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Industry ministry outlines plans for improving productivity

TEHRAN — Iranian ministry of industry, mining and trade has outlined 35 plans covering seven major areas for developing the country's industry and mining sectors, on the occasion of the National Day of Industry and Mining which is due on July 1.

As reported by IRIB, improving the business environment associated with the country's industry, mining and trade sectors has been given significant attention in this planning

and six specific programs have been defined in this regard.

In this due, reforming production processes and guidelines, eliminating or reducing the timing of license issuances, simplifying rules and regulations impeding production, removing barriers in the way of production and trade, and providing open access to information for the general public are some of the programs which are put on the agenda. **→ 4**

Talks with Taliban need to be coordinated with Kabul: Shamkhani

TEHRAN — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, has underlined the need for continuation of talks with the Taliban in coordination with the Afghan government to prevent interference by trans-regional states.

Shamkhani made the remarks in a joint meeting with the high-ranking security

officials from Russia, China, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan on the sidelines of the security conference in the Russian city of Ufa on Tuesday.

The top security official also presented Tehran's proposals on the level, time, agenda and mechanisms for the effective activities of neighbors in the Afghan national reconciliation process. **→ 2**

Egypt condemns UN call for independent probe into Morsi's death

TEHRAN — Egypt has rejected a call by the United Nations for an "independent" investigation into the death in court of the country's first democratically-elected President Mohamed Morsi, saying the world body is "politicizing" the death.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

on Tuesday called for an "independent and thorough" investigation into the sudden death of Morsi during a trial court session on Monday.

Morsi was buried at dawn a day later in the presence of his family members only, said his son Ahmed Morsi, in a burial that analysts believe fuels suspicions surrounding his death. **→ 13**

Turkish politician talks of U.S. multiple goals of creating tensions in PG

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN (MNA) —Senior member of Turkey's Republican People's Party (CHP), Faruk logoglu, believes that the United States follows multiple goals by creating tension in the Persian Gulf, the world's main route of energy.

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

Following the attack, the U.S. and its allies hastily accused Iran of carrying out the attacks without providing any evidence and investigation. Meanwhile, many experts believe that the U.S. is the most beneficiary of recent attacks to destabilize Persian.

According to experts, the U.S. is pursuing



multiple goals by creating tension in the Persian Gulf. In addition to pressurizing Iran the U.S. intends to pressurize its rivals and limit rival countries access to the energy source of the Persian Gulf states.

In light of this development, Mehr News Agency reached to a senior member of Turkey's

Republican People's Party (CHP), Osman Faruk logoglu, who said that the American sanctions are unlawful and will only serve to exacerbate tensions in the Persian Gulf. The risk of an accidental flare-up escalating into an armed conflict is real and ever-present.

With its provocative actions and sanctions, Washington not only aims to buttress its support for Israel and its Arab allies by punishing Iran but at the same time also intends to deny Chinese access to Iranian oil, he added referring to U.S. provocative acts in Persian Gulf.

Turkish diplomat stressed that the fear of and rivalry with China is today one of the primary drivers of American foreign policy, adding that interruption of the oil flow in the Persian Gulf is one way to directly hurt Chinese interests and Trump administration is, therefore, playing with fire in Iran and a potential conflagration with China.

UK govt. settles \$1.6b dispute with Bank Mellat

The British government has settled a 1.25 billion pounds (\$1.6 billion) damages claim brought by Iran's largest private bank in an 11th-hour, out-of-court deal following a dispute over sanctions.

Bank Mellat, which is 20% owned by the Iranian government and 80% privately held, said on Tuesday the legal row had been resolved for an undisclosed sum on the first day of a trial to assess its damages at London's High Court, Reuters reported.

That comes six years after the UK Supreme Court ruled that sanctions imposed on the bank



in 2009 were unlawful and that the government had been "irrational" and "disproportionate". It

referred the case back to the High Court.

Bank Mellat had argued that sanctions had damaged its reputation and goodwill in Britain and internationally, and caused significant loss.

The government's treasury department issued a brief statement, saying: "Bank Mellat's claims have been concluded on terms confidential to the parties."

Sarosh Zaiwalla, a lawyer and founder of London-based Zaiwalla & Co, the law firm represented Bank Mellat.

(Source: agencies)



IRGC chief: U.S. push for talks aimed at wrecking Iran's defense power

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Hossein Salami warned of the U.S. plot to dismantle Iran's military and defense power by luring Tehran into negotiations, whose eventual outcome he said will be surrender.

"The enemy's greatest wish is to dismantle part of our defense power," General Salami said at an academic conference in Tehran on Tuesday.

Iran has effectively foiled the enemy's plans for military action, the general stressed, warning that the adversaries insist on negotiations to impair Iran's deterrent power. **→ 2**



PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari

Head of the Tehran Times
Politics Desk

Florida polls leave Trump in massive shock

It seems that these days even mentioning the names of organizations and agencies like Quinnipiac University, New York Times, Washington Post and recently even Fox News will traumatize Donald Trump, the American president.

Several polls published one after another are revealing that Trump's popularity in many states is decreasing. The news has been severely unsettling to the tenants of the White House. The polls were mainly conducted between March 15 and March 28, but the results were published recently.

The poll taken by Quinnipiac University revealed that Joe Biden, the former U.S. Vice President has now a 50-41 percent lead over Trump in Florida State.

Some experts believe that the White House itself has encouraged the publication of such news in Fox news to justify the future removal of John Bolton or Mike Pompeo, but the news about the decline of Trump's popularity in Florida has caused great worries among his republican fans.

This news is especially groundbreaking because in former U.S. presidential elections in 2016, Trump gained a great edge over his contestant Hillary Clinton by achieving the electoral votes in three states of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan, but the recent polls indicate that he is likely to fail in all these three states in the upcoming elections. Moreover, now it seems that he will also fail in Florida which is a highly important state and has a strong republican base.

Trump's trailing Biden in Florida is specially bad news to republicans because over the last six decades, all presidential nominees who won the race had gained the electoral votes of Florida. The previous surveys had already warned of Trump's diminishing popularity in Florida. A month ago, Hill news had reported that only 53% of voters in Florida are in favor of Trump's reelection and 40% are not willing to vote for him.

Also, according to the surveys, among the republicans in Florida, only 72% are deciding to vote for Trump again.

It seems that Trump's image among American people has been majorly tarnished and his only way to get out of this predicament might be with making great changes in his foreign policy cabinet, something that would surely have dire consequences for his key foreign policy advisors, John Bolton and Mike Pompeo.



ARTICLE

Payman Yazdani

Political analyst

Why should China fully support Iran in Persian Gulf tensions?

According to many international thinkers creating tensions in the Persian Gulf region by the U.S. also aims at containing China and limiting Beijing's access to energy resources of the region which is driving engine of Chinese economy.

China was one of the oil exporter countries in 70s and 80s, but following its economic growth it has turned into an oil importing country since 1993 and due to continuation of its economic growth now the country is heavily dependent on importing of oil from other countries. Nowadays the country is the second energy consuming and third oil importing country in the world. Despite the Beijing's efforts to provide its energy security by diversifying its energy sources during the past years, the country is still heavily dependent on energy import.

Thanks to its efforts and hardworking people China left its global economic rivals behind and became the second biggest economy of the world after the United States. It seems that due to its plans and initiatives Beijing is also managing to leave behind the U.S. in near future and become the world's biggest economy. The White House has kept an eye the China's development and its plans and initiatives. The U.S. has never been negligent in monitoring China's achievements and ambitions.

By changing its approaches and positive interaction with rest of the world Since 1970s, China has promoted its global position to the second biggest economy of the world while before it the country was among the third world countries. The U.S.'s efforts to contain China has become more serious since the beginning of the 21st century. Since Donald Trump took office the level of conflicts between China and the U.S. has climbed up from economic and trade level and is entering into political and security level. Now, Increase of Chinese power and global influence is a major challenge for the White House. In the first step president Trump waged wagged a trade and economic war against Beijing and in the next stage Trump is going to restrict China's influence globally particularly among the U.S. allies. **→ 7**

Claim of Iran role in tanker incidents a ‘sheer lie’: defense chief

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Reiterating Iran’s strong condemnation of attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman on June 13, Defense Minister Amir Hatami on Wednesday categorically dismissed a claim by the U.S. that Iran was involved in the attacks, saying the allegation is a “sheer lie” in line with “acts of sabotage” against the Islamic Republic.

Denouncing Washington’s allegation as “unfair”, the minister said Iran was among the first parties that responded to the distress call and offered a helping hand to the crew members of the two oil tankers.

Washington rushed to pin the blame for the attacks on Iran. It released a grainy video hours after the incidents, claiming that it shows Iranian forces in a patrol boat removing an unexploded mine from the side of the Japanese-owned tanker.

That video was disputed by many experts and Washington’s own allies.

Referring to the footage, Hatami said the video had no date and its location could not be determined and thus it could not be used as a document.

The Iranian defense chief further said, “The allegation leveled against the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the issue of oil tankers in the Sea of Oman is a sheer lie and I strongly reject it.”

“Iran is a powerful, law-abiding and responsible country. If it chooses to do something, it accepts the responsibility,” he added, according to Press TV.

Hatami also described the allegation as “unjust” given the crucial role of Iranian Armed Forces in providing security in the region and international waterways, noting that the accusation is “in line with the acts of sabotage” against Iran.

The Iranian minister further censured the U.S. for attempting to pile pressure on the Iranian nation and promoting Iranophobia.

He also touched on the May 12 attacks on four oil tankers, including two Saudi ones, one Emirati and one Norwegian, near the UAE port of Fujairah.

The UAE’s behavior was “suspicious” concerning the release of information on the Fujairah attacks and its use for political purposes, the Iranian defense minister said.

The U.S. claims Iran has “almost certainly” been behind the Fujairah incidents, without offering any evidence.

Hatami said such incidents in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman and the Fujairah port are very similar in nature and are aimed at destabilizing international waterways in line with personal goals.

“The situation is very complicated and we should all monitor it precisely,” he emphasized.

