute strategy, the key to which is forming small coteries based on different issues and stances, and sabotaging international society's cooperation on issues of mutual concern. Only in this way can the US splinter international consensus and order, and turn the situation into one-to-one competition, like between companies.

However, such strategy has three uncontrollable risks. The US wants to use unilateralism to consolidate its hegemony, but it may backfire. First, taking an approach that resembles corporate attitude to businesslike approach to competition between countries may make the situation go out of control and affect effective decision-making by the country. Laws, government and trade associations can restrain business competition. But there is no mechanism to restrain national competition, which makes it hard to be dealt with. There will even be acts that breach the bottom line. The US government did not give much thought to where this competition would lead. Recently,

a US government official said that China-US competition is a “clash of civilizations.” This shows that the US government is no longer calm because of the competition, which may lead to Washington's highly risky policies.

Second, the US may have overestimated its ability to strong-arm other countries. The US believes other countries are bound to make concessions, meeting the needs of its economy, politics or security and that the US gaining benefits from these concessions would contribute to its rising national power and stronger foothold. But history shows that countries may not yield to military or economic pressure. Instead, they may unite and put up a fight, making the oppressing country pay more than it expected.

Third, the US has underestimated the difficulty to rebuild the international order. Washington's ultimate aim is to establish a new order that is more beneficial to the US. But international order depends on mutual trust and consensus among countries. Once the old order crumbles, it takes a long time to form a new one. Washington pursues absolute security and advantage, but this will not change the general trend of multi-polarization and decentralization of power



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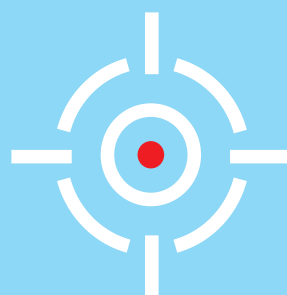
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# NASA’s spacecraft is orbiting closer to an asteroid than ever before

In the dark and lonely place that is space, NASA’s OSIRIS-REx mission has managed to reach a new level of proximity as it studies an asteroid.

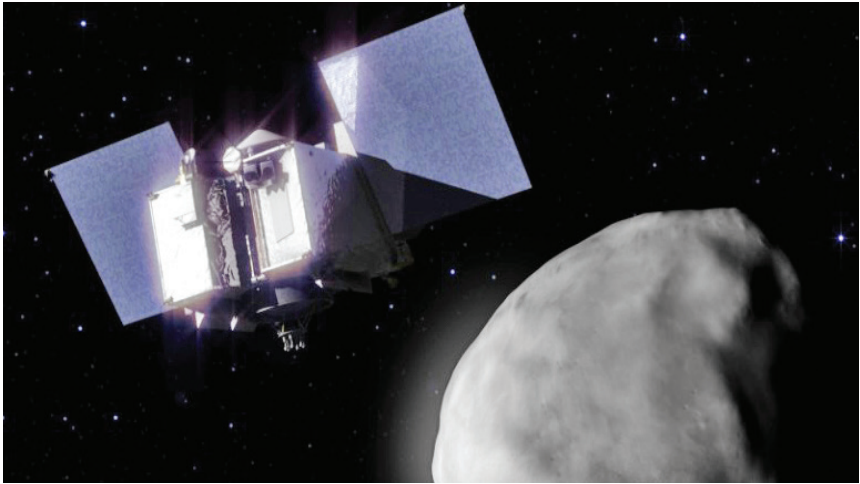
After a maneuver, the spacecraft in NASA’s asteroid study mission is orbiting closer to a planetary body than any spacecraft has ever come, the space agency said.

The mission recently entered a new phase where the spacecraft will orbit about 2,231 feet, or 0.4 miles, above the asteroid Bennu’s surface. During this phase, known as Orbital B, the spacecraft will snap images of the asteroid’s horizon and map the object to determine where the best sample collection site on Bennu’s surface is, NASA said in a statement it released Thursday.

It will remain this close to the asteroid until the second week of August.

The spacecraft broke its previous record, which was set about 4,224 feet, or 0.8 miles, away from Bennu.

OSIRIS-REx, which stands for Origins,



Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer, is NASA’s first asteroid sample return mission.

It’s on a seven year mission. The spacecraft, which was launched in September 2016, arrived at Bennu in December 2018.

It will survey and map Bennu, navigate in close proximity to the asteroid and ultimately touch the surface for five seconds to retrieve a sample, the mission’s website says.

“This sample of a primitive asteroid will help scientists understand the formation of the Solar System over 4.5 billion years ago,” NASA said. Bennu is a near-Earth asteroid that could pass our planet closer than the moon in 2135, with even closer approaches possible in 2175 and 2195.

Although the chance of Bennu directly striking Earth is unlikely, the information from OSIRIS-REx can help scientists understand how to deflect near-Earth asteroids.

Already, scientists have encountered unexpected observations. They have detected particle plumes ejecting off of the surface. This discovery means Bennu is a rare, active asteroid that regularly ejects material into space.

The spacecraft is expected to return to Earth in September 2023.

(Source: CNN)

## Dockworkers’ dietary changes reflect the decline of the Roman Empire



When times were good, the dockworkers of Portus, the maritime port of Imperial Rome, enjoyed a surprisingly diversified diet. But new analysis of ancient animal and human remains -- detailed in the journal *Antiquity* this week -- suggests the diets of the city’s working class shifted as Rome fell into decline.

Portus was established in the first century A.D. For four centuries, it served as the Roman’s gateway to the Mediterranean and a nexus of maritime trade.

But archaeological analysis suggests the city had taken a defensive posture by the fifth century. Protective walls were built and warehouses, once a place to store imports from North Africa and elsewhere, were used to house the dead.

To better understand how these changes affected the local populace, a research team led by scientists at the universities of Cambridge and Southampton conducted isotopic analysis of animal and human remains found buried in Portus.

“Isotopic analysis works on the principle that you are what you eat -- that your body tissues are made from the food and water you consume,” Cambridge bioarchaeologist Tamsin O’Connell told UPI. “We can track chemical signals from the diet into body tissues, to find out about people’s diet.”

By studying the chemical signals in the bones of ancient Portus residents, scientists can better understand how the region’s shifting politics affected people’s daily lives.

“The carbon and nitrogen isotopic

values of collagen is linked to the types of protein that they consume in their diet -- animal, fish or plant,” O’Connell said. “Bones such as ribs form over a period of a few years before death, so they represent a time-integrated signal, not just a recent dietary intake.”

Unlike other Roman cities, where scientists have found distinct differences in the diets of the well-heeled and the working class, the latest analysis showed that the dockworkers of Portus ate diversified diets featuring animal proteins, imported wheat, olive oil, and fish sauce from North Africa.

The good times didn’t last, however. By the time the Vandals sacked Rome in 455 A.D., the diets of port’s dockworkers looked a lot more like the diets of other peasants -- more reliant on plant proteins, portages and stews.

Researchers can’t be certain about how exactly political disruption in Rome triggered a simplification of the working-class diet in Portus.

“That’s the million quid question. We don’t know the causes, but what we have is strong correlation,” O’Connell said. “We would now like to look at other sites, to see if we can see a similar shift at the same time.”

During the time period, the people of the Mediterranean moved around a fair amount, and it’s likely many Portus laborers had to find work elsewhere as the Roman Empire shrank. With its economic reach on the decline, Roman trade shifted eastward.

(Source: UPI)

## Heartwarming discovery shows dolphins are even more like us than we thought



Many comparisons have been made between humans and dolphins, those sleek mammals of the sea. Now scientists have found another point of similarity between us and our cetacean cousins: Like us, dolphins make friends based on mutual interests.

In the case of the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*) specifically, individuals tend to hang out with others that use the same tool for foraging.

That tool is a sea sponge. In the waters of Shark Bay off the coast of Western Australia, the dolphins have been observed using sponges like a thimble, to protect their beaks as they forage, allowing them to access food in deeper water channels than non-sponging dolphins.

This is the only place in the world this behavior has been seen, and it’s been well documented in females, who adopt sponging along matrilineal lines, passing the trick down from mother to daughter. They also tend to associate with other spongers.

Males seem to use the technique much less. Scientists thought this might be because sponging -- which is time consuming -- was possibly taking time away from adult male-specific behaviors, such as making friends with other male dolphins.

But, after an extensive study on sponge use among male Shark Bay dolphins, researchers have discovered that there could be a benefit, and it seems to be a social one after all.

“Foraging with a sponge is a time-consuming and largely solitary activity so it was long thought incompatible with the

needs of male dolphins in Shark Bay -- to invest time in forming close alliances with other males,” said biologist Simon Allen of the University of Bristol.

“This study suggests that, like their female counterparts and indeed like humans, male dolphins form social bonds based on shared interests.”

The team analyzed a whole bunch of data collected on 124 male dolphins in Shark Bay from 2007 to 2015, including photographic, genetic and behavioral. For the purposes of the study, they identified 37 dolphins within that group that were conclusively adult spongers or non-spongers -- 13 of the former, and 24 of the latter.

They found that the spongers tended to spend more time with other spongers than with non-spongers -- and this relationship could not be easily attributed to other factors. For example, how closely two male dolphins were related seemed to have no significant impact on their hanging-out time.

Their shared interest in sponges, however, did. Although spongers spent more time alone, when they were seen with other males, more often than not it would be with another sponger.

This suggests that the costs associated with sponging for male dolphins may be offset by the benefits of a strong dolphin bromance.

“Male dolphins in Shark Bay exhibit a fascinating social system of nested alliance formation,” explained marine biologist Manuela Bizzozero of the University of Zurich.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## Direct from distant planet: Spectral clues to puzzling paradox

CI Tau b is a paradoxical planet, but new research about its mass, brightness and the carbon monoxide in its atmosphere is starting to answer questions about how a planet so large could have formed around a star that’s only 2 million years old.

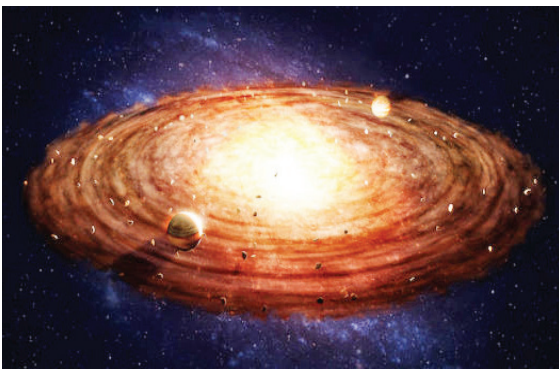
At today’s meeting of the American Astronomical Society, astronomers Christopher Johns-Krull of Rice University and Lisa Prato of Lowell Observatory presented findings from a four-year near-infrared spectroscopic analysis of light from CI Tau b, a close-orbiting giant exoplanet, or “hot Jupiter,” in a nine-day orbit around its parent star about 450 light years from Earth in the constellation Taurus.

“The exciting thing is that we are able to detect light directly from the planet, and it’s the first time that’s been done for a close-in planet around a star this young,” said Johns-Krull, professor of physics and astronomy and co-author of a study that’s slated for publication in *AAS’s Astrophysical Journal Letters*. “The most valuable way to learn how planets form is to study planets, like CI Tau b, that are either still forming or have just formed.” For decades, most astronomers believed giant planets like Jupiter and Saturn formed far from their stars over periods of 10 million years or more. But the discovery of dozens of “hot Jupiters” led to new theoretical models that describe how such planets might form.

Johns-Krull said CI Tau b’s age made it the perfect candidate for observation with the Immersion Grating Infrared Spectrograph (IGRINS), a unique, high-resolution instrument that was used during observations of CI Tau b from McDonald Observatory’s 2.7-meter Harlan J. Smith Telescope and Lowell Observatory’s 4.3-meter Discovery Channel Telescope.

Because each atomic element and molecule in a star emits light from a unique set of wavelengths, astronomers can look for specific signatures, or spectral lines, to see if an element is present in a distant star or planets. Spectral lines can also reveal the temperature and density of a star and how fast it’s moving.

Prato said the research team used the spectral lines from carbon monoxide to distinguish the light emitted by the planet from the light emitted by the nearby star.



**CI Tau b is a paradoxical planet, but new research about its mass, brightness and the carbon monoxide in its atmosphere is starting to answer questions about how a planet so large could have formed around a star that’s only 2 million years old.**

“Many of the spectral lines that are in the planet are also in the star,” Prato said. “If both the planet and star were stationary, their spectral lines would all blend together, and we wouldn’t be able to tell what was from the star and what was from the planet. But because the planet rapidly orbits the star, its lines shift back and forth dramatically. We can subtract out the star’s lines and see only the lines from the planet. And from those, we can determine how bright the planet is, relative to the star,

which tells us something about how it formed.”

That’s because the brightness of a star or planet depends upon both its size and temperature.

“Direct observational evidence of the mass and brightness of CI Tau b is particularly useful because we also know it orbits a very young star,” said Rice Ph.D. student Laura Flagg, the lead author of the forthcoming study. “Most of the hot Jupiters we’ve found are orbiting middle-aged stars. CI Tau’s age gives a tight constraint for putting models to the test: Can they produce a planet this bright and this massive in so little time?”

Flagg’s analysis of spectral lines from carbon monoxide showed that CI Tau b has a mass of 11.6 Jupiters and is about 134 times fainter than its parent star. Prato said that provides strong evidence that it formed via a “hot start,” a theoretical model that describes how gravitational instabilities could form giant planets more rapidly than traditional models.

Prato said the new study provides a unique empirical yardstick by which to measure competing theories.

“At about 2 million years old, CI Tau b is by far the youngest hot Jupiter directly detected,” she said. “We now have a mass and brightness for it -- the only directly measured mass and brightness for a young hot Jupiter -- and that provides very strong tests for planet-formation models.”

IGRINS, which was designed by study co-author Daniel Jaffe of the University of Texas at Austin, uses a silicon-based diffraction grating to improve both the resolution and number of near-infrared spectral bands that can be observed from distant objects like CI Tau b and its parent star. IGRINS was moved from McDonald to Lowell midway through the study.

Additional co-authors include Larissa Nofi and Joe Llama of Lowell Observatory, and Kendall Sullivan and Gregory Mace of both UT Austin and its McDonald Observatory. The research was supported by Rice, the National Science Foundation (AST-1461918, AST-1229522 and AST-1702267), UT Austin, the Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, NASA (18-XRP18\_2-0138) and Lowell Observatory.

(Source: Science Daily)

## This is what it looks like when galaxies are about to die



The beginning of the end of our galaxy is just a few billion years away. That’s when the glittering disk of the Milky Way is projected to smash into its nearest neighbor, a spiral galaxy called Andromeda.

The force of the collision will fuse the black holes at the centers of the galaxies, producing a luminous whirlpool of fast-moving, ultra hot gas known as a quasar.

Far from the galactic center, on a remote and unimportant planet called Earth, the quasar will initially appear as a brilliant blue halo in the sky, so bright it outshines the stars.

But quasars are prone to cataclysmic flashes, which sweep gas and dust -- the stuff that suns and worlds and life are made of -- straight out into the circumgalactic medium. Eventually, the galaxy will empty itself of the material for making new stars.

This is how all galaxies die -- at least, according to the theories. But until now, no one has captured a galaxy in its transition phase, after the formation of a quasar but before it has lost all its stellar building blocks.

In research presented Wednesday at the annual meeting of the American Astronomical Society in St. Louis, astrophysicist Allison Kirkpatrick announced the detection of 22 objects she calls “cold quasars”. These distant bodies glow bright enough to be beginning their death throes, Kirkpatrick said, but still contain cool clouds of dust, suggesting they have not yet lost the ability to birth new stars.

They are right on the brink -- hovering between the epoch of creation and the eon of waiting for death.

“One of the biggest questions we have in astronomy is: How do galaxies die?” said Kirkpatrick, an assistant professor at the University of Kansas. “We know what they look like once they’re dead, but the rest of it is just pieces that we’ve guessed at.”

Now, she continued, “we’ve found a population that we can study in detail and map out exactly how these galaxies move from their star formation phase of their life to their retirement phase.”

The discovery came during a survey of the brightest objects in the sky. Most such surveys examine X-rays produced by gas swooshing toward a black hole at close to the speed of light -- exactly the kind of high-energy radiation you would associate with a monstrously massive quasar.

But Kirkpatrick also looked at these objects using infrared light, which emanates from much cooler phenomena, farther from galaxies’ violent cores.

“Infrared detections suggest very, very cold dust. That’s not something you typically expect to see,” Kirkpatrick said.

Her next step will be to attempt to measure the speed at which gas and dust are being blown out of the galaxy, which will let Kirkpatrick calculate how long galaxies spend in the “cold quasar” phase.

She will continue to seek more of these objects, which offer a glimpse into a little-understood phase of galactic histories.

“Astronomy is a unique science in that it’s passive,” she said. “We can’t watch any process in real time, so we are limited by snapshots of different galaxies we try to link together.”

“The more we can fill in that picture with snapshots, the better we can tell this story,” she said. “And I think I found a new snapshot.”

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## Canada backs startup to boost data on space debris

The Canadian government’s contracting arm is backing a proposed new satellite system that will use big data analytics to provide commercially available data about the Earth and its orbit amid growing concerns about the risks posed by space debris.

Support from the Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC) will allow Canadian startup NorthStar Earth and Space to negotiate initial service agreements with the United States, Britain and other countries, NorthStar CEO Stewart Bain said.

Bain cited strong international interest in the project given increasing levels of activity in space, and mounting concerns about the dangers posed to satellites by some 600,000 estimated pieces of debris floating in the Earth’s orbit.

The United States and other governments already collect such data, but demand for near real-time information that is commercially available is growing rapidly, with experts forecasting a “new space” economy worth over \$1 trillion a year.

“This agreement puts us in a strong position to work with the United States, the UK and other countries to deliver our services,” Bain told Reuters, noting the government of Canada and Quebec had each already invested \$13 million to date.

Private investors in the project include Telesystem Space Inc. of Montreal, the majority shareholder, and the Space Alliance of Europe, which was formed by Telespazio and Thales Alenia Space, a joint partnership formed by France’s Thales and Italy’s Leonardo.

NorthStar’s proposed system calls for the 2021 launch of a new constellation of small satellites that will use an array of hyperspectral, infrared and optical sensors to continuously monitor and analyze the Earth’s ecosystems and orbit.

The company said its system would use big data analytics and artificial intelligence to make sense of the huge amount of information and accurately predict potential collisions with debris and other objects in space, while helping to validate and improve the performance of existing surveillance systems.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said last week he was encouraging all space-faring nations to work together on common issues such as space debris that could stifle the commercialization of space. “Partnerships are important in a world where there are alternative views about the future of space,” he said.

Anti-satellite tests conducted by China in 2007, and most recently, India in March, have raised questioned about the long-term sustainability of operations in space that are essential to a huge range of activities, including banking and GPS services.

(Source: Reuters)



## Chabahar to host surf festival

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A major surf festival will be commenced in Iran's Chabahar on June 20, with the aim of attracting more travelers to the port city, which is located in the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province. Training packages have also been embedded in the schedule of the event, a local official said, CHTN reported.

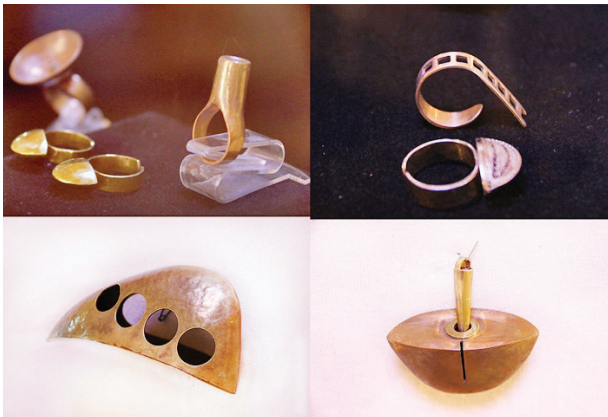


In addition, traditional performances of nomadic tribes and locals as well as festivals of culinary, handicrafts and tourist attractions will be held by the opening ceremony of the festival, Mojtaba Mirhosseini said.

Chabahar welcomed 3,200 foreign nationals during the first nine months of the past Iranian calendar year (ended on December 21, 2018).

## Tehran exhibit features personal ornamentations

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Sets of traditional jewelry and personal ornamentations are on show at the headquarters of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization in Tehran.



The exhibit features some 100 pieces by Shahrzad Aliyari, who is practicing jewelry for over ten years, CHTN reported.

Her works have so far been displaced in 20 national and 10 international exhibitions.

The exhibition will be running through June 19, the report said. Handicrafts exports from the Islamic Republic reached \$289 million in the past Iranian year 1397, showing three percent growth year on year, according to the Organization.

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Historic Center of Riga

A UNESCO World Heritage, the historic Center of Riga, the capital and the largest city of Latvia, is a living illustration of European history.

Through centuries, Riga has been the center of many historic events and a meeting point for European nations, and it has managed to preserve evidence of European influence on its historical development, borders between the West and the East, and intersection of trading and cultural routes.



Riga has always been a modern city keeping up with the current trends in architecture and urban planning, and at the same time, preserving the city's integrity in the course of development.

The Historic Center of Riga is comprised of three different urban landscapes – the relatively well-preserved medieval core, the 19th century semi-circle of boulevards with a green belt on both sides of the City Canal, and the former suburban quarters surrounding the boulevards with dense built-up areas with a rectangular network of streets and wooden architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Riga, which was founded as a port town in 1201, was one of the key centers of the Hanseatic League in Eastern Europe from the 13th to the 15th century. The urban fabric of its medieval core reflects the prosperity of those times, though most of the earliest buildings were rebuilt for actual needs or lost by fire or war.

In the 17th century, Riga became the largest provincial town of Sweden. In the 19th century, it experienced rapid industrial development. It is in this period that the suburbs surrounding the medieval town were laid out, first, with imposing wooden buildings in neoclassical style, and later, when permanent stone buildings were allowed instead, in the Art Nouveau style.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Rouhani calls for development of tourism sector

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has called for the development of tourism sector as a need to expand economy, create job opportunities and boost friendship between cultures and societies.

Addressing a meeting with cabinet members on Sunday, Rouhani underlined promoting Iran's tourism in light of its landmark tourism attractions, historical monuments and natural sites, IRNA reported.

Rouhani urged officials to facilitate ecotourism procedures and remove related obstacles.

Due to a very diverse natural setting, Iran offers a lively and interesting environment to the nature loving travelers. Sightseers may live with a nomad or rural family or

enjoy an independent stays and assist with day-to-day village activities, while learning about rustic routines, agriculture, wildlife, traditional art and culture.

The President also advised Central Bank of Iran to create facilities for those applying for loans to develop ecotourism.

In the session, Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization Director Ali-Asghar Mounesan presented a report of the latest developments in the tourism and ecotourism arenas, saying domestic tourism statistics shows a significant increase in the number of visits to Iran's touristic and historical sites.

"Based on statistics, 134, 232, 820 tourists visited [the country's] attractions this year [started March 21]. The figure grew 24%

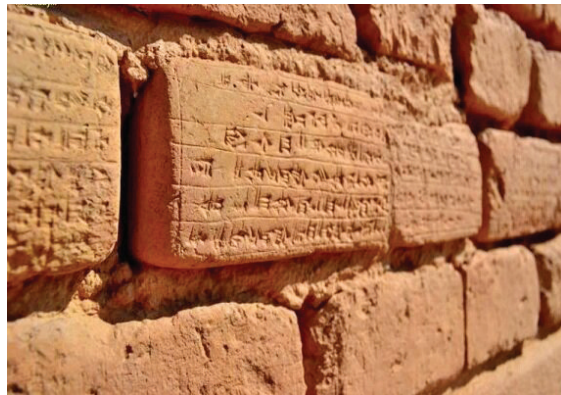


compared with the same period last year," IRNA quoted Mounesan as saying.

According to the Central Bank of Iran, tourism industry contributed \$11.8 billion to the country's GDP in the past year (ended on March 20). In addition, handicrafts exports made up \$600 million of the GDP in the same year.

The ancient country welcomed some 7.8 million foreign nationals last year, which shows a 52.5 percent increase year on year. The ultimate goal of the Islamic Republic is to attract 20 million foreign tourists annually by 2025. However, with only six years to go, according to some experts, the target seems to be somewhat unachievable.

## Tchogha Zanbil: World's best surviving example of Elamite architecture



**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — UNESCO-listed Tchogha Zanbil is widely known as the world's best surviving example of Elamite architecture. The ruined ziggurat stands in Khuzestan province, southwest Iran. It was made a UNESCO site in 1979.

According to UNESCO, Tchogha Zanbil is the largest ziggurat outside of Mesopotamia and the best preserved of this type of stepped pyramidal monument.

Lonely Planet says that even if you're not a fan of ancient ruins, the great bulk and splendid semi-desert isolation of the site can't fail to impress. Try to catch it in the soft, golden light of late afternoon rather than the harsh midday sun.

"The structure is made of red bricks so well preserved that an observer could believe they're brand new. However, if you look very closely, a brick-wide strip at eye level is intricately inscribed with cuneiform, the world's first alphabet, which looks like a spilt box of tin tacks," Lonely Planet says.

The ziggurat is located approximately 30 km southeast of Shush and 80 km north of Ahvaz. Reaching a total height of some 25m, the gigantic monument was used to be surmounted by a temple and estimated to hit 52m during its heyday.

Tchogha Zanbil was excavated in six seasons between 1951 and 1961 by Roman Ghirshman, a Russian-born French archeologist who was specialized in ancient Iran.

Ziggurats, in general, are pyramidal stepped temple towers that bear architectural and religious characteristics of the major cities of Mesopotamia from approximately 2200 until 500 BC. They were usually built with a core of mud brick and an exterior covered with baked brick.

Approximately 25 ziggurats are known, being equally divided among Sumer, Babylonia, and Assyria, according to Encyclopedia Britannica.



## Why early morning flights are the best flights

Though it may be tempting to start off your vacation by sleeping in, you're actually much better off booking an early-morning flight. In fact, Travel and Leisure suggests that you should exclusively fly in the early morning. The reason? You'll have a much better chance of getting to your destination on time (or at least close to it).