Iran to scale back nuclear commitments to create balance: Kamalvandi

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Behrooz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has said that if the Europeans refuse to uphold Iran’s rights under the 2015 nuclear deal, Tehran will continue to scale back its commitments to “create a balance”.

“If the Europeans uphold our rights under the JCPOA [the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, we will implement our commitments, otherwise we will scale back our commitments to create a balance,” he told ICANA in an interview published on Wednesday.



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.

Kamalvandi said that Iran will not extend the 60-day deadline. He added that the next steps will be taken according to the scheduled plan.

Talking to reporters at the Arak heavy nuclear reactor on Monday, Kamalvandi said 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.”

After June 27, Kamalvandi said, Iran will speed up its uranium enrichment activities beyond 3.67 percent if the other sides don’t take a practical step.

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

He 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.

Iran will not wait more if the Europeans delay taking practical actions to preserve the JCPOA, he reiterated.

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

Kamalvandi said that the move would be reversed “once other parties live up to their commitments.”

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.

Talking at a conference of Asian leaders in Kyrgyzstan on Saturday in which the Russian and Chinese presidents were also present, 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.

Talks with Taliban need to be coordinated with Kabul: Shamkhani

1 → “It is necessary for Afghanistan’s neighbors to increase contacts and relations with Afghan dissidents in coordination with the legal government in Afghanistan to narrow down the possibility for interference by the trans-regional states in the country’s crisis,” Shamkhani said, Fars reported.

■ ‘No reason for war between Iran and U.S.’

Speaking to IRNA in Ufa on Wednesday, Shamkhani also said Iran and the U.S. will not engage in a military conflict, even as the Trump administration appeared to escalate tensions with Tehran two days earlier by announcing the deployment of 1,000 additional troops to the Middle East.

“There will not be a military confrontation between Iran and America since there is no reason for a war,” said Shamkhani.

“Accusing other countries has turned into a common practice by American officials as they try to pressure other counties,” the security official remarked.



Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and other senior Trump administration officials have accused Iran of perpetrating attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman last week, though Tehran has denied responsibility for the explosions which partly destroyed the vessels.

Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami insisted on Wednesday that Tehran was not behind the tanker assaults, declaring that “the accusation against Iran is a sheer lie and I dismiss it firmly.”

Trump sought to downplay the possibility of a full-scale confrontation with Iran in an interview on Monday with Time magazine.

Trump tweeted on Tuesday that Patrick Shanahan would be withdrawing from consideration to become permanent defense secretary and would be stepping down as acting Pentagon chief — further contributing to instability within the administration at a tumultuous moment in the relationship between Washington and Tehran.

IRGC chief: U.S. push for talks aimed at wrecking Iran’s defense power

1 → “Our resistance is based on logic, because there is war, loss of power and surrender behind the logic of negotiations,” he underlined, adding, “We are close to victory, and our only solution is resistance in accordance with our national and revolutionary expediency.”

Diplomacy without power is meaningless, and backing off from resistance would encourage the enemy to intensify the pressure of sanctions, the general stated, according to IFP News.

“Today, America is not able to make correct political choices and its mechanism of turning military power into political power has broken down,” he concluded.

In comments last week, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei highlighted the necessity for

strong resistance in confrontation with the enemies, stressing that the Islamic Republic will keep making progress provided that the U.S. does not come any close to Iran.

The Leader also described the ultimate goal of resistance as reaching the “deterrence point” in the economic, political, social and military spheres.

Deterrent power dissuades the enemy from aggression against Iran in all arenas, the Leader stated, saying Iran has already reached the deterrent point in the military field.

The enemies have focused on Iran’s missile power, because they know that Tehran has gained the deterrent power in this area and seek to deprive the Islamic Republic of such capability, “but they will never be able to do that,” Ayatollah Khamenei underscored.



Rouhani says U.S. sanctions which have targeted people’s lives are ‘crime against humanity’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the U.S. sanctions against Iran constitute examples of “crime against humanity and economic terrorism” because they have targeted ordinary people’s “lives and needs”.

“It should not be said that the U.S. has imposed sanctions on us, because they are not sanctions. They are crime against humanity. They could be called sanctions if they targeted some of our sensitive industries, but they are crime against humanity and economic terrorism when they target the people’s lives and needs,” he said in a cabinet meeting.

He said that Iran’s partial withdrawal from implementing its obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is within the framework of the deal.

“All are on the belief that Iran has practiced strategic patience and logic and its actions have been based on international law and its latest action in reducing its commitments is based on terms 26 and 36 of the JCPOA,” he said.

Pointing to 60-day deadline set by Iran to keep the JCPOA, he said that after the



Partial suspension of nuclear commitments is Iran’s least reaction, the president says

deadline the country will take further actions.

“We act based on law and within the framework of regulations and we will take new actions after 60 days which started on May 8 if our demands are not met. However, if they fulfil their commitments within the 60 days, everything will return to previous state and there will be no problem,” Rouhani stated.

He noted, “Despite what certain other

countries say, what we are doing is the least we could do.”

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.

Behrooz Kamalvandi, spokesman for

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

■ ‘U.S. has been defeated in its policy against Iran’

Rouhani also said that the U.S. policy of exerting pressure against Iran has been defeated.

“Today, nobody doubts that the U.S. anti-Iran plots, which began last year with the sanctions aiming at making people disappointed about the system, has completely failed,” he said.

He noted that the U.S. sought to isolate Iran, however, it failed and made itself isolated.

Rouhani said U.S. officials have admitted the failure of policies against Iran. “In their important meetings with world leaders, the Americans have admitted to failure.”

He added, “Even the U.S. president has told a world leader that it is Bolton [U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton] who is doing all these and we thought that if we put pressure on Iran, we can bring it to its knees, but now he has understood that he was wrong.”

Iraqi stability hinges on Iranian security: top Iraqi MP

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The vice speaker of the Iraqi Parliament said on Tuesday that Baghdad sees its stability and security dependent on stability and security in Iran.

Bashir Khalil al-Haddad made the remarks in meeting with his Iranian counterpart Massoud Pezeshkian in Tehran.

Khalil al-Haddad said Iran-Iraq relations are far beyond a political relationship, noting that the visit of the Iraqi parliamentary team to Iran signifies “fraternal relationship” between the two neighboring countries.

“Our relationship is based on long-term, brotherly and religious convictions and beliefs.”

The senior Iraqi MP said added, “The Iraqi parliamentary delegation seeks to deepen bilateral, regional and international relations in various security, political, economic and parliamentary spheres between the two countries.”



Al-Haddad also appreciated Iran’s comprehensive support for Iraq during the fight against the terrorists and also Tehran’s help in formation of the new Iraqi parliament and government.

Pezeshkian, for his part, referred to the importance of cooperation between the two countries for economic development, saying progress in the two countries has important effect on stability and security in the region.

“Fortunately, the return of Iraq to its natural position in the region and its effective and constructive role in the developments are on the rise. This is a great victory for both Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Pezeshkian said, according to the Fars news agency.

The Iranian vice parliament speaker also called for unity between the Muslim states in the region and the wider Islamic world in the face of bullying by the United States and other Western countries.

The top MP added Washington’s hostile actions coupled with its economic war against Iran are because the White House is unhappy with Tehran’s efforts to maintain stability and security in the region.

France, Germany seeking to reduce tensions between Iran, U.S. but warn time running out

(Press TV) — French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on Wednesday blamed the U.S. policy of maximum pressure against Iran for rising tensions in the Middle East, while criticizing Washington’s decision last year to leave a 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and six world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

After a cabinet meeting in Paris, Le Drian said that Iran’s announcement on Monday to exceed its uranium stockpile limit in the next 10 days was very worrying and not in Tehran’s interest,

but he pointed the finger at the United States.

“We ... consider the U.S. decision to break with the accord is not good and that its maximum pressure campaign is contributing to tensions,” Le Drian told reporters.

“So we want to unify our efforts so that there is a de-escalation process that starts,” he added, but said there remained “only a little time” and expressed hope that “all the actors show more calm” to defuse tensions.

Meanwhile, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, who attended the French

cabinet meeting, described the ongoing tensions as “a serious situation” and warned that the risk of war in the Persian Gulf “has not been averted.”

“We need to do everything so that it doesn’t come to this. That’s why we are talking to all sides. I was in Iran and we are also talking with the Americans. We need to de-escalate through dialogue. It is a time of ‘diplomacy first’ and that’s what we are committed to,” Maas said.

Diplomats told Reuters on Tuesday that Britain, France and Germany, the three European signatories to the JCPOA, plan a new push to keep Iran

in the nuclear deal, but warned about a possible stalemate in the diplomatic road that started 15 years ago and culminated in the conclusion of the JCPOA.

The three countries have voiced their support for the JCPOA and promised to keep the accord alive since U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from it last year and began re-imposing sanctions.

Iran has, however, been critical of the Europeans, saying they have failed to fully implement the agreement and keep trade with Tehran to help the country benefit from the JCPOA.

Britain, France and Germany would intensify diplomacy to keep JCPOA

By staff & agencies

Britain, France and Germany plan a new push to keep Iran in the 2015 nuclear deal and would intensify diplomacy in the coming days.

"Diplomats said the E3, which began talking to Iran about curtailing its nuclear program in 2003, would intensify its diplomacy in the coming days, including with talks among the E3 and EU political directors in Brussels on Thursday," Reuters reported.

The British, French and German foreign ministers could visit Tehran for talks about the deal, though that is just an option for now.

And three diplomats said the Joint Commission set up under the nuclear deal could meet within the two weeks. With the U.S. withdrawal, those talks would bring together officials from Britain, China, France, Germany, Iran, Russia and the European Union.

After a year since the U.S. quit the nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions including oil embargo, Iran announced on May 8 that its "strategic patience" is over and partially removed limits on its nuclear activities.

In line with the decision, 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.

The U.S. State Department's point man on Iran, Brian Hook, plans to meet the E3 political directors in Paris on June 27, two sources said.

On May 8, the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) issued a statement declaring if the remaining parties to the JCPOA make an agreement within 60 days to offset U.S. sanctions, Iran will reverse its decision.

Kamalvandi insisted on this point on Monday.

Iran has threatened if a decision is not

made by that date it will take the next steps.