### ■ Fewer delays

Early-morning flights are less likely to be delayed than those that happen in the afternoon or evening. Delays reportedly start around 8am each day and then get worse until they've reached a peak around 6pm. The reason is air traffic. In the early-morning hours, air traffic is less likely to be backed up since all the flights from the night before will have already landed.

### ■ Less turbulence

Even better, you're also much less likely to experience turbulence in the air when you fly in the morning since most thunderstorms and the unstable air that come with



them happen in the afternoon.

### ■ It's cheaper and less crowded

Early-morning flights are also often cheaper than their

later counterparts because people would much rather sleep than head to the airport at the crack of dawn. That's good news for you if you do since crowds will also be lighter at security and the gate for that early-morning flight, making it easier for you to use the money you saved on your ticket to buy an overpriced coffee at that airport Starbucks.

### ■ Airports are not as gross first thing in the morning

Lastly, getting to the airport early in the day is just more pleasant. With the exception of anyone who has had to stay overnight, most people—passengers, flight crew and airport workers alike—may be less frazzled and frustrated than they'd be later in the day and in their shift. Also, fewer people going through the airport means fewer grimy hands touching everything. Plus that halfway-decent coffee kiosk will still be fully stocked with those pastries that always sell out.

(Source: MSN)

## Croatia's tourism industry calls for more foreign workers

**ZAGREB (Reuters)** — Croatia's tourism industry, a key engine of the economy, urged the government on Friday to allow more foreign workers into the sector to help staff bars and restaurants in the high season.

Croatia, the youngest European Union member, is highly dependent on mostly summer tourism receipts, with the industry contributing almost 20 percent to gross

domestic product.

"Ahead of the main tourist season, the situation with workforce is critical and opening of some tourist capacities, including bars and restaurants, is in jeopardy," Croatia's association of tourist firms (HUT) and the national association of employers (HUP) said in a joint appeal to officials.

In December, Croatia raised the number

of licenses for foreign workers for 2019 to 65,100 from 38,769 last year.

The quota for workers in tourism was raised to 15,611 from 8,930.

The sectors that suffer most from a shortage of qualified workers are tourism, construction, retail, manufacturing and transport.

"It is our goal primarily to employ domestic workforce but the local people are

not available or interested to take jobs in tourism," the HUT said.

The average monthly salary in Croatia was 6,464 kuna (\$983.60) in March. The unemployment rate in April was 8.6 percent.

Foreign workers who come to Croatia are mostly from non-EU Balkan states, but some also arrive from more distant nations such as Ukraine or even Asian countries.

## Tourists from the U.S., Canada, Japan and Australia can now travel to Brazil visa-free

If watching a game at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium has been on your bucket list since the 2014 FIFA World Cup, you can now do so without adding a trip to the consulate as part of your itinerary.

Effective June 17, tourists from the United States, Canada, Japan and Australia will no longer need a visa to visit Brazil.

Travelers with a valid passport will be able to explore Brazil for up to 90 days, with the possibility of extending their stay to up to 180 days (though expect a visit to the Federal Police to get the extension approved).

The move was announced in March ahead of an official visit by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to the White House.

In a joint news statement released on March 19 by President Donald Trump and President Bolsonaro, the duo announced that along with lifting the requirement, "the Presidents agreed to take the steps necessary to enable Brazil to participate in the Department of Homeland Security's Trusted Traveler Global Entry Program."

Since the announcement, Brazil has already seen increased travel interest from tourists in those four countries. In March, searches for flights from Australia to Brazil were up by 36% from the previous year. Americans experienced a similar search boom, with a 31% increase in search for flights following the news.

In the past year, airlines around the world have launched additional routes to various cities in Brazil. In November 2018, Brazil's largest airline, GOL, launched new direct routes from Brazil to Miami and Orlando. Virgin Atlantic and Norwegian Air also announced new direct flights from London to Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, respectively.

American Airlines is the leading carrier with routes from the United States to Brazil, with direct flights to Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia and Manaus.

"American Airlines applauds the Brazilian government for instituting a no-visa requirement that will allow for U.S., Canadian, Japanese and Australian visitors to travel to Brazil without a visa," Martha Pantin, director of cor-

porate communications at American Airlines, told CNN in an email.

Brazil has implemented a series of changes over the past few years aimed at increasing the number of tourists visiting the country.

European visitors have long enjoyed visa-free travel to Brazil, and those from neighboring Latin American countries are able to move freely in and out of Brazil so long as they can produce an identity card -- no passport necessary.

During the 2016 Summer Olympics hosted in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil temporarily scrapped its requirement for travelers from the four countries now exempt from the requirement altogether to bolster tourism around the event.

In 2017, the country announced that visitors from the same countries would no longer be required to visit a consulate or embassy to get their visas and could instead apply for the document online for a \$40 fee as opposed to the \$160 previously mandated.

(Source: CNN)



# E-government goal realized by 62.8%: official

**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — The goal of e-government has been realized by 62.8 percent in the country before the first Iranian month of Farvardin, which began on March 21, the IT executive council secretary announced, Mehr reported on Saturday.

Reza Baqeri Asl said that 105 organizations have been monitored and their general score in different parts are: e-portal 84%, presence at web 66.9%, interaction services 70.44%, transaction service 70.22% and service integration 50.19 percent.

The indicator for presence at web does not vary from previous years, he explained.

Nine insurance companies, Organization for Investment Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran, Organization for Collection and Sale of State-owned Properties of Iran, Communication Regulatory Authority of Iran, E-Commerce Development Centre Of Iran, Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, Literacy Movement Organization and Telecommunication Infrastructure Company are on top of the list for e-services, he said.

He named Technical and Vocational Training Organization, Audit Organization of Iran, Pasteur Institute of Iran and Thermal Power Plants Holding Company which are amongst 10 companies with great growth in e-commerce.

Amongst 20 ministries, ministry of economy, higher education, industry, education, ICT, energy and Iran presidential office are on top list for providing e-services, he said.

On the other hand, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance,



ministries of labor, health, agriculture, sports, oil and foreign affairs do not have any progress in e-government, he lamented.

## E-government in Iran

Iran's ranking in the United Nations E-Government Development Index (EGDI 2018), which was released in late July 2018, was promising.

Iran has moved 20 notches up to rank 86 among 193 countries in the EGDI 2018 in comparison with EGDI 2017.

Issued by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, EGDI evaluates the scope and quality of online services, status of telecommunication infrastructure and existing human capacity.

In December 2018, the head of Information Technology Organization of Iran (ITO) Amir Nazemi stated that over five million Iranians have got electronic documents and 5,138 million citizens benefited from e-government services.

Meanwhile, ICT Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi announced that a total of 67 percent of state-run organizations in Iran are currently offering e-services.

He said that the ICT Ministry proposed that the government allocate one trillion rials (about 240 thousand dollars) to development of e-government in the current Iranian calendar year, which began on March 21, 2019.

## Iran ranks 12th in internet user growth: report

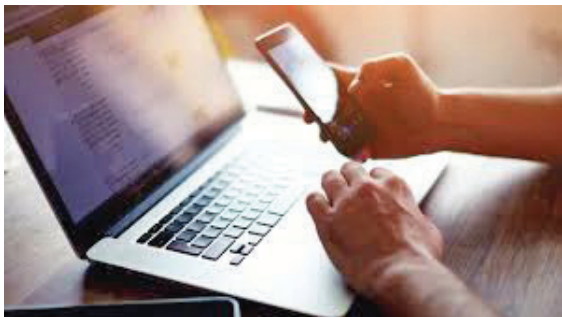
**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — Iran is the 12th country in 15-point most internet users list in 2018, according to Bond Internet Trends report 2019, The Next Web reported.

According to the report, released by the Bond, a venture capital firm based in

San Francisco, more than half the world's population — 3.8 billion — is online. China and India lead the pack, followed by the U.S., Indonesia, and Brazil.

Asia Pacific, home to 53 percent of global internet users, have 48 percent of internet user penetration. A total of 15% of global internet users live in Europe and the continent has 78% of internet user penetration.

The Africa and Middle East host 13% of internet users with 32% internet user penetration. Latin America and



Caribbean have 10% of global internet users and 62% of internet user penetration. The North America have 9% of

global internet users and 89% of internet user penetration.

The report assesses online platform time, which means percent of internet users using select platform more than one time per day. According to the report, Youtube increased from 22 percent to 27 percent, Instagram from 13 percent to 19 percent followed by Whatsapp which rose from 23 percent to 25 percent.

According to the report, the Media consumption on mobile devices (33 percent) almost equal that of time spent on TV (34 percent).

Wearable technology is booming, and users have doubled in the past four years to 52 million.

The report says the number of gamers worldwide grew six percent to 2.4 billion people last year, as titles like Fortnite have become the new social networks of choice for avid players.



During the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2016-March 2017), 80 percent of total sale of Pardis Technology Park equaled 60 thousand billion rials (about \$1.4 billion), he announced.

At present, 40 brokers at the technology business development center and 1350 juridical members are active at the Pardis Technology Park, he explained.

About 80 startups with 450 employees are now active at the Pardis Technology Park and 330 startups are working with 40 accelerator centers affiliated to the PTP, he added.

Investors from Italy, Sweden, France, South Korea and Belgium are four percent of companies active in this park, he said.

He announced that 28 thousand experts benefit from Pardis Technology Park services.

The Pardis Technology Park initiated techmarket in 20 Iranian provinces, he explained.

During past three years, a total of 13,600 technology products at the Pardis Technology Park were commercialized, he added.

## Adapting to new technology still a struggle

Bedbank player Hotelbeds has released details of the audience surveys conducted at its recent MarketHub Americas and Europe events held this May in Cancun and Istanbul respectively.

Participants at both MarketHub events — which were attended by over 700 senior representatives from travel agencies, tour operators, airlines and points redemption partners from across the Americas and Europe — took part in audience surveys digitally during the conference sessions. Attendees responded to a series of questions about their views and understanding of technology.

The results showed that while the B2C

travel companies are aware of the importance of technology to drive growth in their businesses, nevertheless many intermediaries in the B2C space are struggling to respond to the challenges of new technology — and could boost their business by both improving their technology and their understanding of its benefits.

When attendees at the MarketHub Americas event were asked “How do you rate your consumer mobile website?”, 44% of respondents said they needed a little help, 23% said they needed a lot of help, 6% admitted they were awful in this area, and 9% admitted to not having a site. Only 18% felt their mobile

consumer site to be best in class.

Additionally, the results showed that machine learning still represents a huge opportunity for B2C travel companies. Only 24% were able to confirm that their business was currently using machine learning.

MarketHub Europe audience results showed that around 78% of the attendees admitted that their business has “no near future plans to embrace blockchain”, with only 11% having already adopted the technology and the small remainder planning to do so in the coming 12 months.

Carlos Muñoz, managing director, Hotelbeds commented: “For me these results

show the role that providers such as ourselves play in the travel distribution ecosystem, supporting B2B travel trade buyers to help them respond to technological evolution and the ever increasing needs of consumers. “For instance, our booking platform can have peaks of up to three billion searches per day, something few individual companies could cope with; so much data additionally gives us great insight into consumer desire, something we then feed back to our hotelier partners to make sure they are providing the right product, at the right price, to the right buyer, at the right moment.”

(Source: [traveldailymedia.com](#))

## Unlocking innovation: Tips for transforming a risk-averse IT culture

If today's mantra for innovation is to celebrate failure as a catalyst for success, how do legacy enterprises fine-tuned to reduce failure become innovative organizations?

A new book from Deloitte and MIT Sloan Management Review, “The Technology Fallacy: How People are the Real Key to Digital Transformation”, addresses this question to help organizations understand how to cultivate an environment conducive to innovation.

In today's rapidly changing digital era, innovation has become critical to survival, and to innovate IT leaders must facilitate a shift in mindset at their organization to allow and even embrace a certain amount of risk.

“You have to start with the curiosity of an explorer,” says Anh Nguyen Phillips, digital transformation research lead at Deloitte's Center for Integrated Research, and one of the book's co-authors along with Gerald C. Kane, Jonathan R. Copulsky and Garth R. Andrus. “But you have to pair that with the discipline and structure of a scientist — develop a hypothesis, create experiments and tests to confirm or deny those hypotheses in a very precise way. Then, you eliminate and isolate variables to learn what is and what isn't working.”

### Rethinking failure

Research shows that risk taking, experimentation and failure are all necessary elements for fostering innovation, but most organizations are optimized for efficiency and productivity. Because of this, most IT cultures are designed to eliminate variation, reduce experimentation and minimize risk.

“That's where a lot of organizations get stuck,” Phillips says. “Their IT functions have been approached in a specific, traditional way to keep the lights on and keep things running, but now they have to lead innovation, and minimizing variance and failure isn't the only goal anymore.”

Testing and pilot programs — in which failure is a possible outcome — are integral features of innovative organizations. Here, rapid learning, iteration and adaptation are the goals, and that can be done by changing how you talk about



and react to failure, Phillips says.

“You have to start by shifting the conversation — culturally — away from failure toward a ‘concept of learning,’” she says, which involves both curiosity and scientific discipline. “In IT, failures used to be the worst thing that could happen, but you have to consciously change that connotation. The best organizations don't think in terms of failure, they think in terms of lessons learned, and then taking those lessons and sharing them.”

### Dedicated inspiration

Innovation isn't always the product of spontaneous inspiration. Instead, organizations must commit to carving out specific time for innovation. That may seem counterintuitive, but innovation can be cultivated by being thoughtful and intentional about it, Phillips says.

“If you want to innovate, you have to challenge what you're doing today. A key element of this is setting aside time for creativity and innovation,” Phillips says. “Some companies set aside once a quarter, or annually, for dedicated ‘innovation days,’ in which the IT department gets together and tries projects outside of their usual tasks. They're encouraged to think outside the box. It's comparable to hackathons, a ‘shark tank’ kind of competition.”

It's also vital to bring in stakeholders to help assess ideas and projects generated from these initiatives, and to plan how to integrate them

into the day-to-day workings of the company, Phillips says.

“It's really important to invite leadership to weigh in on and present the winning ideas to them and help ensure those are implemented,” she says. “This is one of the most important steps, because it improves visibility and has an impact on the whole organization; a lot of times, the results of these types of initiatives just get shelved, and that doesn't make an impact.”

### The feedback loop

To succeed with any innovation initiative, you must also determine which risk and security policies have flexibility, and which are non-negotiable. Make sure everyone is aware of these policies, and be sure to communicate the principles of acceptable versus unacceptable risk-taking.

Also, put a fixed, short-term timeline on most experiments. For example, conduct short, six-to-eight-week sprints that are assessed at the end of each cycle, releasing the minimum viable product to a small group of trusted customers and stakeholders for feedback, the book's authors suggest.

This feedback should be addressed and integrated intentionally into the process, but it's important not to get distracted by ad hoc iterations that don't facilitate learning. Feed what you've learned and the feedback you've received into subsequent versions of the product

and then iterate again. Over time, this will have a significant positive impact on your organization, Phillips says, as it impacts how your people think and how they approach their jobs.

“That challenges how people think and thus how they work,” she says. “Your IT department can develop stronger connections and understanding with the customer and the business; think about how their work impacts the customer experience and with an eye towards innovation at all times.”

### Opening up the process

While there's a myth that innovation is always sparked by a single person having a ‘Eureka!’ moment, that's mostly not the case, Phillips says. Especially in IT, the need to be collaborative is critical, so be sure to approach selected clients and stakeholders and invite them into iterations going forward. “Traditionally IT has been very isolated and siloed, and that didn't allow much room for iteration,” she says. “But some of the most successful and innovative organizations have figured out that IT, working collaboratively across functions and with different areas of the business, has worked to spur innovation.”

Start by educating clients and stakeholders on the guiding principles and approaches you're taking, then on the iteration and feedback process and show them how they, too, can use this process to spur innovation, the research advises.

Developing a culture of innovation can be done, it just takes some intention and commitment to thinking differently and understanding the risks and rewards, Phillips says.

“It's like the concept of a growth mindset — yes, you can cultivate and teach this; there's always going to be people with a more natural propensity for behaving in this way, of course. But that said, as with any skill or capability, it can be cultivated. We have to undo the institutional strictures that keep us from exploring and being curious and shift how we think about failure and learning,” she says.

(Source: [cio.com](#))

## Special economic zone for technology, innovation to be established

**TECHNOLOGY** **TEHRAN** — The Pardis Technology Park (PTP) plans to establish a special economic zone for technology and innovation near Tehran in the near future, PTP Director Mehdi Saffarinia announced, Mehr reported on Saturday.

By expanding the area of the park to 1000 square meters, the zone will be established at the park in which about 1000 experts will be employed, he said.

Calling the zone the innovation region, he said that Majlis (the parliament) and government should support the plan.

The Pardis Technology Park aims to boost innovation, establish techmarket, boost startup ecosystem and provide an economic model for entrepreneurs, he explained.

About 230 knowledge-based companies present at the PTP and over 2000 startup teams and knowledge-based companies are covered by the Pardis Technology Park different branches, he said.

The second branch of Pardis Technology Park's innovation factory, dubbed Highway, was established in Tehran in early June. Its first branch, dubbed Azadi, was established in October 2017 in district 22.

## Technology in the classroom: the question is not now “if” but “how”

Last Thursday, California approved its first budget under Governor Gavin Newsom, making a substantial down payment on education for the state's high-tech economy. The budget significantly increases the state's investment in schools and includes new funding for expanding broadband infrastructure in low-income communities and teaching computer science in the schools. These investments advance the effort begun in 2018, when the State Board of Education adopted computer science standards for K-12 students, making it one of only seven states in the nation with such standards.

As California focuses its attention on technology instruction, there is likely to be pushback. Across the country, a heated debate continues about the role of technology in the classroom. This is an age-old argument, which often goes something like this: Reliance on technology hurts learning, weakens students' minds, and undermines teachers' hold on their attention.

How old is this debate? Socrates famously railed against using the hot technology of the time—books—in a fourth-century BC dialogue with Plato. Socrates said of the written word, “This discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories.”

Over time, society has figured out how to use books for education reasonably well (along with the pencils and markers that replaced quill pens, and the white boards that replaced chalkboards that replaced stone tablets). Now, two and a half millennia hence, we find ourselves in the midst of a similar debate about the use of digital technology in the classroom.

Computers, tablets, iPhones, and apps—none of them are silver bullets or a magical solution to end education woes. All offer tools to skilled practitioners in the classroom and, in the rapidly developing realm of education technology, some tools are terrific, while others are not.

My research with Stanford colleagues shows that how technology is used is key. We found that technology can be helpful in advancing learning for high school students who are at greatest risk of failing courses or dropping out when it's interactive rather than one-way, used to support discussions and projects with peers and teachers, and serves as a tool for creation rather than passive consumption. When technologies try to replace teachers, research consistently finds little benefit.

There is no doubt that some concerns about education technology are well-founded. It's unwise, at school or at home, to put kids in front of screens without adult involvement for long periods. Privacy worries are real for all of us, and nowhere more so than with our children; devices and apps that compromise privacy and sell data have no place in our kids' lives. And there's plenty of technology out there that simply doesn't do much for children's learning.

But there's a burgeoning field of innovative digital technology that can help teachers help students.

For example, research from SRI International demonstrates how technology tools for reviewing and analyzing homework can help teachers strengthen students' math skills. Another study shows how innovative uses of technology allowed at-risk students to outperform their peers on state reading tests when they researched ideas online, wrote and revised literature blogs, and developed their own websites to communicate their research. In some schools that blend collaborative project-based learning with technology supports, students who previously struggled often experience significant learning gains as they become more engaged.

(Source: [forbes.com](#))



## Court summons men who killed bear cub in Mazandaran

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Two men who killed a bear cub in **d e s k** Savadkuh, northern province of Mazandaran, by throwing stones at it are summoned by the court, ISNA news agency reported on Monday.

On Sunday, a video of two men, one 30 years old and another 50 years old attacking a bear cub with stone went viral. While it seems that locals were trying to control the bear from attacking them, they caused severe injuries to the poor animal which led to its death.



A lack of awareness of how to behave in case of encountering a wild animal most certainly resulted in the unfortunate incident. Once rangers observed the scene and took the bear to the nearest animal rehabilitation center in Sari the bear lost its life due to the gravity of the injuries, the report added. Mazandaran province chief of department of environment Hosseinali Ebrahimi Karnami explained that the provincial department will follow up on the case to punish the wrongdoers. He went on to say that animal cruelty is punishable by imprisonment and fine, stating that those who killed the bear are liable to a fine of 500 million rials (nearly \$12,000).

## Charity donates 1,000 home appliance packages to flood victims

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam also known as Setad-e Ejrai-e Farman-e Hazrat-e Emam has donated some 1,000 packages of home appliances to the victims of the flood in Shiraz, southern province of Fars. Heavy rainfalls caused flash flood in Shiraz on March 25 killing 19 people and leaving 119 injured.



Javad Shokrkhab, deputy director of Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam, also announced that in addition to the house appliances, 2000 stationery packages were delivered to the area. Some 2,000 job plans are also created for the flood-hit victims, he added. Shokrkhab also highlighted that Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam has so far implemented 1,028 economic plans with a budget amounting to about 26 trillion rials (nearly \$618 million) in Fars province. Moreover, he added, 8,656 jobs are generated in the province.

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Financial crisis at the International Atomic Energy Agency

(August 10, 2000)  
The organization which controls nuclear material around the world revealed a financial emergency. BBC World Affairs Correspondent Nick Charles reported.  
The **IAEA** - whose job it is to try to ensure that countries around the world don't **divert** nuclear materials into **clandestine** weapons' programmes - has been facing one of the worst financial **crises** in its history. That's because some members have been late in **paying their dues**. According to an article in the Washington Post newspaper, one of the countries involved was France, while others have delayed **contributions** because they're **irritated** that U.S. payment practices have **placed an increasing burden** on them.  
The United States contributes about a quarter of the IAEA's 300 million dollar annual budget, but only makes its contributions late in each calendar year because of U.S. **budgetary practice**, which can cause **cash flow problems** for UN agencies. As a result of the **go-slow** by other members, the IAEA was faced with **an outstanding bill** of a million dollars on travel expenses, and risked **defaulting** on salary payments for its 2,100 staff. According to IAEA sources, the agency warned its members of the crisis, and as a result two of them have come up with **additional funding**.  
■ **Words**  
**IAEA**: acronym for International Atomic Energy Agency  
**divert**: if something is diverted it is sent to a different place than was planned  
**clandestine**: secret  
**crises**: emergencies  
**paying their dues**: if you belong to an organization your membership payment is called your dues  
**contributions**: here, another word for money that is owed  
**irritated**: annoyed or angry  
**placed an increasing burden**: if something places a burden on you then it gives you a problem. An increasing burden is a problem that is getting bigger  
**budgetary practice**: the way an organization deals with its finances is its budgetary practice  
**cash flow problems**: if you have a cash flow problem you do not have enough money coming in to make the payments that have to go out  
**go-slow**: an expression which means not co-operating in good time  
**an outstanding bill**: a bill which has not been paid yet  
**defaulting**: if you default on a payment it means you don't make that payment  
**additional funding**: extra money

(Source: BBC)

# Is inter-basin water transfer a remedy to quench dry lands?

**1 →** However, implementing such schemes are usually costly and time-consuming, they could have negative socio-economic consequences for communities downstream from the donor basin, and meanwhile water transfer can negatively affect ecosystem balance, including water quality and flora and fauna.

■ **Inter-basin water transfers in Iran**  
Iran is an arid and semiarid country with scarce and sensitive water resources and the increasing demand for water has led to an alarming decrease in annual per capita renewable water resources. Due to the fact that available water resources are unevenly distributed in terms of both time and space, water resources in many areas are under pressure.

The reasons behind present shortage of water for urban and domestic uses are the uneven distribution of water across the country, the expansion of population centers as well as developments in unsustainable agricultural and industrial activities.

In a chapter of the book Water Conservation, Reuse, and Recycling (2005) titled "Inter-basin Water Transfers in Iran" by Ahmad Abrishamchi and Massoud Tajrishy it is highlighted that water managers at both local and national levels find water transfer from humid zones to arid zones to be the only option to satisfy demand. Each year proposals are presented to the government for new inter-basin water transfer (IBWT) projects, which are normally backed by political pressure. These efforts occur even while efficient and effective use is not being made of the available water resources.

Iran, an arid country, has an average annual precipitation of about 250 mm; less than one-third of the world average.



The annual per capita water as a general index of the water resources status used to be about 7,000 m3 in 1956 when the population was only 19 million. In 2005, with a population that has grown to about 65 million, the index was estimated to be about 2,000 m3. With the increasing trend in population growth, it is predicted to sink further, to below 1,000 m3 in the year 2025.

And this, sadly, indicate that the future generations will most certainly face serious water shortages in the coming decades.

The chapter on inter-basin water transfers continues: "Due to the present increase in water demand by an increasing population, as well as the economic status and desire for higher standards of living by the public, the conflicts of water supply and water demand are gradually getting more serious so that the available water must be shared among different regions

in the country for different uses.

"In most areas, local water resources have already been tapped, while demand remains beyond the capacity of existing water resources. Bridging the present and future gaps between demand and supply will require tremendous efforts to develop various supply enhancements and demand management options, among which construction of new dams on the remaining unexploited sites and inter-basin water transfer (IBWT) appear to water managers to be promising options. A number of IBWT schemes have accordingly been implemented or proposed in order to divert water mainly from northeastern basins into central arid regions."

■ **Conclusion**  
Usually one argument which is raised against such infrastructural solutions is that initiatives must be directed toward re-

## By 2050, what if we can't see the forests or the trees?

By Kundhavi Kadiresan

Most of us are familiar with the old saying that sometimes we 'can't see the forest for the trees.' But what if I told you, at our present rate of exploitation of our forests and depletion of our natural resources in Asia and the Pacific, that we run the risk of not seeing the forests OR the trees by the middle of this century?