After June 27, Kamalvandi said, Iran will speed up its uranium enrichment activities beyond 3.67 percent if the other sides don't take a practical step.

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

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.

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday that he regretted Iran's announcement that it would exceed the limit of uranium enrichment set under the 2015 nuclear deal, Euronews reported.

He added that Paris would still hold talks with Tehran and its partners to save the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"I regret the Iranian announcements made today, but as the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) has underlined, Iran is respecting its commitments and we strongly encourage it to be patient and responsible," Macron told a news conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Macron said there was still a window between now and July 8 to save the nuclear deal.

"All forms of escalation do not go in the right direction and won't help Iran itself and the international community so we will do all we can with our partners to dissuade Iran and find a path to a possible path for dialogue," Macron said.

Iran urges U.S. immediate exit from Syria

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Iran has denounced the United States' illegal presence in Syria, urging the U.S. government to put an immediate end to its military presence in the war-torn country, IRNA reported.

"We strongly condemn the violation of international law, in particular, the IHL (International Humanitarian Law) by the U.S. in Syria, and stress that it must put an immediate end to its illegal presence in parts of Syria," Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, said on Tuesday at the United Nations Security Council meeting on "Middle East: Syria — Humanitarian".

Takht Ravanchi said the Islamic Republic continues its consultations with other guarantors of the Astana peace process on a range of issues, including Idlib's de-escalation area.

"Along with other guarantors and in line with international law, Iran continues supporting the inherent right of the Syrian government to fight terrorists designated by the Security Council," he stated.

"While International Humanitarian Law must be observed by all without exception, this cannot and should not be used as a pretext to call for stopping the fight against terrorism as it would be paradoxical," he added.



The Iranian diplomat underscored the need to fight against the most dangerous terrorists who have taken a large number of civilians as their hostages.

He added, "This, in fact, is a practical protection of civilians and should lead to the release of all civilians who are trapped in terrorist-held areas."

It is obvious that these internationally designated terrorist groups cannot and should not be allowed to continue their control over a large part of a sovereign state's territory, Takht Ravanchi asserted.

"The current situation in Idlib, which allows terrorists to use over two million civilians as human shields and conduct their operations, cannot and must not continue indefinitely. This, among other things, will prevent the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, delay the country's reconstruction, and hamper the political solution, all of which are inherently interlinked."

"Ultimately, the right to determine the future of Syria belongs exclusively to Syrians themselves. We must genuinely support a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, UN-facilitated political process," he concluded.

Earlier this month, a senior member of the Syrian parliament rejected the claims about an agreement on Iranian military advisors' withdrawal from the country, adding that the U.S. is entitled to no rights at all to make decisions for Damascus.

The remarks came after some news outlets claimed that Damascus and Washington had stricken a deal about Iranian military advisors leaving Syria.

Top MP advises Europe to take Iran's ultimatum seriously

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — A senior Iranian lawmaker on Wednesday advised European parties to the 2015 nuclear pact, also known as the JCPOA, to take Tehran's 60-day ultimatum seriously.

On May 8, exactly one year after U.S. President Donald Trump quit the JCPOA, Iran adopted a counter-measure announcing its decision to abandon limits on its uranium enrichment stockpile unless Europe makes a decision within 60 days to shield it from the U.S. sanctions.

Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh, chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said

European countries must take Iran's 60-day ultimatum seriously and end their inaction regarding the agreement.

He made the remarks in meeting with a member of the German Parliament Matthias Hohn in Tehran, Mehr reported.



Falahatpisheh said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has certified Iran's compliance with all its commitments under the JCPOA but Europe has taken no positive, practical measure after U.S. withdrawal from the deal.

The top MP also said Iran's parlia-

ment welcomes expansion of ties with Germany based on mutual respect.

For his part, the German MP said that boosting ties with Tehran in political, economic, and cultural fields is of significant importance for Berlin.

Hohn, who is also the head of a non-proliferation committee in the

German parliament, highlighted that JCPOA bears great significance for the world and that all sides are responsible for saving it.

It is clear that Iran has abided by all its commitments under the deal, he said, expressing the hope that European countries' efforts to keep the deal alive would prove fruitful.

He also called on Iran to practice more restraint, adding that it will take time for Europe to fully establish the proposed mechanism to continue trade with Iran.

Europe introduced its special purpose mechanism for trade with Iran in January, however it has not become operational yet.

Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions, however, with the return of sanctions, which are even harsher than the previous ones, the validity of the multilateral agreement has come under question by the officials and the public.

"I haven't been hearing that lately," he claimed.

Trump withdrew the U.S. from the landmark JCPOA in May 2018, based on unfounded accusations against the Islamic Republic. Then his administration imposed sanctions on Tehran in a clear violation of UNSC resolution 2231, also pushing other countries to violate the same resolution by cutting economic ties with Iran.

Iran waited for one year before announcing on May 8 that it is reducing commitments to the JCPOA since Tehran has not been able to benefit from the deal, giving a 60-day ultimatum to European signatories to the deal to take practical measures to safeguard Iran's interests.

European countries have politically supported Iran and condemned U.S. actions but they have not done anything in practice to protect Iran from damages of U.S. sanctions.



He also slammed former U.S. President Barack Obama for signing a "horrible deal" with Iran, also known as the JCPOA, while Iranians were screaming "Death to America".

Ayatollah Jannati hails Leader's anti-American stance

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, head of the Assembly of Experts and the Guardian Council, has lauded Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for his remarks during a recent meeting with Japan's prime minister, saying the Leader's remarks disgraced the U.S. government.



"As the respected representatives said in their appreciative statement, the Leader of the Revolution's behavior in meeting with the Japanese prime minister was based on three principles, including dignity, wisdom and expediency," Ayatollah Jannati said on Wednesday, the Mehr news agency reported.

In an open letter to the Leader a day earlier, 210 members of parliament described Ayatollah Khamenei's stance as a "display of dignity, wisdom and expediency."

Last week, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe came to Tehran for the first time to meet Ayatollah Khamenei and President Rouhani. Abe said he was carrying a message from U.S. President Donald Trump.

In response, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "We have no doubts about your goodwill and seriousness, but with regard to what you relayed from the U.S. president, I see no merit in Trump as a person to deserve the exchange of any messages, and I do not have any answer for him and will not give him any either."

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

Advisor says Morsi's 'suspicious' death is noteworthy

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, says former Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi's "suspicious death" needs to be taken into account.

"Late #MohamedMorsi had faults during his presidency, but the American, #Saudi & #Emirati actions against the civilized & faithful Egyptians as well as his suspicious death are regrettable and need to be taken into account. My sincere condolences to Dr. #Morsi's friends & family," Amir Abdollahian said in a tweet on Tuesday.

Morsi, imprisoned since he was toppled by the military in 2013, collapsed in a cage during a court session on Monday and died shortly afterward, Egypt's public prosecutor said.

He was a top figure in the Muslim Brotherhood who became Egypt's first freely elected president in 2012, but was overthrown after mass protests against his rule and a coup d'état in July 2013 led by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Morsi was buried early on Tuesday morning alongside other senior figures of the Muslim Brotherhood, his son, Ahmed Morsi, said on his Facebook page.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi expressed regret over the death of Morsi, and wished "divine blessing and mercy for him and success for the great Egyptian nation."



'Iran ready to retaliate against any U.S. military move'

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Tehran's ambassador to Damascus has said Iran is not afraid of U.S. threats and is ready to retaliate in the face of any act of animosity by Washington.



"Iran regards as defeated both the policies adopted by the U.S. government and [U.S. President Donald] Trump's strategy," Javad Tork Abadi said, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

"According to the nuclear agreement, Iran is entitled to defend its rights," the diplomat said, reiterating, "Iran is not afraid of U.S. threats and have already been threatened in vain with sanctions."

He also said Trump's stances have undermined international treaties and agreements.

In May 2018, the Trump administration withdrew from the 2015 nuclear pact and reintroduced new rounds of sanctions against the Islamic Republic. Tensions between Tehran and Washington have escalated since the U.S. withdrawal.

'We'll see what happens,' says Trump on Iran

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump says his administration is "very prepared" for Iran, adding that "we'll see what happens".

"Well, we have Iran. We've been talking to various people on lots of different sides," Trump told reporters as he left the White House for a campaign event in Florida, the Associated Press reported.

He added, "And we'll see what happens with Iran. We're very well set. We're very well configured. We have a lot of things going on with Iran."

The U.S. president went on to repeat his allegations against Iran, saying, "If you look at what's taken place, if you look at what they've done, if you look at — and I'm not just talking about over the last week, I'm talking about over a long period of years. They've been a nation of terror."

STOCK MARKET	
TEDPIX	234879.4
IFX	2978.12

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES	
USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,011 rials
GBP	52,762 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES	
Brent	\$61.65/b
WTI	\$54.04/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.60/b
Gold	\$1,343.70/oz
Silver	\$14.96oz
Platinum	\$802.40oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Industry ministry outlines plans for improving productivity

1 → Establishing a comprehensive information system aiming to exchange information with other governmental institutions and executive agencies related to industry, mining and trade sectors, and a strategic plan for managing currency policies, bank profits and macroeconomic goals to support production in the industrial sectors as well as ranking and encouraging investors and entrepreneurs in order to increase the presence of industrial units in the national and international arenas, are some other programs which are to be followed by the industry ministry.

Copper cathode output rises 35% in 2 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of copper cathode in Iran rose 35 percent during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21) compared to the same period of time in the past year, IRNA reported.

As reported, some 45,144 tons of copper cathode has been produced during the two-month period of this year.

According to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMI-DRO), production of copper cathode and anode in the country exceeded the planned amount in the past Iranian year (ended on March 20, 2019).

Iran National Copper Company produced 247,300 tons of copper cathode and 313,700 tons of copper anode in the previous year, showing 15 percent and 21 percent rise, respectively, from the projected figures.

UK inflation falls to Bank of England target

The UK's inflation rate cooled in May and cost pressures in factories fell to a three-year low, according to data that might reassure the Bank of England that there is no urgency to raise interest rates.