As a region, Asia and the Pacific has more people than any other part of the world and many areas within have very high population densities. As a result, nearly two-thirds of the forests in this region have been degraded to various degrees. Only 19 percent of primary forests remain (where human intervention has been minimal), compared with the global average of 32 percent. So what will the future of our forests look like? Will we continue down this road or will we work together to improve things?

To get a better understanding of the way forward, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has just published a wide-ranging and comprehensive review of the forest sector in the Asia-Pacific region. It examines trends from the last 25 years, the current state of forests and forestry, and provides an outlook for their future to 2030 and beyond up to 2050.

This report is unique because it looks well beyond the horizon to what our forests could look like by mid-century. I say 'could look like' because the mid-century predictions depend largely on the path we take through our forests in the coming years and decades.



The report, *Asia-Pacific Forest Sector Outlook Study III*, outlines some immense challenges ahead.

First, the population of Asia and the Pacific is expected to add another 500 million people by 2030, rising to 650 million more by 2050, when about two-thirds of the region's population are predicted to be living in urban areas. Second, the middle class is expanding in most countries. On one hand, this increases demand for forest products and on the other, adds pressure to convert forest areas into agricultural land for a variety of uses such as animal production. These demands will add further pressure on natural resources such as soil and fresh water.

Already, the report finds, deforestation has, through the years, left the region with huge areas of secondary forests. While replanting is of course to be encouraged, the loss of biodiversity from disappearing primary forests is a major concern.

The report warns that business as usual will lead us down a path that no one really wants to travel, a dead end future where natural resources have been squandered and exhausted. It suggests a more aggressive move toward an integrated landscape management plan that systematically deals with improvements in all natural resource areas – landscapes, forests, soils, water – and benefits communities.

Innovations – making use of powerful new technologies – are needed for improved governance and management to cope with future demands on forests and landscapes, including those in urban and peri-urban areas.

Clearly there is a role for all of us to play. There is an

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

## Child adoption website operational nationwide next year

The child adoption website being piloted in Tehran will be operational all over the country in the next [Iranian calendar] year (starting on March 21), the Welfare organization director for children and teen affairs has said.

"There are some 10 adoptive applicants per child in the country," ISNA quoted Montazer Shabar as saying on Tuesday. Parents not having children or tending to adopt a child can refer to the website and sign up for adoption process, he added.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “cranio-, crani-“

■ **Meaning**: skull

■ **For example**: **Craniology** is the science dealing with variations in size, shape, and proportions of skulls among the human races.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Hit back

■ **Meaning**: to attack or criticize a person or group that has attacked or criticized you; retaliate

■ **For example**: The actress hit back at claims that she had threatened a member of staff.

## IDIOM

### Burn the candle at both ends

■ **Explanation**: to exhaust yourself by doing too much, especially going to bed late and getting up early

■ **For example**: Scott looks exhausted - I'll bet he's been burning the candle at both ends lately.

urgent need for societies to reduce consumption, increasingly reuse instead of discarding, and sustainably produce biomaterials in forests. In short, we need to find innovative ways to balance competing demands that will benefit us all.

There are, however, reasons to be optimistic and they are worth mentioning. The rate of deforestation has been slowing in recent years. And, overall, big shifts in the way we interact with forests and landscapes are happening due to demographic changes, economic progress, technological advances, environmental awareness and improvements in governance. The traditional use of wood as a source of domestic energy is declining rapidly, due largely to increasing incomes, urbanization and the substitution of wood with electricity and LPG. The use of printing paper has declined as our society has shifted to online media and paperless workplaces.

To make sure our region maintains some of these good approaches and deals with some of the earlier mentioned challenges will take political will and cross-country cooperation of all stakeholders.

At the end of the day, if carefully managed, forests offer solutions to food insecurity, climate change, water scarcity and energy demands – but we will only take advantage of these if we take corrective action – and do so quickly. To ensure a positive and resilient future for everyone, we need to avoid going beyond the tree line.

Kundhavi Kadiresan, is Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).





# Saudi crown prince warns Turkey over Khashoggi probe

**TEHRAN** — Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has urged no exploitation of the killing of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, which tarnished his international reputation, for political gains, in an apparent veiled attack on Turkey, which presses Riyadh to disclose the body's whereabouts.

Turkish officials were the first to report the killing of Khashoggi who disappeared after he entered the Saudi diplomatic mission in the Istanbul last year, and have pressed the kingdom for information on his dismembered body's whereabouts.

"The death of Jamal Khashoggi is a very painful crime," Mohammed said in an interview with pan-Arab daily Asharq al-Awsat published on Sunday.

"Any party exploiting the case politically should stop doing so, and present evidence to the (Saudi) court, which will contribute in achieving justice," the crown prince added, without directly naming Turkey.

He, however, said Saudi Arabia was keen to build strong relations with "all Islamic countries, including Turkey."

Khashoggi, a former advocate of the Saudi royal court who later became a critic of bin Salman, was killed and his body was dismembered by a Saudi hit squad after being lured into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2, 2018.

The Washington Post, for which Khashoggi was a columnist, reported in November last year that the CIA had concluded that Mohammed personally ordered his killing. Riyadh strongly denies the allegation.

Riyadh spurned all the allegations linking the killing to bin Salman and instead claimed that the murder has been carried out by a "rogue" group.

Mohammed said his country was committed to "full justice and accountability" in the case.

In November, the kingdom's Public Prosecutor indicted 11 unnamed suspects for the killing.

The United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, Agnes Callamard, said Saudi Arabia's investigation falls short of international standards.



## Golan Heights: Israel unveils 'Trump Heights' settlement

**TEHRAN** — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has inaugurated a new illegal settlement in the occupied Golan Heights in honor of US President Donald Trump.

The Israeli premier unveiled a "Trump Heights" sign on Sunday to show gratitude towards Trump's recognition of the Syrian territory as belonging to the regime against the international community's consensus.

"The Golan is Israeli and will remain so always," claimed the hawkish prime minister at the ceremony, describing Trump as "a very great friend of Israel who has taken a decision that has never before been taken."

The US president also took to Twitter to thank Netanyahu and welcome the move, calling it a "great honor."

US ambassador to Israel David Friedman and Israel's cabinet were also present at the event, with the American envoy calling the measure an "extraordinary gesture."

On March 25, Trump signed a proclamation, formally recognizing Israel's sovereignty over Golan Heights.



Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, in a statement, called the US decision a "blatant attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Syria. According to Press TV, Israel seized the Golan Heights

from Syria after the 1967 Six-Day War and later occupied it in a move that has never been recognized by the international community. The regime has built dozens of settlements in the area ever since and has used the region to carry out a number of military operations against the Syrian government.

The United States has dropped the word "occupied" in describing the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights paving the way for furtherance of the Israeli regime.

The State Department changed its usual description of the Golan Heights from "Israeli-occupied" to "Israeli-controlled" in an annual global human rights report released on Wednesday.

Israel has been lobbying the administration of US President Donald Trump to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which it effectively annexed in 1981.

Tel Aviv claims the Syrian Golan Heights, which Israeli forces captured in a 1967, is critical to its security.

However, the United Nations emphasizes Syria's sovereignty in the territory.

## China warns West over 'ill-intentioned' meddling in Hong Kong

**TEHRAN** — China slams "ill-intended" and "hypocritical" foreign intervention in the affairs of Hong Kong after violent protests over a proposed amendment to the city's extradition law.

The official China Daily said Monday Hong Kong's "fugitive rendition arrangements are purely an internal affair", adding countries such as the United States or Britain should have no say in the matter.

Hong Kong, a former British colony, was returned to China in 1997, under a "one country, two systems" deal that guarantees it a level of autonomy, including a separate and independent legal system.

On Saturday, Hong Kong's chief executive Carrie Lam decided to indefinitely postpone amending the city's extradition law after a week of sometimes violent protests.

Washington and London were quick

to welcome the move and support the agitation which continued on Sunday, with thousands of protesters occupying main roads and highways.

In an editorial, China Daily said Beijing will "not waver, not in the face of street violence nor the ill-intentioned interventions of foreign governments."

The central government in Beijing has expressed its support, respect and understanding for Hong Kong's decision, but condemned violent acts by protesters.

Clashes erupted between police and demonstrators when tens of thousands of people moved to occupy key roads around government headquarters Wednesday, injuring at least 22 police officers and dozens of protesters.

A US consulate spokesman in Hong

Kong warned Lam to take "the domestic and international community" into account should her government pursue changes to extradition laws, particularly regarding mainland China.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said last week London was "concerned about potential effects" of Hong Kong's extradition plans.

"Indeed, their sanctimonious posturing is hypocritical, given their bluster is maliciously intended and fans anti-government sentiment in Hong Kong and incites lawlessness," China Daily said in reference to the US and the UK.

On Friday, Beijing summoned Robert Forden, the US Deputy Chief of Mission in Beijing, to protest against Washington's interference in Hong Kong affairs.

"China called on the United States ... to immediately stop all interference in Hong Kong's affairs and stop taking action that would affect the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong," the Chinese foreign ministry said.

Chinese daily the Global Times also warned Washington against using Hong Kong as a "bargaining chip" to force compromises in trade talks.

"The riots in Hong Kong will only consolidate Beijing's tough stance against Washington," it said.

It was referring to a year-long trade dispute between Beijing and Washington, which according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), could cut the global economic output by 0.5 percent, or about 455 billion dollars, next year.

## civilians killed after mortar attack hits Syrian wedding party 12

**TEHRAN** — At least 12 Syrian civilians have been killed and more than a dozen injured after a wedding party was hit by a terrorist mortar attack in Aleppo's suburbs.

The wedding party was being held in the village of al-Wadihi late on Sunday, when it was shelled by the terrorists' mortars, according to the Syrian state broadcaster.

Earlier in the day, terrorists carried out two other mortar attacks in the west of Aleppo and inside the city.

The attacks came as government forces launched a major operation against foreign-backed terrorist groups in Hama and Idlib.

The army says the operation was in response to terrorists' breach of a de-escalation zone agreement there.

Under a deal reached following a meeting between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in the Black Sea resort city of Sochi on September 17, 2018, all militants in a demilitarized zone, which surrounds Idlib and also parts of the adjacent provinces of Aleppo and Hama, were supposed to pull out heavy

arms by October 17, and Takfiri groups had to withdraw by October 15 last year.

The National Front for the Liberation of Syria is the main Turkish-backed militant alliance in the Idlib region, but the Takfiri Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) terrorist group, which is a coalition of different terror outfits, largely composed of the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, holds a large part of the province and the zone.

The HTS, which is said to be in control of some 60 percent of Idlib province, has yet to announce its stance on the buffer zone deal.

It is estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 members of different factions of armed groups, which Syria, Russia and Turkey consider terrorists, are active in the volatile province, which is home to around three million inhabitants.

According to Press TV, Syrian forces are pressing ahead with the final phase of the anti-terror campaign after most foreign-backed terrorist groups were vanquished in the country last year.



Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country.

## Nigeria suicide attack: Triple blasts kill at least 30 in Borno

**TEHRAN** — Thirty people were killed late on Sunday in a triple suicide attack in north-east Nigeria, emergency services reported, marking the biggest mass killing this year by suicide bombers.

Three bombers detonated their explosives outside a hall in Konduga, 25 kilometres from the Borno state capital Maiduguri, where football fans were watching a match on TV.

"The death toll from the attack has so far increased to 30. We have over 40 people injured," Usman Kachalla, head of operations at the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), said on Monday.

An earlier toll from the blasts said 17 were dead and 17 others were wounded.

The attack happened around 9:00pm (18:00 GMT), Ali Hassan, the leader of a

self-defence group in the town, said.

The owner of the hall prevented one of the bombers from entering the packed venue.

"There was a heated argument between the operator and the bomber who blew himself up," Hassan said by phone.

Two other bombers who had mingled among the crowd at a tea stall nearby also detonated their suicide vests.

Hassan said most of the victims were from outside the football viewing centre.

"Nine people died on the spot, including the operator, and 48 were injured," Hassan said.

Kachala said the high number of fatalities was because emergency responders had been unable to reach the site of the blast quickly. Nor were they equipped to deal with large

numbers of wounded.

"Lack of an appropriate health facility to handle such huge emergency situation and the delay in obtaining security clearance to enable us deploy from Maiduguri in good time led to the high death toll," he said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the attack bore the imprint of Boko Haram, which has led a decade-long campaign to establish a Muslim state in northeast Nigeria.

The last suicide attack was in April this year when two female suicide bombers blew themselves up outside the garrison town of Monguno, killing a soldier and a vigilante and injuring another soldier.

Konduga has been repeatedly targeted by suicide bombers from a Boko Haram faction

loyal to longtime leader Abubakar Shekau.

The faction typically carries out suicide attacks against soft civilian targets such as mosques, markets and bus stations, often using young women and girls as bombers.

The fighters are believed to sneak into the town from the group's haven in nearby Sambisa Forest.

Eight worshippers were killed when a suicide bomber attacked a mosque in the town last July.

Boko Haram's campaign has claimed about 30,000 lives and displaced millions of people from their homes.

The violence has spilled into neighboring Niger, Chad and Cameroon, prompting the formation of a regional military coalition to battle the group, Al Jazeera reported.