As per rte.ie, this matched the consensus of a Reuters poll of economists and followed a 2.1% increase in April, the Office for National Statistics said today.



Stable inflation, combined with the lowest unemployment rate in 44 years and rising wages, has taken the edge off the uncertainty about Brexit for many households whose spending drives the UK economy.

Britain's modest rate of underlying inflation is also helping the Bank of England to hold off on fresh interest rate hikes while it waits for the outcome of the Brexit impasse.

However some officials in recent weeks have said increases may be needed sooner rather than later.

Core inflation, excluding energy, food, alcohol and tobacco, dropped to 1.7% in June, the lowest annual rate since January 2017 and as expected in the Reuters poll.

"Inflation eased in May, as travel prices such as air fares fell back after their Easter highs in April," ONS statistician Mike Hardie said.

Britain's inflation rate surged in 2017, pressured by the slump in sterling after the Brexit referendum in June 2016.

It peaked at a five-year high of 3.1% in November 2017 but has now fallen back to the Bank of England's 2% target.

Britain's on-target inflation contrasts with the euro zone where the European Central Bank has struggled to get inflation to match its target of just below 2%.

The Bank of England announces its policy decision tomorrow but no economist polled by Reuters expects it will raise interest rates.

Today's ONS figures suggested less short-term pressure in the pipeline for consumer prices.

Among manufacturers, the cost of raw materials - many of them imported - was 1.3% higher than in May 2018, slowing from 4.5% in April and marking the weakest increase since June 2016.

Economists polled by Reuters had expected input prices to rise by 0.8%.

NIMA supplies over €4.5b for imports of basic goods

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA) has supplied €4.564 billion for imports of basic goods since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21), IRNA reported on Wednesday.

As reported, the trend of offering foreign currency earned from exports in NIMA has been increasing in the recent weeks following the Central Bank of Iran (CBI)'s announcement of new policies on re-injection of those earnings into the domestic economy via NIMA.

CBI unveiled a directive package on May 20 which provides the country's exporters with guidelines about how they should re-inject their foreign currency incomes into the country's economy.

Based on the new directive, for the petrochemical sector, the exporters should present at least 60 percent of their foreign currency incomes into NIMA, and a maximum 10 percent could be injected into the



financial system in the form of hard currency and the rest could be used for importing necessary goods.

As for other exporters, at least 50 percent

of the total earnings should be presented at the NIMA system and a maximum 20 percent could be distributed in form of hard currency and the rest can be used for imports.

‘Iran will proudly pass through sanctions’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Kaveh Zargaran, the secretary general of the Federation of Iranian Food Association, said the condition created by the sanctions on his country is temporary and Iran will proudly overcome this condition.

He made the remarks in a meeting with a German trade delegation at the place of German-Iranian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AHK), IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Stressing that the German technology has been always important for Iranian industries and German production lines are highly welcomed in Iran, Zargaran said that Germany would be a top trade partner of Iran if there were no sanction.

He further suggested that Germany defines a proper sys-

tem for reducing the effect of sanctions on relations between the two countries.

The secretary general of the Federation of Iranian Food Association went on to say that expansion of economic and political relations between Iran and Germany would be an important factor for development of infrastructures in Iran and strengthening demand inside the country which will bring prosperity in short term and favorable economic growth in the long term.

He further emphasized the necessity of attracting technology for renovation of some old industrial sectors inside Iran and said this could be realized through cooperation with the countries, like Germany, that enjoy modern technology.



Kaveh Zargaran (L), secretary general of Federation of Iranian Food Association, speaking in a meeting with a German trade delegation at the place of German-Iranian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

U.S., China rekindle trade talks ahead of Trump-Xi G20 meeting

By Jeff Mason

China and the United States are rekindling trade talks ahead of a meeting next week between Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping, cheering financial markets on hopes that an escalating trade war between the two countries would abate.

Trump said on Tuesday that teams from the two sides would begin preparations for the leaders to sit down at the G20 summit in Osaka, China, which previously declined to say whether the two leaders would meet, confirmed the get-together.

"Had a very good telephone conversation with President Xi of China. We will be having an extended meeting next week at the G-20 in Japan. Our respective teams will begin talks prior to our meeting," Trump said in a post on Twitter.

The world's two largest economies are in the middle of a costly trade dispute that has pressured financial markets and damaged the world economy.

Talks to reach a broad deal broke down last month after U.S. officials accused China of backing away from previously agreed commitments. Interaction between the two sides since then has been limited, and Trump has threatened, repeatedly, to slap more tariffs on Chinese products in an escalation that businesses in both countries want to avoid.

In a speech Tuesday night formally launching his 2020 re-election campaign, Trump said he had taken "historic action to confront China's chronic trading abuses."

■ American companies

"It should have been done a long time ago, but the days of stealing American jobs and American companies, American ideas and wealth - those days are over," Trump told the packed rally in Orlando, Florida.

White House officials declined to go into detail about the preparations or expected outcomes of the talks in Japan, but both sides reiterated long-held positions: U.S. officials called for structural changes in the Chinese economy and in how Beijing treats U.S. businesses; China called for dialogue instead of expensive tariffs.

The "key is to show consideration to each other's legitimate concerns," Xi said, according to Chinese state media. "We also hope that the United States treats Chinese companies fairly. I agree that the economic and trade teams of the two countries will maintain communication on how to resolve differences."

Washington has already imposed 25% tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese goods, ranging from semi-conductors to furniture that are imported to the United States.

Trump has threatened to put tariffs on another \$325 billion of goods, covering nearly all the remaining Chinese imports into the United States, including consumer products such as cellphones, computers and clothing.

Trump had made no secret that, despite his threat to escalate the dispute, he wanted to meet with Xi while they are both in Japan. China's confirmation of the meeting avoids the possibility of a snub to Washington that could have triggered

another round of tariffs.

Trump praised his relationship with Xi and spoke optimistically about getting a deal.

"I think we have a chance. I know that China wants to make a deal. They don't like the tariffs, and a lot of companies are leaving China in order to avoid the tariffs," he told reporters at the White House.

"I think the meeting might very well go well, and frankly our people are starting to deal as of tomorrow. The teams are starting to deal. So we'll see. China would like to make a deal. We'd like to make a deal, but it has to be a good deal for everybody."

Trump's tweet offered fresh fuel to a rally on Wall Street as investors bet renewed talks could diffuse the trade war. The S&P 500 gained nearly 1%, while the Nasdaq and Dow Jones Industrial Average both gained around 1.4%. All closed at their highest levels since early May when Trump knocked global stock markets by ratcheting up tariff rates on \$200 billion of imported Chinese goods.

"This is a very positive development," said Clete Willems, a former trade negotiator with Trump's team.

"Leader level engagement at last year's G20 was critical to jumpstarting the talks," he said, citing last year's meeting between Xi and Trump at the G20 in Argentina. "It will be essential to managing the current political dynamic and getting the talks back on track once again."

■ Doing business in China

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow declined to give details on how the

European Central Bank hints at stimulus — drawing Trump ire

The European Central Bank could unleash more stimulus if the economy doesn't pick up soon, its president warned Tuesday, sparking a sharp drop in the euro and drawing an angry tweet from U.S. President Donald Trump.

According to voanews.com, Mario Draghi told a conference in Sintra, Portugal, that the ECB was not resigned in its quest to perk up the economy and said that "in the absence of improvement ... additional stimulus will be required."

Europe's top central banker even held out the prospect of cutting interest rates, though they are already at record lows.

"Further cuts in policy rates ... remain part of our tools," he said. Draghi noted it was also possible to re-start a bond-buying stimulus program that had been halted only in December.

Investors read the comments as a clear step toward more stimulus in coming months, causing stock markets to rally and sending the euro lower against the dollar.

Draghi's statement was met with anger from Trump, who suggested it was an effort to boost European exports by weakening the currency. Trump wrote on Twitter that the lower euro was "making it unfairly easier for them to compete against the U.S. They have been getting away with this for years, along with China and others."



■ More stimulus could come

Mario Draghi just announced more stimulus could come, which immediately dropped the Euro against the Dollar, making it unfairly easier for them to compete against the U.S. They have been getting away with this for years, along with China and others.

Asked about the tweet by a conference moderator, Draghi said that the European Central Bank was ready to use all available tools to achieve its mandate of stable prices and added that "we do not target the exchange rate."

The euro traded at \$1.1187 by late afternoon in Europe, down from \$1.1241 before Draghi's speech. Germany's main stock index surged over 2%.

Rate cuts and monetary stimulus are aimed at loosening credit for businesses and consumers and at the same time can

send a currency's exchange rate lower. Since stimulus measures can do both, it can be a matter of debate about how much intent there was to lower the currency. A weaker euro can give European exporters a price advantage over U.S. businesses.

Trump has cited the currency issue in his criticism of Europe over what he describes as unfair trade practices.

Talk of re-starting stimulus comes only six months after the ECB phased out a 2.6 trillion euro (\$2.9 trillion) bond-purchase program that pumped new money into the economy over almost four years in an attempt to drive inflation higher.

The ECB's shift to a pro-stimulus stance mirrors that of the U.S. Federal Reserve, which has halted a series of interest rate hikes. Fed Chair Jay Powell has said that the Fed is prepared to respond if it decides the U.S.-China trade conflict is threatening the U.S. economy. Investors read his remarks as a signal that the Fed will likely cut interest rates this year.

■ Softening global economy

Both the ECB and the Fed, which holds a policy meeting Tuesday and Wednesday, have cited similar reasons for their policy shift — the threat of a softening global economy if Trump and the Chinese don't reach agreement on trade. Any rate cuts by the Fed could in theory add to pressure

NIMA, which seeks to boost transparency, create competitiveness among exchange shops and a secure environment for traders, is a new chance for importers to supply their required foreign currency without specific problems and for exporters to re-inject their earned foreign currency to domestic forex market. It was inaugurated to allow exporters of non-oil commodities to sell their foreign currency earnings to importers of consumer products.

In mid-November last year, CBI issued the instructions on return details of the hard currency earned by exporters back to the domestic financial system.

The instructions, aimed to lead the export revenues from the non-oil exports back into the country's economy through NIMA, mandate all the exporters of goods and services to guarantee bringing back to the country the foreign currency amount allocated to them by the government at lower prices than the free market.

two countries would prepare for the Xi-Trump meeting and said the United States would continue to press for China to change its practices on intellectual property theft and requirements that U.S. companies share their technology to do business in China.

"Our position will continue to be (that) we want structural changes. We want structural changes on all the items ... theft of IP, forced transfers of technology, cyber hacking. Of course trade barriers. We've got to have something that's enforceable," he told reporters at the White House.

The two sides were close to a deal in May that addressed many of those concerns. But China sought to soften the legal requirements in the text of the deal, and the United States balked.

According to Chinese state media, Xi told Trump that the China-U.S. relations had encountered difficulties. "If China and the United States cooperate, both benefit. If they fight, both get hurt," state media paraphrased Xi as saying.

Beijing wants the United States to lift its tariffs, but U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who has spearheaded negotiations, said on Tuesday that talks alone were not enough.

"I don't know if it will get them to stop cheating, tariffs alone. I think you don't have any other option," Lighthizer told a congressional hearing. "I know one thing that won't work and that is talking to them. Because we've done that for 20 years."

(Source: reuters.com)

U.S. cannot reach goals of Iran's oil sanctions: Zanganeh

E N E R G Y d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the U.S. won't be able to realize the goals it's pursuing by sanctioning Iran's oil industry, IRIB reported.

Speaking on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, the minister emphasized the need for boosting exports of oil and non-oil commodities, including petrochemicals, as the country's most important economic strategy in countering the U.S. sanctions. "We must take all necessary measures

to pass through sanctions as we have done successfully so far," he added.

Zanganeh further noted that Europe has not been very cooperative regarding oil imports from Iran, saying "They argue that the governments do not directly buy oil and private companies are in fact importers of oil in Europe."

"Since most European companies have direct association with the U.S. they cannot purchase Iranian oil," he explained.

Earlier this week, Zanganeh met with the



Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak to discuss oil market, cooperation in oil and gas industry and the upcoming OPEC meeting.

According to Ship tracking data, Kpler estimates that at least five supertankers loaded Iranian LPG in May and June heading for China. That would equate to around \$100 million of the gas, according to Bloomberg calculations.

Chinese buyers turned to Iran after Beijing slapped a 25 percent tariff on the gas imports from U.S. last August as the trade tussle heated up between the two nations. Iran accounted for around a third of imports in April, before Donald Trump imposed new sanctions on the country in May, aiming to block its energy exports.

after the meeting on Monday.

Asked about the Russian energy giant Gazprom's collaboration in the construction of the Pakistani side of the IP gas pipeline project, the minister noted that some talks have been held but no final agreement is yet reached.

China continues buying Iranian LPG despite U.S. sanctions

E N E R G Y d e s k **TEHRAN** – China is still importing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from Iran after the U.S. imposed sanctions on the country's oil industry, Bloomberg reported citing the Paris-based energy researcher Kpler SAS. According to Ship tracking data, Kpler estimates that at least five supertankers loaded Iranian LPG in May and June heading for China.

That would equate to around \$100 million of the gas, according to Bloomberg calculations.

Chinese buyers turned to Iran after Beijing slapped a 25 percent tariff on the gas imports from U.S. last August as the trade tussle heated up between the two nations.

Iran accounted for around a third of imports in April, before Donald Trump imposed new sanctions on the country in May, aiming to block its energy exports.

To avoid running afoul of the U.S. sanctions, LPG importers in Asia's largest economy would have to turn to more expensive supplies from elsewhere in the Middle East or Africa.

Some reports say that China could also be importing Iranian oil, so that FACTS Global Energy Group (FGE) last week said in a note that it expects some degree of non-compliance with the U.S. sanctions.

China probably isn't complying with U.S. sanctions on Iranian crude, U.S. Deputy Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette said Friday, adding that he didn't have any hard evidence to show this.

LPG is one of the important oil products that Iran exports to its destination markets. According to Energy Information Administration data, in 2017, some 83 percent of the country's 507,000 barrels a day of petroleum product shipments were LPG and fuel oil.

OPEC, non-OPEC agree on holding next meeting on July 1-2

E N E R G Y d e s k **TEHRAN** – The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries announced on its website that the organization has agreed to move its next meeting to July 1, followed by a meeting with non-OPEC allies on July 2. The 176th OPEC meeting was originally scheduled for June 25-26, however non-OPEC ally Russia proposed to postpone the meeting.

Iran opposed the decision for delaying the oil producer group's next meeting however, earlier this week Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh agreed with rescheduling the upcoming OPEC meeting only if it is set to be on July 10-12.

Zanganeh made the remarks in a meeting with the Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak in Tehran on Monday.

He stated his busy work schedule as the reason for his refusal.



"I have no problem with postponing the meeting to July 10-12 and I will participate in the event," he said.

In the meeting with Novak, Zanganeh noted that Russia is not the decision maker and the OPEC will make the final decision.

OPEC and its allies, a grouping known as OPEC+, agreed in December to reduce supply by 1.2 million barrels per day from Jan. 1. OPEC's share of the cut is 800,000 bpd, to be delivered by 11 members - all except Iran, Libya and Venezuela.

Oil broadly stable as inventory data counters trade deal hopes

Oil prices were broadly steady on Wednesday as data suggesting a smaller-than-expected fall in U.S. crude inventories countered support from hopes for a U.S.-China trade deal.

As per reuters.com, Brent crude futures were down 18 cents at \$61.96 a barrel by 0839 GMT.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude fell 5 cents to \$53.85 a barrel. On Tuesday, it had recorded its biggest daily rise since early January.

After weeks of swelling, U.S. crude

stocks fell by 812,000 barrels last week to 482 million, industry group the American Petroleum Institute said on Tuesday, a smaller fall than the 1.1 million barrel drop analysts had expected.

PVM said a price rally had run out of steam "as concerns over bulging U.S. oil stockpiles return to the fore."

Estimates on U.S. crude stockpiles from the U.S. Energy Information Administration are due on Wednesday.

U.S. President Donald Trump offered some support, by saying preparations were

starting for him to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping next week at the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan.

Talks between the United States and China broke down last month after Washington accused the Chinese of backing away from previously agreed commitments.

Interaction between the two sides has been limited since then. Trump has repeatedly threatened to slap more tariffs on Chinese goods.

European Central Bank President Mario Draghi also offered a boost, saying on Tues-

day that the central bank would ease policy again if inflation failed to accelerate.

Elsewhere, tensions in the Middle East after last week's tanker attacks remain high. Fears of a confrontation between Iran and the United States have mounted since last Thursday's attacks. Washington blamed Tehran, which has denied any role.

Trump said he was prepared to take military action to stop Iran having a nuclear bomb but left open whether he would approve the use of force to protect the Persian Gulf oil supplies.

Half the world's power will come from renewables by 2050

By Millicent Dent and Christopher Martin

Nearly half the world's electricity will come from renewable energy by 2050 as costs of wind, solar and battery storage continue to plummet.

That titanic shift over the next three decades will come as electricity demand increases 62% and investors pump \$13.3 trillion into new projects, according to a report released Tuesday by BloombergNEF.

The move away from fossil fuel has sweeping implications for energy markets and the fight to stave off climate change. Wind, solar and batteries are poised to enable the power sector to meet its share of emission cuts required under the Paris climate agreement, at least until 2030, according to BNEF. But after that, nations will need other technologies to make deeper cuts at a reasonable cost, said Matthias Kimmel, the lead analyst on the report.

To "get emissions where we want them to be, we need something else," Kimmel said in an interview.

By 2050, solar and wind will supply almost 50% of the world's electricity, with hydro, nuclear and other renewable energy resources providing another 21%, according to BNEF. Coal will be the biggest loser in the power sector, with its share of global generation plunging from 37% today to 12% in 2050, BNEF said.



Geothermal systems

Those other renewables could include geothermal systems, fuel cells and devices that harvest energy from ocean waves and tides. But it's unclear which, if any, will be economical to deploy on a mass scale. And other low-emission technologies could be developed between now and 2030.

BNEF sees a more ambitious transition to clean power than one oil giant BP Plc laid out in its 2019 Energy Outlook. BP foresees renewables generating about 30% of power by 2030 under its "evolving transition" scenario, while BNEF calls for 41%. Under a different scenario, however, BP is even more

bullish than BNEF, saying renewables could hit 50% by 2040.

BNEF forecasts that many nations can cut power-sector emissions through 2030 in line with goals set in Paris to limit the increase in world temperatures to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). And they can do that without additional subsidies for solar and wind, BNEF said.

Since 2010, the cost of wind power has dropped by 49%, and solar has plummeted 85%, according to BNEF. That makes them cheaper than new coal or gas plants in two-thirds of the world. Battery storage costs, meanwhile, have dropped 85% since 2010.

If the world is to completely eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity sector, technologies including carbon capture and storage, hydrogen power and solar thermal plants will compete to provide about 13,000 terawatt hours of generation by 2050, according to BNEF. That's equivalent to about half of all electricity produced today. And even if every nation scrubs emissions from the power sector, there are still ample greenhouse gases from cars, trucks, ships, airplanes, heating systems and agriculture.

Europe is taking the lead on the shift to renewables, which will supply 92% of the region's electricity by 2050.

China and India, which are still adding coal plants to their grids, will both get almost two-thirds of their power from mostly solar and wind by then.

(Source: siliconvalley.com)

Mozambique gas riches near as \$25b LNG plant approved

By Matthew Hill and Paul Burkhardt

Anadarko Petroleum approved a \$25 billion liquefied natural gas project in Mozambique which could help transform the economy of one of the world's poorest countries.

Anadarko chief executive officer Al Walker signed a final investment agreement with Mozambique President Filipe Nyusi in the capital, Maputo. Anadarko sees Mozambique having the potential to become one of the largest LNG suppliers in the world, and the project, expected to export to countries in Asia and Europe, will play a big part. The project will be funded with \$11 billion of equity and \$14 billion of debt.

"Over time this project will double this country's GDP," Walker said at the signing ceremony.