## Poll shows Trump trailing democrats in hypothetical matchups

**➔1** The other three Democratic hopefuls who were part of the poll also came out ahead of Trump but they were all within the poll's margin of error of three percentage points. Sen. Elizabeth Warren has a two-point lead over Trump while Sen. Kamala Harris and Mayor Pete Buttigieg each have a one-point lead over the president.

The silver lining for Fox News viewers? Trump is in a better standing now than he was at this point four years ago when Hillary Clinton was ahead by 17 points. "Trump's current position in the polls is far from ideal," says Republican pollster Daron Shaw. "But he's definitely in the game. His base is on board and he'll have ample opportunity to frame the choice set moving forward while the Democrats battle for voter and media attention in the debates." A key data point is that voters seem more enthusiastic about a Trump reelection than they were in 2016. Among all voters, those feeling enthusiastic increased by 8 points and a higher 18 points among Republicans.

Trump's reelection campaign, meanwhile, will be firing several pollsters after internal numbers were leaked.

## China's President Xi to visit North Korea this week

**TEHRAN** — Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit North Korea for two days from Thursday, state media in both countries reported on Monday, making him the first Chinese leader to visit in 14 years.

Neighboring China is reclusive North Korea's only major ally, and the visit comes amid renewed tensions between the United States and North Korea over efforts to persuade Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons.

"Both sides will exchange views on the (Korean) peninsula situation, and push for new progress in the political resolution of the peninsula issue," China's official broadcaster CCTV said in a lengthy report that led the evening news.

The invitation was made by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, state media in both countries said.

Since a failed summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Kim in Hanoi earlier this year, Pyongyang has resumed some weapons tests and warned of "truly undesired consequences" if the United States is not more flexible.

Xi's visit kicks off a flurry of high-level diplomatic activity around the Korean peninsula, with Trump set to visit ally South Korea after the G20 summit this month in Osaka, Japan.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in's office said he and Xi would hold talks during the G20.

The visit also comes against a backdrop of mounting acrimony between Beijing and Washington over trade and other issues, Reuters reported.

## India reels under worst drought in decades, heat kills dozens

**TEHRAN** — Almost half of India - an area home to more than 500 million people - is facing drought-like conditions while a blistering heat wave has killed dozens of people in the impoverished eastern state of Bihar.

As the country suffers its lowest rainfall ahead of a monsoon season in more than six decades, the western state of Maharashtra witnesses its worst drought in 47 years, forcing many to leave their lands and take shelter in relief camps, as they wait for monsoon rains.

Reporting from Beed in Maharashtra, Al Jazeera's Elizabeth Puranam said people walk in intense heat, sometimes for kilometres, only to find a small amount of muddy water at the bottom of a well.

Asha Pawar said she collects about five pots - or 100 litres - of water a day for herself and her four children. The state government provides water tankers, but Pawar said they only come every four or five days.

"We have no arrangements for water. We keep getting it from whatever source is available. If nothing is available, we climb down the well for drinking water," Pawar told Al Jazeera.

"My daughter fell in the well when she went to fetch water. A passer-by rescued her when he heard her scream."

Elsewhere in Beed, farmers have left their land and moved to nearby relief camps, where the government provides fodder and water to keep their cattle alive.

"There is no water left in the Beed area. It used to rain by June 7, but there are still no signs of rains. Last year, we had a drought situation. This year is worse. If it doesn't rain again this year, we have to leave our village," said farmer Navnath Kadam, who has already spent four months at a relief camp.

**■ Deadly heat wave**

India's hot season has been particularly harsh this year, with temperatures rising above 50 degrees Celsius in the western state of Rajasthan.

In Bihar, severe heat during the weekend killed at least 76 people, according to the dpa news agency.

Most deaths occurred in three districts of Bihar - Aurangabad, Gaya and Nawada - where temperatures hovered around 45 degrees Celsius as India entered the third week of searing heat.

On Sunday, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced a compensation of 400,000 rupees (\$5,700) for the family of each heatwave victim, while federal Health Minister Harsh Vardhan asked people to not leave their homes until temperatures fell.

"Intense heat affects brain and leads to various health issues," he said.

A heatwave in 2015 left more than 3,500 dead in India and Pakistan.

In 2017, researchers said South Asia, home to one-fifth of the world's population, could see heat levels rise to unsurvivable levels by the end of the century if no action is taken on global warming.

**■ 'Ill advice'**

Falling groundwater levels and poor irrigation techniques mean farmers are overly reliant on India's June-to-September southwest monsoon, which provides the country with most of its annual rainfall.

Three of the last five monsoons have been deficient and, while the Indian Meteorological Department is predicting a normal monsoon this year, it is already nearly two weeks late and that worries the farmers.

Experts blame the severe drought on the lack of rain, along with rising demand for water, mismanaged resources and climate change.

Environmentalist Vandana Shiva, who has been warning about India's water crisis for decades, says bad policy decisions are to blame.

"The water famine we are facing is a result of over 30 to 40 years of ill advice by financial institutions, and that ill advice, on the one hand, mined the ground water, diverted river waters, destroyed the soil moisture, but is also the single biggest reason for climate change," she told Al Jazeera.



## Brailsford backs Froome to come back after horror crash

Team Ineos manager Dave Brailsford expects four times Tour de France champion Chris Froome to return to elite cycling after last week's horror crash at the Critérium du Dauphine.

Froome sustained multiple fractures including broken femur, elbow and rib bones in a high speed crash and was airlifted to hospital where he underwent surgery.

The 34-year-old Briton has been ruled out of this year's Tour de France but Brailsford does not think he will retire from the sport.

"It's quite difficult to see that, if I'm being honest with you," Brailsford told BBC 5 Live's Sportsworld. "I think he will try and get back.

"Who knows how this will impact on him, but I don't think it will be the case where he'll just say 'right, I'm satisfied now. I'll hang up my wheels and call it a day'.

"I think he's more likely to really work hard in rehab and push himself really hard. He'll take the same approach to that I'm sure as he does to his sport. If I was a betting man I'd say yes we'll see him back at some point in the future."

Brailsford said he expected the crash to prompt a review of rider safety by cycling's authorities.

"When something like that does happen, when it's quite traumatic, then it's a human reaction I think, so it would be no surprise at all," he said.

(Source: Reuters)



## Costa Rica cruise past Nicaragua at Gold Cup

A rampant first-half performance from Costa Rica set them up for a 4-0 win over Nicaragua in their Gold Cup opener at the National stadium in San Jose on Sunday.

Playing their first game of the tournament at home in this year's expanded Gold Cup, Costa Rica were dominant throughout against their Central American neighbours.

Bryan Oviedo put the home side ahead in six minutes when the Nicaraguan goalkeeper failed to block his angled drive and Celso Borges made it two 13 minutes later.

Costa Rica got a third seconds before half time after a mix up in the Nicaraguan defence allowed Elias Aguilar's 35-meter free kick to sail over everyone and into the net.

The second half was a quieter affair, with Allan Cruz rounding off the scoring 13 minutes from time when he curled a sweet left-foot shot into the top corner of the net from 18 meters out.

While 27 of the 31 Gold Cup matches are taking place in the United States, this match and Haiti's 2-1 win over Bermuda in the other Group B encounter, were held in Costa Rica as part of the confederation's expansion plans.

Another two games take place in Jamaica on Monday.

The next round of Group B games will be held in Frisco, Texas on Thursday when Costa Rica play Bermuda and Haiti take on Nicaragua.

(Source: Goal)

## No Chelsea approach for Lampard

Chelsea are yet to approach Derby County about the availability of their manager Frank Lampard, says Rams chairman Mel Morris.

Lampard, 40, is the favourite to replace Maurizio Sarri as Chelsea boss after the Italian left Stamford Bridge to take charge of Juventus.

BBC Sport reported on Sunday that the Rams had opened talks over a new deal with the former England midfielder.

Lampard led Derby to the Championship play-off final last season.

"We have made it very clear to everyone, but most importantly to Frank, that we want to retain Frank for the long term," said Morris.

"If Chelsea want to hire Frank, then it is in their gift to make an offer in pursuit of that.

"In the meantime, we will continue to put our best foot forward to continue with our plans for the coming season and work with Frank for him to know how much he is wanted by everyone associated with the club."

Lampard won three Premier League titles and the Champions League as a Chelsea player, in addition to becoming the club's all-time top scorer with 211.

His first season in management culminated in defeat by Aston Villa in the play-off final at Wembley last month.

(Source: BBC)

## "Mbappé will be at PSG next season...200% guarantee"

Paris Saint-Germain club president Nasser Al Khelaifi closed any speculation that the star striker was poised to leave the Ligue 1 with his comments in the latest edition of France Football as the club representative stated: "Mbappé will be playing with PSG 200% next season".

The Qatari president was also critical of the problems generated by certain players over the course of the 2018-19 season stating: "Players need to be responsible for their actions, and this is true of now more than ever. They need to behave differently and need to work harder. If they don't agree with this policy, then the doors are open...goodbye....I don't want any more spoilt superstar behaviour".

In the same interview, Al Khelaifi was also auto-critical observing: "We all lack character and a degree of authority and I'm the first to admit this. We all need a jolt or electroshock".

(Source: AS)

# Francesco Totti leaves Roma after 30 years as he resigns as director

Francesco Totti says that leaving Roma 'is like dying' as the club's legendary former captain announced he is leaving his role as technical director.

The 42-year-old addressed the media on Monday afternoon where he explained why he had decided to bring to an end his 30-year relationship with the club.

Totti said it was a day he 'hoped never would have come' but in the end he made the decision having become marginalised behind the scenes by president James Pallotta.

A large media contingent gathered to hear from an emotional Totti as he explained the issues he faced behind the scenes.

"I sent an email to say something that felt unimaginable. I wrote my resignation. I was hoping this was not necessary, but the fateful day has arrived, which for me is very ugly and painful," he said.

"Considering the conditions, it was only right that I made this brusque decision, especially as I never had the chance to work on the technical area with Roma.

"I thought long and hard. Let's just say it was not my fault that I had to make this decision. 'They knew my intentions and what I wanted, to give so much to this club and team, but they never wanted me to, in all honesty. 'They excluded me from every decision.' Totti retired from playing two years ago after 25 seasons with his hometown club and was given the chance to have a management role in the boardroom.



He led Roma to its last Serie A title in 2001 but has now brought to an end his time with the club. Making his senior debut in 1993 as a teenager, Totti went on to score 307 goals in 785 games for the club, establishing himself as a Roma legend. Speaking openly about his departure,

Totti explained how club bosses made him retire and also dictated how his role would have little to no influence on the football side of operations.

He added: 'Everyone knows they made me stop playing. They wanted me to stop. I had a six-year contract already as a director.

## Real Madrid want to complete Pogba signing as quickly as possible



Real Madrid have set an ambitious target to seal the signing of Paul Pogba: July 1, the day Manchester United return for pre-season training.

They know at the Santiago Bernabeu that the Frenchman's arrival will not be easy, due to the cost involved and United's stance on the matter, and, from Monday, they have left themselves just two weeks to complete the deal.

Thus far, United have been unwilling to negotiate Pogba's exit, though his statements on Sunday may change their position. This is the 26-year-old's first step towards trying to force the transfer as he signals his intent whilst also opting to go public in his desire to leave. There have been more aggressive tactics used in the past as players have looked to force their way out, but his declarations are nevertheless significant after being named as Zinedine Zidane's No.1 target.

In order to avoid Pogba returning to United for pre-season, Madrid will need to act quickly. Securing the transfer earlier would enable the midfielder to have an extra week of rest, too, as the English side begin pre-season on July 1 while Los Blancos will start theirs a week later on July 8, at which point they will travel to Canada.

The situation shows that there has already been plans made around Pogba's arrival, a player Zidane believes will be a key piece in his new-look Madrid side next season.

From Madrid's perspective, they do not want to get implicated in any soap operas this summer and, as such, they will look to be as forthright as possible in negotiations. This method has already been successful as Los Blancos have completed the signings of Luka Jovic, Ferland Mendy and Eden Hazard in June, as well as having already sealed the arrivals of Rodrygo Goes and Eder Militao months ago. Zidane wants to start pre-season with all of the footballers he wants in his squad at his disposal as he looks to create a sense of cohesion before the beginning of the 2019/20 campaign.

Zidane considers the work he will undertake in North America this July to be vital. There will be tactical changes that need time and training, which is why it is essential for the Frenchman to be a part of the squad from day one.

Madrid, sensitive to the situation, want to satisfy their coach not only with the signing of Pogba but also the speed with which they complete the transfer.

(Source: Marca)

## Is there an open door for Neymar at Barcelona?



Neymar Jr left Barcelona in the summer of 2017 moving to PSG in exchange for 222 million euro making the Brazilian the most expensive player in history. Despite Barça club president Josep Maria Bartomeu insinuating at the time that the Brazilian's chapter with the Catalan club had come to an end, that situation could see a u-turn after PSG president Nasser Al Khelaifi's recent declaration stating: "If someone isn't happy here, then the door is open" which contrasts with the 'closed door' policy on every occasion the Catalan side have tried to pursue a player from the Parisian side with Thiago Silva, Marquinhos or Verratti recent examples.