It's taken the American company nearly a decade to green-light the development after discovering gas in Mozambican waters in 2010. The country had to draft new regulations for its nascent oil and gas industry, even as

uncertain global demand for LNG slowed down plans. The Mozambique government expects \$95 billion of revenue over 25 years from this project and others led by Exxon Mobil and Eni SpA.

"It is the start of a new era for Mozambique," said Darias Jonker, a London-based director at consultant Eurasia Group. The size of these projects "will bring tens of billions of dollars of investment" and revenue to the government, he said.

Developing hydrocarbon resources

Developing the hydrocarbon resources is crucial for the southern African nation, which has struggled to service its debt in the past.

Nyusi could use Anadarko's planned investment in the project, called Mozambique LNG, to showcase his achievements ahead of elections in October, and hope to compensate for the problems with borrowings, according to Jonker.

Mozambique LNG is at the center of a new restructuring deal the government reached with a core group of its Eurobond holders last

month. While investors will no longer have access to future revenue from the project, the in-principle agreement allows the administration to pay a lower interest rate until after the country's gas production begins in 2023.

Occidental Petroleum agreed to buy Anadarko earlier this year. Once the deal is completed, Total SA has an arrangement with Occidental to acquire all of Anadarko's African assets for \$8.8 billion, including Mozambique LNG.

The project will have the capacity to produce 12.9 million tons a year in the first phase, with the scope to expand to as much as 50 million tons. It has contracts with key global importers in Asia and Europe and Mozambique's location between the Pacific and Atlantic basins is an advantage that will help the country compete with a booming number of LNG suppliers.

Crowded LNG market

Flexible commercial arrangements, including an innovative co-purchase agreement with Tokyo Gas and Centrica, have helped the project secure "high-quality customers in a

crowded LNG market," Frank Harris, head of LNG consulting at Wood Mackenzie said in an emailed note.

Gas from the Anadarko-operated offshore field will be sent to a processing plant on land, where it will be liquefied and then exported. The onshore plant is being built in the northern Cabo Delgado province, an area where suspected insurgency began in 2017. While the company says it hasn't been targeted, one of its convoys was attacked and a contractor beheaded in February.

Anadarko has implemented a resettlement program in the area, and is building roads and an airport. The company has said it will continue to develop the infrastructure until Total takes over.

The Exxon-led project, called Rovuma LNG, is planning a 15.2 million-ton-a-year facility adjacent to Anadarko's and expects to reach a final investment decision by the end of the year. Eni approved another \$7 billion project in 2017.

(Source: moneyweb.co.za)

Water projects worth \$166m being inaugurated in central Iran

E N E R G Y d e s k **TEHRAN** – Eight water projects worth seven trillion rials (about \$166.6 million) are being inaugurated in Isfahan Province, central Iran, by Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian during a three-day visit started on Wednesday, ILNA reported.

According to Ardakanian, in addition to the finished projects, the energy ministry has 207 projects worth 87 trillion rials (over \$2 billion) underway across Isfahan province, some of which are just started and some are halfway through.

The official mentioned pipeline water supply to rural areas as a priority project for the energy ministry in the region, saying this weak 60 villages were connected to the country's water supply system through pipeline.



In early April, Ardakanian said that the investment in the country's power and water sectors reached over 162.6 trillion rials (over \$3.87 billion) in the last Iranian calendar year of 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019).

According to Ardakanian, more than 1,115 villages were connected to the country's pipeline water network and nine desalination plants were also inaugurated which would be able to supply 913,000 people with drinkable water.

Ardakanian visited Isfahan to attend the closing ceremony of the 15th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting and the second Iran-North Caucasus trade conference which were wrapped up on Tuesday in Isfahan.

Full capacity test a success for solar power plant

The country's first 100-megawatt molten salt solar thermal power plant in Dunhuang, Northwest China's Gansu Province, has successfully generated power while operating at full capacity, China Daily reported.

As per asiatictimes.com, nearly 20 hours of operating records show the systems at the power plant have been normal and stable. The facility also set a new record by generating over 1.8 million kilowatt-hours of power day and night, with all indicators suggesting it has reached or exceeded its designed values.

This marks another important step after the plant created 1.67 million kWh of power over 34 hours of continuous operations in mid-April, the report said.

Unlike wind power or photovoltaic power generation stations, the molten salt can also be stored and used to generate power on demand, even at night, and the system is nonpolluting as well,

Huang Wenbo, vice-chairman of Beijing Shouhang, said the power plant has withstood the test of running under the harshest environmental conditions in different seasons, which means it can be widely used in northwestern areas.

The power station is among China's first batch of solar thermal power generation demonstration projects, the report said. With an investment of 3 billion yuan (\$433.1 million), it was built by Beijing Shouhang IHW Resources Saving Technology Co. Ltd., which wholly owns the power station's intellectual property rights.

The power plant, also called the "super mirror power plant," works by using 12,000 mirrors that concentrate the sunlight onto a receiver at the top of a solar tower, which then heats the molten salt.

It is designed to generate 390 million kWh of power annually, which can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 350,000 metric tons per year. That's equivalent to the annual environmental benefit derived from 667 hectares of forested land.

Siemens Gamesa awarded contract for 376 megawatt Taiwanese offshore wind farm

Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy announced on Monday that it had been awarded a conditional order to supply offshore wind turbines for the 376 megawatt (MW) Taiwanese Formosa 2 Offshore Wind Farm Project.

The Formosa 2 Offshore Wind Farm Project is set to be located off the coast from Miaoli County, in the country's north-west, and will be located close to the site of the Formosa 1 project, which currently consists of the 8 MW Phase 1 and the under-construction 120 MW Phase 2 expansion — an expansion which is also using Siemens Gamesa offshore wind turbines.

Formosa 1 Phase 1 is Taiwan's first offshore wind farm, completed in November of 2016, to be followed by Phase 2 which reached financial close a year ago and which is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

Developed by a consortium consisting of Macquarie Capital and Swancor Renewable Energy, the firm turbine order for Formosa 2 is subject to the consortium's final investment decision.

If the project proceeds, Siemens Gamesa will provide 47 of its SG8.0-167 DD offshore wind turbines as well as a full service contract for 20 years. "We are delighted to continue our close collaboration with Swancor and Macquarie in Taiwan, which started on Formosa 1, Taiwan's very first offshore wind power project," said Niels Steenberg, Executive General Manager of Siemens Gamesa Offshore for Asia-Pacific. "Siemens Gamesa is committed to the success of those early developments, which will lay the foundations for a prosperous and sustainable offshore wind industry in the market."

Siemens Gamesa is currently the dominant supplier in Taiwan's nascent offshore wind industry, also securing earlier this month the contract to supply turbines to the 640 MW Yunlin offshore wind power plant being developed by German wind power developer wpd. Set to be built 6 kilometres off the coast of Yunlin County, on the country's west coast, the Yunlin offshore wind farm will also boast Siemens Gamesa 8.0-167 DD turbines.

(Cleantechnica.com)



Xi’s visit to North Korea comes at a crucial juncture

GLOBALTIMES — Chinese President Xi Jinping is scheduled to visit North Korea on Thursday and Friday. How will the visit influence dynamics on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia? The Global Times talked with two Chinese experts on the issue.

Lü Chao, a research fellow on North Korea with the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences

President Xi’s upcoming visit to North Korea is a formal state visit and also a return trip to North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un’s visit to China. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China and of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and North Korea - a significant year for both countries.

Xi’s visit will further improve the traditional friendship between China and North Korea, promote interaction among their people, and in particular, increase interaction between the Communist Party of China and the Workers’ Party of Korea - the ruling parties in the two countries.

China is playing an important role as a stabilizer in Northeast Asia. Xi’s visit is anticipated to promote peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and thus stabilize the situation in the region. China has been attaching importance to the situation on the Korean Peninsula, as it is directly related to China’s peripheral security. The Korean Peninsula nuclear issue has been under international spotlight.

Before the upcoming G20 summit in Osaka, Japan, Xi’s visit to North Korea will allow the two countries to carry out better strategic communication, which is conducive to better coordination among all sides involved in the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue.

In addition to showing the importance of traditional friendship between China and North Korea, the agenda of Xi’s visit also shows that China, as a major responsible power, is willing to properly deal with the concerns of all sides and better promote peaceful solution of the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue.

US President Donald Trump is scheduled to visit South Korea in late June, which shows that the US wants to further strengthen its influence on the Korean Peninsula and achieve its stated objectives on the nuclear issue.

China and the US have relatively consistent goals for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. There is room for the two countries to cooperate to maintain peace on the peninsula, although they have differences on implementation of denuclearization and in judging the situation in Northeast Asia.

China encourages North Korea and the US to take negotiations forward and work to alleviate the crisis on the peninsula.

Da Zhigang, director and research fellow of the Institute of Northeast Asian Studies at Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences and chief expert at Northeast Asian Strategic Studies Institute

October 6, 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of China and North Korea’s diplomatic ties. No matter how skeptical foreign media outlets are, China will not change its support for socialist North Korea and friendship for the North Korean people.

Some foreign media outlets speculated the purpose of this visit as it will take place before the G20 summit. However, it ignored the fact that the visit will benefit regional cooperation and send signals that help ease the situation on the peninsula.

After vote, will EU change approach to China?

By Wang Yiwei

GLOBALTIMES-Populism was given a cold shoulder in European parliament elections, lending traction to attempts at European integration. Now, important issues will receive more attention with focus moving back to climate change and data protection. In the meantime, due to disputes among populist parties and groups, it is getting more difficult for Europe to coordinate overseas policies.

The EU elections have shown three major changes. First, the times have changed. Globalization has split regions and countries. The EU elections showed two trends - polarization and fragmentation. Both are typical of US politics but rare for Europe, where polarization manifests itself in the extreme right and extreme left.

Fragmentation is a result of rise of more political parties. Despite three or four or more parties sharing seats in the European Parliament, it is no longer the Europe we were familiar with. The direction and pattern of its development are changing.

Europeans learnt their lessons from two cases - Brexit and election of US President Donald Trump - and were motivated to safeguard European integration during EU elections. If it were not for Brexit and Trump, I’m afraid populism would have dominated the continent.