Barcelona reuniting with Neymar is still something of a long shot but Al Khelaifi's comments suggest that the thought of seeing the Brazilian wearing the famous navy and claret is not such a tall order.

Around the Catalan club, there is a pro-Neymar lobby with the likes of Rexach, Jordi Cruyff or Edmilson all stating how they feel the return of the Brazilian would be a positive step. Neymar still maintains a wonderful relationship with the bulk of the current Barcelona first team squad and many were instrumental in attempting him to keep him at the LaLiga side in the month

'I started quietly, realising it's a completely different sphere to being on the field.

'Many promises were made and they were never kept. They knew what I wanted.

'Naturally, as time goes on, you judge, you evaluate, as I too have a character and don't just sit there doing what they every now and then ask me to do.

'I did it for Roma, but as time wore on, I didn't think it fair to put myself at the disposal of people who never wanted me to be there.'

Many of Totti's grievances surrounded club consultant Franco Baldini, who spent time working at Tottenham.

When quizzed by reporters on his rapport with Baldini when both were at the club, Totti was damning in his assessment, revealing that there was no relationship whatsoever.

'The rapport with Franco Baldini has never existed and never will,' he said. 'If I made this decision, it's only normal that there were misunderstandings, problems within the club.

'One of us had to go. I stepped aside because you can't have too many people sticking their oar in and causing chaos.'

Roma fans are still reeling from the exit of iconic midfielder Daniele de Rossi and Totti feels the 'main focus of certain people has been to remove Romans from Roma' this summer.

The club finished sixth in Serie A last season and missed out on a Champions League spot for 2019-20.

(Source: Daily Mail)

## Suarez, Cavani score as Uruguay crush 10-man Ecuador in Copa America

Luis Suarez and Edinson Cavani were on target as Uruguay thumped 10-man Ecuador 4-0 in their opening Group C match at the Copa America on Sunday.

Nicolas Lodeiro opened the scoring after just six minutes before Ecuador full-back Jose Quintero was dismissed for a flailing arm.

With a numerical advantage, Uruguay ran riot at the Mineirao stadium in Belo Horizonte as Cavani and Suarez netted before the break. The rout was completed 12 minutes from time with an Arturo Mina own goal.

"We had chances in the first half, we managed to take them and that gave us the tranquility to manage the game," said Cavani, who finally scored his first Copa America goal in his fourth participation. It was the ideal beginning for Uruguay in a tough Group C alongside champions Chile and guests Japan, who meet on Monday in Sao Paulo.

"We're not as bad as that," lamented Ecuador's Colombian coach Hernan Dario Gomez.

■ Uruguay were off to a dream start.

Suarez crossed from the right and Lodeiro proved the coolest customer in the Mineirao stadium as he beat one defender with his chest control, flicked the ball over another and then hit a crisp, low volley into the bottom far corner.

"We knew they would be very tough opponents. The important thing was start the game with maximum concentration and we managed that," said Cavani.

Uruguay were rampant and had the ball in the net soon afterwards only for Cavani to be given offside in the build-up.



Ecuador brought a physicality to the contest that upset the Uruguayan players and Quintero was perhaps lucky to escape punishment when catching Diego Laxalt with an elbow in an aerial challenge.

But moments later, his arm made contact with Lodeiro's face when challenging for another header, this time drawing blood.

Brazilian referee Anderson Daronco -- whose bulging arm muscles put even Ecuador's strapping players to shame -- initially showed the full-back a yellow card but after consulting VAR he changed that to red.

That left Ecuador with a mountain to climb.

On 27 minutes, Alexander Dominguez made a brilliant low save to turn behind Cavani's half-volley from 15 yards.

Paris Saint-Germain forward Cavani was denied again when Dominguez stunningly tipped his clever back-flick onto the post one-handed.

But it was third time lucky on 33 minutes as Diego Godin headed the ball into the danger area and Cavani acrobatically rasped a bicycle kick from seven yards past a helpless Dominguez, his 47th international goal.

■ Patient Uruguay

Nahitan Nandez wasted a good chance, shooting straight at Dominguez but Suarez put the game to bed a minute before the break, stealing in at the back post to poke home a flick-on from Martin Caceres.

With the game all but over as a contest, the second half was a damp squib of an affair.

Uruguay had the ball in the net soon after the restart but Cavani was offside again.

Ecuador showed plenty of commitment, continuing to rough up Uruguay's more technical players, but never looked like they believed they would get anything out of the game.

Uruguay looked content to play a patient possession game without pushing for more goals.

Cavani did send Suarez scampering in on goal after a defensive mistake but Dominguez was quickly off his line to snatch the ball off the Barcelona forward's toes.

The fourth came in calamitous fashion as Gaston Pereiro tried to pick out Suarez from Cavani's cross even though he was only six yards from goal.

(Source: AFP)



# Branko Ivankovic on his way out of Persepolis, Afshin Ghotbi on radar

By Masoud Hossein

**TEHRAN** — Branko Ivankovic could be on his way out of Persepolis after the Iranian giants failed to meet their financial commitments to the Croatian coach and according to what the local media reported Afshin Ghotbi is a possible replacement.

Ivankovic built the most decorated resume of any coach in Persepolis history. Under leadership of him, Persepolis won three successive Iran Professional League. The Reds, also won one Hazfi Cup and three Super Cups.

Furthermore, Persepolis reached the AFC Champions League final for the first time ever, where they lost to Japanese outfit Kashima Antlers 2-0 on aggregate.

Now, the local media reported that the 65-year-old coach has penned a two-year contract with Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia.

Ivankovic is leaving Persepolis at the peak of his career but the fans are protesting the club's officials to let him go and it has angered them.

To regain domestic supremacy next season will be very tough for Persepolis since their opponents have already started their readiness but they should find a new coach from now on.

Afshin Ghotbi is the best possible option for Persepolis since the ex-Iran coach has already won a title with Persepolis in 2008 which is highly regarded as one of the most inspirational moments in the team's history. Ghotbi inspired the Reds to win the league title after six years despite six-point deduction imposed by FIFA for non-payment of a former player.

Ghotbi, who was greeted as 'Afshin the Emperor', will definitely have a difficult task in Persepolis because he faces a tough task in living up to fans' expectations.

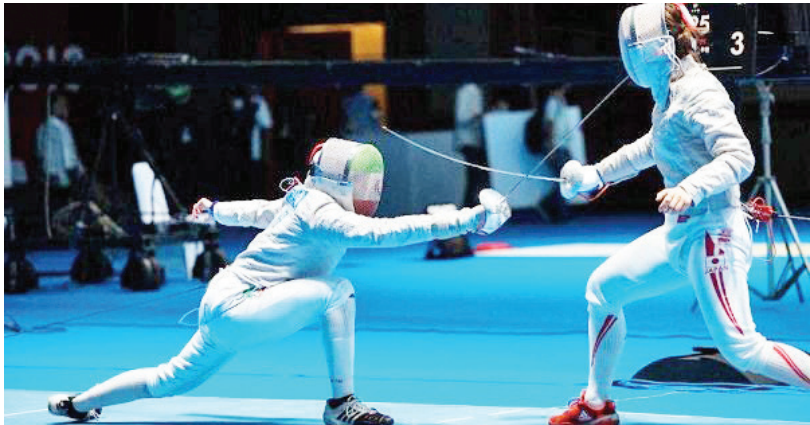
Ghotbi is without a team after parting company with Foolad, where he failed to make a splash in the Ahvaz based



football club, however, he is a favorite candidate for the fans. Ivankovic has given everything to Persepolis and has

nothing left but it's not the right time to announce his departure since there's not much time left for the club.

## Iran men's team sabre win silver at Asian championship



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran claimed a silver medal at the men's team sabre at the Asian Fencing Championships in Chiba, Japan on Monday.

The men's trio of Mojtaba Abedini, Mohammad Rahbari and Ali Pakdaman lost to South Korea's Sanguk Oh, Bongil Gu and Hansol Ha 45-42 in their final in the Japanese city.

Japan provided some home cheer

as Kenta Tokunan, Kento Yoshida and Kaito Streets beat China's Yingming Xu, Yinghui Yan and Shi Wang 45-39 to win bronze.

Abedini has already secured a bronze medal in the sabre event in the competition.

Team competitions in the men's épée and women's foil will conclude the Championships on Tuesday.

## Iran extend winning run at Asian Beach Handball C'ship



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran earned their third successive win at the Asian Beach Handball Championship 2019 in Weihai, China on Monday.

Team Melli defeated Saudi Arabia 2-1 in Group B.

Iran, who have already defeated Japan (2-0) and Thailand (2-1), will face Pakistan on Tuesday. The tournament includes two groups of six teams.

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 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.

## Preview - Quarter-final: IR Iran v Lebanon

Lebanon are hoping to bounce back strongly against 2019 AFC U-20 Futsal Championship hosts, Islamic Republic of Iran, in a do-or-die quarter-final match on Tuesday.

"I told my players that we need to take this challenge to bounce back," said Lebanon head coach Tarek Rizk. "We will work on it. We have a chance to say that we are ready to play against strong contenders."

Lebanon started their Group B campaign against Kyrgyz Republic, a match which they started on the back foot after conceding in the first minute, but Tarek Rizk's side soldiered on to seal a 3-2 win.

Their next group opponents came in the form of heavyweights Thailand, and although Rizk blamed the 8-1 defeat on fatigue, he has identified the changes needed in his team for his boys to show their best against Iran.

"We were in the toughest group in the competition," said Rizk.

"We faced two teams with two different styles of play. We faced Kyrgyz Republic, who were strong and



Thailand were fast and efficient. We won the first tough game and then fell to Thailand due to lapses in concentration and we were physically tired as well.

"What we need to change for the upcoming game is our mentality, confidence and responsibility. To play a

strongly against Iran, you need to have this combo. If you miss one of these elements, you risk losing against a strong team supported by fans."

Iran produced some top quality form to win Group A as they saw off a resilient Hong Kong before turning on the power in the second half to beat Afghanistan 3-2.

Head coach Hamid Moghadam expressed his satisfaction following their victory over their Central Asian neighbors, saying his team is growing from strength to strength with each passing game.

"The victory we achieved against Afghanistan was very satisfying and enjoyable since they played very well," said Moghadam.

"If we had lost the match, we would have a harder job to do now. I see my players performing well with each passing game and they're finding their own way to play.

"But I believe my players haven't reached their excellent form yet, and we'll try to reach it. My players have this pressure to win the title once again, but I see my players performing better and better."

(Source: the-afc)

## Saeid Marouf crafts Iran's upset of VNL champions Russia

Saeid Marouf ran Iran's well-crafted offence to record their eighth win, along with Brazil in the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League on Sunday.

Iran completed their sweep of their home matches in Urmia with their 3-0 (25-20, 26-24, 25-23) defeat of Russia, as captain Marouf led his team setting up brilliant plays for Amir Ghafour and distributing well-calculated sets to the rest for the rest of the starters.

The 33-year-old Iranian setter likewise got involved in scoring with three attack points and two service aces to bolster the team's strong finish against the reigning VNL champions. He sits on top of the best setter ranking with an average per set of 9.03.

Ghafour, on the other hand, topped all scorers with 17 points that were fired solidly from the attack line. Milad Ebadipour and Seyed Mohammad Mousavi scored eight points each, then Marouf, Purya Fayazi and



Ali Shafiei had five points apiece. Ghafour is third in scoring with 151 total

points and is separated only by six markers from best scorer Sharone Vernon-Evans of

Canada (158) and five points from Gabriele Nelli of Italy (157).

Viktor Poletaev and Yaroslav Podlesnykh's respective double-digit outputs of 16 and 11 were no match for the intensity of the hosts as the latter led in the attack and block categories, committed fewer errors and employed better defense on them.

The Iranians now have a total of eight wins and one loss, while Brazil have the same win-record and trailing by two points to stay on the second spot in the overall standing.

Meanwhile, Brazil earned back-to-back wins in Gondomar to recover from their tough five-set loss to Serbia in the opening match of Pool 9. The reigning Olympic gold medalists have been productive with double-digit performances from Douglas Souza, Ricardo Lucarelli, Alan Souza, Isac Santos and Yoandy Leal Hidalgo in their last two victories.

(Source: FIVB.org)

## World Karate mourns the death of Iran's Navid Mohammadi

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — World Karate Federation (WKF) has extended condolences over the death of Iranian young karate athlete Navid Mohammadi.



The young Iranian athlete who won the gold medal at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires passed away due to a car accident.

At 18 years old, Mohammadi was one of the most promising karatekas in the world. The young Karate enthusiast made history for the sport when he won the gold medal in the category of Male Kumite +68kg in the first appearance of Karate at the Youth Olympic Games. Mohammadi had also won the silver medal at the 2018 AKF Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships and many national recognitions. The young karateka passed away on June 6 due to a car accident in Tehran.

The World Karate family would like to extend their deepest condolences to Navid Mohammadi's loved ones and friends, as well as to all members of the Iranian Karate community.

## Iran's Pouria Fayazi joins MKS Bedzin

**TASNIM** — Iran international outside spiker Pourya Fayazi has joined Polish volleyball team MKS Bedzin.

Fayazi has penned a one-year contract with MKS Bedzin for an undisclosed fee.