Many Europeans believe they are faced with three major challenges right now: Trump’s unilateralism and the mess he created by pulling the US out of international organizations and treaties; the threat from Russia; and an «increasingly aggressive» China as the Belt and Road Initiative is extending in the continent.

Second, the West has changed. Europe is no longer just an ally of the US. It considers China a competitor. China figuring in the EU election campaign is something rarely seen in Europe.

China says it is a developing country but most European countries don’t agree. Such issues will inevitably come up for discussion during the G20 summit on June 28 and 29 in Osaka, Japan. The group of 20 emerging economies will also take up the issue of reforms of the World Trade Organization.

Third, politics itself has changed, and is viewed with skepticism by an increasing number of Europeans. The political group Greens/ European Free Alliance, which gained 22 more seats in this EU election, is composed primarily of young people who want the UK to remain an EU member. They support globalization and are all for European integration. In their view, only cross-border coordination can solve the problems faced by European countries.

However, the middle aged and elderly still dream of staying in countries which don’t belong to a bloc. The shift between the two generations reflects the changing political spectrum of Europe.

Such being the case, China has undoubtedly become the scapegoat amid all these three changes. Globalization has caused an international split. While we are proud that China contributes one third of the global economic output, people from other parts of the world don’t think so. They believe China has gained the most from globalization.

Some Europeans admire China’s strong system and industrial policies, while others have a different view and don’t think European socialist market economy can get along with China’s so-called state capitalism.

The EU’s attitude toward China hasn’t changed much after the elections. Europe will become more demanding of China and its fear and skepticism of the Asian power is also set to rise. Therefore, China’s policy toward Europe should focus on bilateral aspects. In the meantime, sub-regional collaboration like the 16+1 format and pragmatic cooperation in fields including 5G, energy and climate change should be strengthened.

The Guardian tells of UK crimes in Yemen war

The role of London in killing innocent people

By Ali Azimi

TEHRAN — UK continues to support the killing of Yemeni people by Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, with support from Saudi Arabia and other dictatorial regimes in the West Asian region. Undoubtedly, in the near future, the role of London in killing innocent Yemeni people will be more clearly identified.

Although the British authorities are trying to prevent their role in the Yemeni war using their complex media and security networks, the documentation is so large that the English killer politicians can not deny it. Here, We review one of the papers by Guardian about Britain’s role in the Yemeni war:

For more than four years, a brutal Saudi air campaign has bombarded Yemen, killing tens of thousands, injuring hundreds of thousands and displacing millions – creating the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. And British weapons are doing much of the killing. Every day Yemen is hit by British bombs – dropped by British planes that are flown by British-trained pilots and maintained and prepared inside Saudi Arabia by thousands of British contractors. The Saudi-led military coalition, which includes the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait, has “targeted civilians ... in a widespread and systematic manner”, according to the UN – dropping bombs on hospitals, schools, weddings, funerals and even camps for displaced people fleeing the bombing.

Saudi Arabia has in effect contracted out vital parts of its war against Yemen’s Houthi movement to the US and the UK. Britain does not merely supply weapons for this war: it provides the personnel and expertise required to keep the war going. The British government has deployed RAF personnel to work as engineers, and to train Saudi pilots and targeteers – while an even larger role is played by BAE Systems, Britain’s biggest arms company, which the government has subcontracted to provide weapons, maintenance and engineers inside Saudi Arabia.

“The Saudi bosses absolutely depend on BAE Systems,” John Deverell, a former MoD mandarin and defence attache to Saudi Arabia and Yemen, told me. “They couldn’t do it without us.” A BAE employee recently put it more plainly to Channel 4’s Dispatches: “If we weren’t there, in seven to 14 days there wouldn’t be a jet in the sky.”

The British bombs that rain down on Yemen are produced in three towns: Glenrothes in Scotland, and Harlow and Stevenage in south-east England. Bombs roll off production lines owned by Raytheon UK and BAE Systems, firms contracted by the government to manufacture Paveway bombs (£22,000 apiece), Brimstone bombs (£105,000 apiece), and Storm Shadow cruise missiles (£790,000 apiece) for the Saudi Royal Air Force. BAE, under government contract, also assembles the jets that drop these bombs in hangars just outside the village of Warton, Lancashire.

Once these weapons arrive in Saudi Arabia, Britain’s involvement is far from over. The Saudi military lacks the expertise to use these weapons to fight a sustained air war – so BAE, under another contract to the UK government, provides what are known as “in-country” services. In practice, this means that around 6,300 British contractors are stationed at forward operating bases in Saudi Arabia. There, they train Saudi pilots and conduct essential maintenance night and day on planes worn out from flying thousands of miles across the Saudi desert to their targets in Yemen. They also supervise Saudi soldiers to load bombs on to planes and set their fuses for their intended targets.

Around 80 serving RAF personnel work inside Saudi Arabia. Sometimes they work for BAE to assist in maintaining and preparing aircraft. At other times they work as auditors to ensure that BAE is fulfilling its Ministry of Defence contracts. Additional RAF “liaison officers” work inside the command-and-control centre, from where targets in Yemen are selected.

Aircraft alone have never defeated a guerrilla insurgency. Despite atrocities committed by the Houthis on the ground, the rebel group’s domestic support has only been bolstered by outrage over years of Saudi bombing. Facing up to this reality, last year Saudi Arabia decided to deploy significant ground forces across the border – and here too, the British have joined the mission. In May 2018, an unknown number of British troops were sent to Yemen to assist Saudi ground forces. Since then, multiple newspapers have published reports of British special forces wounded in gun battles inside Houthi-controlled territory.

Under British law, it is illegal to licence arms exports if they might be used deliberately or recklessly against civilians –



or in legal terms, to violate international humanitarian law. There is overwhelming evidence that the Saudis are flagrantly in violation, and yet when questions are raised in Parliament about Britain’s role in the atrocities occurring in Yemen, Conservative ministers typically limit themselves to three well-worn responses. First, they claim that Britain operates “one of the most robust arms export regimes in the world”. Second, they say that while Britain may arm Saudi Arabia, it does not pick the targets in Yemen. Third, they say that the Saudi-led coalition already investigates its own alleged violations of international humanitarian law.

These responses have long since been overtaken by the bloody reality of the Yemen war. In fact, as the conflict has continued, the killing of civilians has actually accelerated. According to Larry Lewis, a former US State Department official who was sent to Saudi Arabia in 2015 in an attempt to reduce civilian harm, the proportion of strikes against civilians by Saudi-led forces almost doubled between 2017 and 2018.

The UK government’s argument that it does not pick the targets in Yemen resembles nothing so much as the logic of the American gun lobby, with its infamous claim that it’s not guns that kill people, but the people who use them. Since 2016, many countries have revoked or suspended arms sales to Saudi Arabia – including Austria, Belgium, Germany, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. But Britain and the US, whose planes constitute the backbone of Saudi Arabia’s combat fleet, are still holding out.

This could soon change. Three of Britain’s most senior judges are now mulling whether the government’s licensing of billions of pounds of arms to the Saudi Royal Air Force has been legal. The court of appeal’s judgment, expected this week, could force the government to suspend the licences that keep the bombs and spare parts flowing to Saudi Arabia, which would ground half of Saudi Arabia’s fleet in a matter of weeks.

The judiciary may now decide to curtail Britain’s ability to sustain Saudi Arabia’s doomed and destructive air war. The British and Saudi governments may also decide to send more aid to help the 24 million Yemenis now dependent on an underfunded UN relief fund. But a generation of Yemenis who have lost their families, their homes, educations and livelihoods will not get them back. On a 2016 trip to Yemen, the Conservative MP Andrew Mitchell visited a school in the capital. It had been built, he said, with British aid – only to be destroyed, in all likelihood, by a British bomb. “I asked my host what the children were chanting,” he recalled to me in his Westminster office. His host translated for him: “‘Death to the Saudis’, ‘Death to the Americans’ – and in respect for your visit today, they have cut out the third stanza.”

On 27 March 2015, one day after the first bombs fell on Yemen, foreign secretary Philip Hammond told reporters that Britain would “support the Saudis in every practical way short of engaging in combat”. This would prove to be an

understatement.

BAE and Raytheon production lines in Britain sped up to keep up with Saudi bombing. It is impossible to say how many bombs the UK has sent to Yemen, because the government in 2013 and 2014 granted BAE three special arms-export licences that permit the sale of an unlimited number of bombs to Saudi Arabia without requiring disclosure of how many have been sold. As a result, the full scale of the UK’s rearmament programme has remained hidden. But even discounting this secret trade, British military exports to Riyadh multiplied almost 35-fold in one year, from £83m in 2014 to £2.9bn in 2015.

Saudi Arabia, the world’s biggest oil exporter, can afford to buy these weapons, but it has traditionally lacked the skills and manpower to deploy them. A retired US defence official joked that in the past, all the kingdom’s pilots were selected from the king’s immediate family – because “only they could be trusted not to drop a bomb on his palace”.

British personnel have played a major role in picking up the slack. Government contractors carry out around 95% of the tasks necessary to fight the air war, one former BAE employee told Channel 4’s Dispatches – an estimate confirmed to me by a former senior British official who worked in Saudi Arabia during the air war.

Inside Saudi forward operating bases, there are thousands of British contractors working to keep the war machine moving. British contractors coordinate the distribution of bombs and aircraft parts. They manage climate-controlled armories and work in shifts to ensure bombs are dispatched in a timely manner for fresh raids. Alongside RAF personnel, British contractors train Saudi pilots to conduct hazardous bombing raids in Yemen’s rugged northern mountains and over its cities. They also manage avionics and radar systems to ensure that Saudi planes can get to and from their targets, and conduct the deep aircraft maintenance necessary to keep them circling over Yemen.

The British government is keen to stress that it has no role in targeting, and insists that only Saudi Arabia chooses what to hit in Yemen. But there is no disputing the fact that British contractors enable Saudi Arabia to hit its targets – and that Britain is well aware of the nature of these targets.