The 26-year-old player was a member of Shardari Varamin and helped the Iranian team win 2019 Asian Club Championship.

Fayazi has shown a series of eye-catching performances in Iran national volleyball team in the 2019 Volleyball Nations League.

His compatriot Milad Ebadipour is also a member of Polish club PGE Skra Belchatów.

## Esteghlal keeper Mehdi Rahmati signs for Padideh

**TASNIM** — Iran's Padideh has completed the signing of Esteghlal goalkeeper Mehdi Rahmati.

Rahmati has joined the Mashhad-based football team on a two year contract.

The details of the 36-year-old keeper's contract have not been disclosed yet. Rahmati, who has played for Esteghlal in three stints, left the team in a shock move.

He has also made 77 caps for Iran national football team. The shot-stopper will play in the 2020 AFC Champions League.

## Asian Qualifiers draw to provide pathway to Qatar and China

The Asian Qualifiers draw for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Preliminary Competition and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 will be held on July 17, 2019 at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — providing Asia's top 40 nations with their pathway to glory.

The seedings for the draw will be based on the latest FIFA Rankings issued on June 14, 2019 and following the conclusion of the Preliminary Joint Qualification Round 1 where Bangladesh, Cambodia, Guam, Malaysia and Mongolia - advanced to Round 2.

The decision on the outcome of the match between Macau and Sri Lanka is still pending.

The 40 nations will be drawn into eight groups of five teams and compete in a double round robin format, with matches to be held from September 5, 2019 to June 9, 2020. Following the June 14, 2019 FIFA World Ranking

The group winners and four best runners-up (total 12 teams) will advance to the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 finals and the final round of qualifying for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The next best 24 teams from the preliminary stage of the joint qualifiers will compete in a separate competition for the remaining slots in the 24-team AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

## Perth confirmed as host for Fed Cup final

Perth has been named host city for this year's Fed Cup final between Australia and France, which will be held from Nov. 9-10 at the RAC Arena.

The final will mark the first time in a decade Perth has hosted a Fed Cup tie and is also Australia's first home final since 1978.

"I'm so excited we have the chance to play the Fed Cup final here in Perth, and showcase the very best of women's tennis right here in my hometown," Australia's Fed Cup captain Alicia Molik said in a statement on the Tennis Australia website.

"It's particularly exciting to be making this announcement just a little over a week since Ashleigh Barty won the French Open."

France reached their sixth Fed Cup final after beating Romania in April while Bartley inspired Australia to their first final since 1993 at the expense of Belarus.

"I'm delighted we are able to stage the Fed Cup final in Perth, in what will be a spectacular showcase of women's tennis," Tennis Australia Chief Executive Craig Tiley said.

(Source: Reuters)



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Destiny prevails over what one predicts, and policy, however correct, leads to loss.

Imam Ali (AS)

## Croatian Ambassador Štambuk, Culture Minister Salehi meet

**CULTURE** TEHRAN — Croatian Ambassador Drago Štambuk met Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi at his office in Tehran on Sunday to discuss the expansion of cultural relations.

“There are good intentions between the two countries to develop ties,” Salehi said during the meeting.

“We hope this meeting would help reinforce bilateral relations between the two countries,” he added.

Štambuk also said that when he was appointed as ambassador to Iran he was told that he would be leaving his homeland to the country of U.S. sanctions.

“I told them that I am going to the land of poetry because I believe that poetry is much stronger than economic sanctions,” he added.

The ambassador announced Croatia's plans to organize a number of art and cultural events for 2020 when the country will take over the European Union's presidency. He asked Iran to take part in the cultural events.

He also mentioned that his country is ready to host Iranian cultural delegations in other international cultural events of Croatia.

## BIB winning illustrations to go on display in Qom

**A R T** TEHRAN — An exhibition of 42 winning works from the Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) will open at Eshraq Gallery in Qom on Thursday.

Slovak Ambassador Jan Bory, Iranian member of BIB jury Ali Buzari and a number of cultural officials and artists are scheduled to attend the opening ceremony, the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) announced on Monday.

Iranian artist Kamal Tabatabaai is scheduled to hold a workshop on children's book illustration on the sidelines of the exhibition on June 26.

The exhibition was previously held in the Iranian cities of Sanandaj, Kerman, Ahvaz and Mashhad.

The exhibit will run until July 10.

## Polish musician Martyna Kosecka to discuss contemporary music in Tehran

**A R T** TEHRAN — Polish composer and conductor Martyna Kosecka will be delivering a speech on contemporary music in a session to be held at the Beethoven Museum House today.



Polish composer Martyna Kosecka in an undated photo.

The lecture is part of an educational seminar, which will be held at the museum until Wednesday.

Kosecka is the wife of Iranian composer Idin Samimi-Mofakham who is also one of the participants in the Wednesday session.

Iranian musicians Hushyar Khayyam, Nader Mashayekhi, Sina Sedqi, Mohsen Saqafi and Mehdi Kazeruni will also attend the meeting.

The museum is located at No. 69, Mirza Shirazi St., off Karim Khan Ave.

# 50 years of studio photography by Amanollah Tariqi on display at Tehran showcase

**A R T** TEHRAN — An d e s k exhibition opening on Wednesday at Akhaneh Shahr, Iran's photo museum in Tehran, will observe 50 years of studio photography by Amanollah Tariqi, the founder of the Hollywood Photography House.

Hamed Qamsari is the curator of the exhibition, which will be organized under the auspices of Tariqi's son, Dariush, Akhaneh Shahr has announced.

The exhibition titled “Isfahan's Hollywood” will run until July 22 at the museum located near Bahar Shiraz Square in the Haft-e Tir neighborhood.

A documentary directed by Qamsari about Tariqi will also be screened at the exhibition.

Born in Isfahan in 1923, Tariqi studied painting at the Isfahan Academy of Fine Arts. After graduation, he also began a career in photography, which led him to found his atelier “Hollywood Photography House” in 1945 next to the Iran Cinema on Chahar-Bagh Street in the central Iranian city.

The Hollywood Photography House soon became a major photography studio, which holds reliable pictorial records of the city in the second half of the 20th century.

Tariqi died in 2001 and was buried the Baghe Rezvan Cemetery in his hometown.



A poster for photographer Amanollah Tariqi's exhibition “Isfahan's Hollywood”.

## High schoolers take tragedy of Hiroshima atomic bombing on stage in Tehran



A scene from “Japanese Fishermen”, which was staged by Ahmad Beigi at Mashayekhi Hall in Tehran.

**A R T** TEHRAN — An d e s k Iranian troupe of high school students took a tragedy on the U.S. nuclear attack on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on stage in Tehran on Sunday.

Ahmad Beigi is the director of the play “Japanese Fishermen” written by German writer Wolfgang Weyrauch in 1961 and it will remain on stage at Mashayekhi Hall until July 5.

The play is about a number of Japanese fishermen who enter a city after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, but they can only see the shadows of the dead there.

Ali Cheshmeh, Amin Qasemi, Parsa Qeisar, Amir-Hossein Shahbazi and Amir-Mohammad Tamimi are the main members of the cast for the play translated into Persian by Ahmad Amini.

## Franchise fatigue continues with “Men in Black” and “Shaft”

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Brand familiarity isn't everything when it comes to attracting audiences to the multiplex, and Hollywood is learning that lesson the hard way this summer with a slew of underperforming sequels and reboots. That so-called franchise fatigue came to a head this weekend with the releases of “Men in Black: International” and “Shaft.”

The writing may have been on the wall after neither an X-Men movie (“Dark Phoenix”) nor a Godzilla movie (“Godzilla: King of the Monsters”) could get moviegoers enthusiastic enough to turn out. But this weekend, down over 50% from last year, is the worst yet.

“This was a rough weekend,” said Comscore senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian. “We've had some big franchises that are not resonating with audiences or critics.”

And there's a common denominator between all the recent disappointments: Poor reviews. All four have been certified “rotten” on Rotten Tomatoes.

“Men in Black: International” took the No. 1 spot in North America, but it's a dubious distinction for the Tessa Thompson and Chris Hemsworth-led reboot which isn't exactly the franchise-revitalizer it hoped to be. Sony Pictures on Sunday estimates the F. Gary Gray-directed film earned only \$28.5 million over the weekend against a reported \$110 million production budget. The three previous “Men in Black” films all opened to over \$50 million not accounting for inflation.

However, international audiences are helping the bottom line with the film earning \$73.7 million from 36 markets, bringing its global total to \$102.2 million.

The weekend's other big new release, “Shaft”, which introduces another generation to the franchise, couldn't even manage to carve out a place in the top five, which instead was populated mostly by holdovers.



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Tessa Thompson and Chris Hemsworth in a scene from Columbia Pictures' “Men in Black: International.” (AP/Giles Keyte/Sony/Columbia Pictures)

“The Secret Life of Pets 2” got the No. 2 spot in its second weekend with \$23.8 million. Disney's “Aladdin”, now in weekend four, took third with \$16.7 million. “Dark Phoenix” placed fourth with \$9 million and “Rocketman” coasted to fifth with \$8.8 million.

“Shaft”, a Warner Bros. release, placed sixth on the charts, with a disappointing \$8.3 million.

Directed by Tim Story, “Shaft” features Samuel L. Jackson reprising his role from almost 20 years ago and Jessie T. Usher as his son. It was made for around \$30 million.

Although critics did not praise the film, audiences who turned out (54% of whom were women) were more enthusiastic, giving the film an A CinemaScore.

Even some originals had a tough time this weekend. Amazon Studios expanded its Mindy Kaling and Emma Thompson comedy “Late Night”, which it acquired the North American rights to for a Sundance record of \$13 million, to 2,220 theaters where it earned \$5.1 million.

“The real bright spots have been the smaller indies,” Dergarabedian said. “We think of summer as blockbuster season, but it's turned into indie film season.”

## Jagran festival to hold filmmaker Puran Derakhshandeh retrospective



Iranian filmmaker Puran Derakhshandeh in an undated photo.

**A R T** TEHRAN — The d e s k 10th edition of the Jagran Film Festival (JFF) in New Delhi will hold a retrospective of Iranian filmmaker Puran Derakhshandeh on July 19, the organizers announced on Friday.

Derakhshandeh, who is mostly known for her great attention on major social problems in Iranian society, will be in the Indian capital to attend the program, which is a part of the Retrospective of World section of the festival.

A number of Derakhshandeh's award-winning movies, including “Hush! Girls Don't Scream”, “Under the Smokey Roof”, “Eternal Children” and “Wet Dream”, will be reviewed during the festival.

JFF, which is the world's largest travelling film festival, will begin in Delhi on July 18 and then travels through 18 Indian cities, including Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Dehradun, Ranchi and Jamshedpur.

The festival will come to an end in Mumbai on September 29.

## New Mexico film industry up amid abortion fights elsewhere

**SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)** — New Mexico's film industry appears to be on the brink of a boom thanks to abortion law controversies in other states and expanded incentives.

A recent spike in film production in the state comes as Hollywood targets both Georgia and Louisiana over recently passed restrictive abortion laws, the Albuquerque Journal reports.

The political developments are being watched closely in New Mexico, which is poised to benefit even though state officials have said there's no organized campaign to lure film productions from those states.

“I don't know that we are necessarily using that as a drawing card, because we are a drawing card,” New Mexico Film Office Director Todd Christensen said.

The jump also comes as New Mexico is set to more than double its annual state spending cap on film incentives.

In addition, NBCUniversal announced Friday it will build a television and film studio in a warehouse district just north of downtown Albuquerque as it seeks to expand its footprint in one of the fastest-growing film production hubs in the country.

The company said it entered a 10-year venture with a developer to reshape an empty warehouse into a studio with two sound stages and offices. The studio will be used to produce shows for broadcast and cable channels.

The New Mexico Film Office said the coming Amazon TV series production “The Power” reached out to New Mexico because of Georgia's political climate.

“The Power” will be a 10-part series based on Naomi Alderman's 2016 novel in which women around the world suddenly gain the ability to electrocute people.

New Mexico has on its books a 1969 state law that banned abortion in most cases. But the law became unenforceable after it



In this Feb. 1, 2019, file photo, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, center, holds a news conference about film incentives with Sen. Nancy Rodriguez, D-Santa Fe, second from left, and others in Santa Fe, N.M. (AP/Eddie Moore/The Albuquerque Journal)

was superseded by the landmark Roe vs. Wade ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court.

An attempt to scrap the 1969 law failed during the last state legislative session in the Democratic-controlled Senate. Democrats have downplayed the vote and have vowed to try again in the near future.

New Mexico was one of the first states to launch a film incentive program in 2003 and upped the ante with a new package of film and TV incentives passed by lawmakers during this year's 60-day legislative session and signed into law by Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham in March.

Film companies receive 25 percent rebates on qualifying expenditures on goods and services in New Mexico. There is a 30 percent rebate for some TV shows.

In recent months, the New Mexico Film Office has received about two calls a day from production companies asking about the new incentives and possible locations in the state.

“We're getting calls,” Christensen said. “If the script fits, they'll come here. In some cases, they can change the scripts to fit New Mexico.”