Michael Knights, a Gulf military expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, has made two visits since the war began to the Saudi airbase at Khamis Mushayt, near the border with Yemen. Planes from this base, he told me, had waged an “out-and-out coercive air campaign” of “terror bombing” over the city of Saada in 2015 and 2016. “You couldn’t have hit more civilian targets,” he said. Saudi military chiefs “worked their way down a list of all the national infrastructure targets like we did [when the US and UK bombed Iraq during the Gulf war] in 1991 ... that meant everything: cranes, bridges, ministries ... water treatment plants.”

Human rights groups have criticised the Saudi-led coalition for its use of so-called

“double-tap” attacks – in which a second bomb is dropped a few minutes after the first, targeting civilians and emergency responders who have rushed to the site of the first explosion. One such staggered attack on 8 October 2016 hit a funeral in Sana’a, killing 155 mourners and wounding at least 525. Another double-tap strike hit a wedding party in the remote village of Al-Wahijah on 28 Sept 2015, killing 131 civilians. “The corpses were scattered among the trees,” the father of the groom, Mohammed Busaibis, told the Yemeni human rights group Mwatana, adding that he learned his own mother had died when he saw her familiar scar on a disembodied leg. “Why did they attack us? There is nothing around here. No military camps, not even a police station.”

The former senior British official told me he was aghast at the recklessness of Saudi targeting. “This is what would happen regularly,” he told me. “We’d be sitting down for lunch and a Yemeni [from the government in exile] would get a WhatsApp message with a pin on Google Maps saying that there will be Houthis here. On that basis, an awful lot of the targeting was conducted without any verification whatsoever.”

Larry Lewis, the State Department advisor for civilian protection, described Saudi targeting to me as “incredibly loose”. “In the US and the UK,” he explained, “we have very formal processes” for airstrikes, but “this coalition is not using them ... And when you mess up, bad things happen.”

Lewis says that in September 2016 – a few weeks before the funeral strike – he took his concerns to the chairman of the Saudi armed forces. “I laid out all of the very actionable things he could do to reduce civilian harm,” he told me. “The chairman didn’t really seem very interested ... he just didn’t respond.” Last July, crown prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), the architect of the air war, issued a royal decree “pardoning all military personnel who have taken part in Operation Restoring Hope of their respective military and disciplinary penalties.”

After Saudi Arabia realised it could not defeat the Houthis with airstrikes alone, it launched a ground operation in northern Yemen, which includes thousands of Saudi troops, a wide assortment of Yemeni and foreign fighters, and British special forces.

The presence of British special forces in Yemen has not been officially acknowledged, but has become an open secret in defence circles. A senior British diplomatic source told me that the decision to approve military assistance to Saudi Arabia emerged from a meeting in London between British ministers and Bin Salman during his state visit to the UK in March 2018 – when he met the Queen and signed a memorandum of intent to buy 48 more jets worth £10bn to upgrade his war-ravaged fleet.

Two months later, on 23 May 2018, Boris Johnson, then foreign secretary, released a carefully worded statement committing an undisclosed number of UK troops to provide “information, advice and assistance” to “mitigate” the threat to Saudi Arabia from Houthi missiles.

The UK government refuses to confirm or deny whether it has deployed troops inside Yemen. In April, when asked in parliament about allegations published in the Mail on Sunday that British special forces were fighting in Yemen alongside Saudi-backed child soldiers, foreign minister Mark Field called for an investigation, while refusing to confirm whether British troops were in the country at all.

Conclusion

What is certain is that the British government must respond to its crimes in Yemen. UK support for US regional strategies is surely based on Britain’s traditional policy to stay in the corners and take a share of the final profits, but this time, given the upcoming crisis, it seems that London will not receive the benefits it seeks.

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

UK, with following Trump’s regional policies will be incurring just more high costs on the country and will surely become the “complete loser” of this game. It is no surprise that many UK citizens are constantly protesting against the government and ask them to stop following Washington in their international policies.

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Why should China fully support Iran in Persian Gulf tensions?

➔ To contain China, the U.S. has resorted to many strategies and tactics such as destabilizing west borders of China in Afghanistan and Pakistan and trying to spread to central Asia aiming at thwarting Chinese 'One road-One belt' initiative that many experts believe that success of this project will let China to determine the word trade orders in the future.

Trying to intensify territorial disputes between China and its neighbors besides its trade war against Beijing are among another U.S. tactics to contain China.

Statistics from www.worldstopexports.com website indicates that China imports its needed crude oil from the following countries:

1. Russia: US\$37.9 billion (15.8% of China's total imported crude)
2. Saudi Arabia: \$29.7 billion (12.4%)
3. Angola: \$24.9 billion (10.4%)
4. Iraq: \$22.4 billion (9.4%)
5. Oman: \$17.3 billion (7.2%)
6. Brazil: \$16.2 billion (6.8%)
7. Iran: \$15 billion (6.3%)
8. Kuwait: \$11.9 billion (5%)
9. Venezuela: \$7 billion (2.9%)
10. United States: \$6.8 billion (2.8%)
11. United Arab Emirates: \$6.7 billion (2.8%)
12. Congo: \$6.4 billion (2.7%)
13. Colombia: \$5 billion (2.1%)
14. Malaysia: \$4.8 billion (2%)
15. Libya: \$4.7 billion (2%)

Crude oil import is driving engine of Chinese economy so any threats to energy security of China will inflict a heavy blow to the country's economic growth and can help U.S. to win trade war against Beijing and contain it.

Above mentioned statistics show that some 43% of the crude oil that China imports goes from Persian Gulf and 4.6% goes from Libya and Venezuela that the U.S. destructive policies has already created a chaotic situation in two countries.

Many experts believe that the U.S. withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal known as



the JCPOA under false pretexts not only aims at pressurizing Iran but also it is a way to pressurize China to compromise in the trade war that Washington has waged against it. Any conflict and tension in the Persian Gulf region which China's economy is heavily dependent on means a great blow to the country's economy, therefore many suspicious incidents and tensions created by Washington and its proxies in Persian Gulf region like attacking oil tankers can be interpreted as the White House's measures to contain China in order to guarantee the U.S. hegemony and influence for the next decades.

Commenting on possible relation between recent developments in Persian Gulf and its effects on China's economy, Dr. Osman Faruk Logoglu a senior member of Tukey's CHP and former diplomat says, "With its provocative actions and sanctions, Washington not only aims to buttress its support for Israel and its Arab allies by punishing Iran but at the same time also intends to deny Chinese access

to Iranian oil. The fear of and rivalry with China is today one of the primary drivers of American foreign policy. Interruption of the oil flow in the Gulf is one way to directly hurt Chinese interests. The Trump administration is, therefore, playing with fire in Iran and a potential conflagration with China."

A senior Iranian analyst Sadeq Maleki also believes, "The rising tensions between the United States and Iran are mainly caused by Tehran's independence policy and Washington's intolerance toward this fact. However, such independence is considered as an exceptional opportunity for the Europeans and other states, especially China, that need to supply their energy from Iran and the Persian Gulf region. A big part of Washington's policy of fomenting tensions against Tehran and making the Persian Gulf region more volatile comes in line with the White House's plan to contain China. Iran's resistance to the U.S.' pressure is in fact shaping an equation, in which the Islamic Republic indirectly contributes to the interests of China and even Europe. So,

China and Europe are highly expected to help Iran in this regard. In a long-term strategic perspective, the U.S.' long distance from the Middle East, the dangers of insecurity in the Persian Gulf region, and the proximity of Europe and China to the region, heighten the need for greater coordination between Iran, China and Europe in countering the U.S.' aggressive attitudes."

Zeynep Oktav, an international relation Professor at Istanbul Medeniyet University also sees a close relation between U.S. created tensions in the Persian Gulf and containment of China. She said, "I believe there's a close relation as Washington wants to dominate the Middle East with its efforts to exclude China from the region. In this context containing Iran is of crucial importance as China buys Iranian crude oil. China currently seems to change its previous policies of balancing Iran and USA. Beijing applies latest sanctions on Iran, however, it opposes any possibility of American military attack on Iran. In my opinion, USA challenges China by threatening Iran in the Middle East, the issue is not about Iran, it's about China."

Even some experts who don't believe in close relation between the ongoing U.S. created tensions in Persian Gulf and containment of China by the U.S. don't reject the possibility totally and say the relation is indirect not direct.

Prof. Larry Catá Backer of Pennsylvania State University says, "Relation between Persian Gulf tensions and U.S.-China negotiations may reflect post facto efforts to exploit serendipitous perceive opportunity; it is much less likely to represent the execution of some sort of strategic plan."

Prof. Nader Entessar, a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice at the University of South Alabama believes that if there is any relationship between the tensions in the Persian Gulf and containment of China, it is not direct.

Surveys that have worried the White House

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump tries to describe his country's political situation to its own advantage! He claims to be ahead of his rivals in 17 key states, but polls conducted in the United States do not endorse such a claim!

As President Donald Trump heads to Florida on Tuesday to officially declare his reelection bid in 2020, he's trailing multiple top Democratic candidates in the battleground Sunshine State, according to a new Quinnipiac poll.

Former Vice President Joe Biden bests Trump in a hypothetical matchup for the general election, by 50% to 41%. This includes 7% of Republicans and 54% of independents in Florida who said they would support Biden against Trump. The general election isn't for another year and a half, but Biden has the highest lead over the President of tested Democratic candidates.

Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont also tops Trump in a hypothetical contest, though with a smaller lead of 48% to 42%. Other top Democrats are also beating Trump in Florida, according to the poll, albeit by much slimmer margins than Biden and Sanders. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts is leading the President by 4 percentage points (47% to 43%) and Sen. Kamala Harris of California, former Rep. Beto O'Rourke of Texas and South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg are all up by only 1 percentage point against Trump in their hypothetical head-to-head matchups, which amounts to holding no real advantage.

Numbers this far out from a general election are hard to read, and could change between now and November 2020. They should be thought of as a snapshot in time rather than a predictor of the future. About half of Florida voters said they've been paying a lot of attention to the campaign for president, including 51% of Republicans and 59% of Democrats. Biden dominates the Democratic primary for the Southern state, leading 41% among Democratic voters. Sanders and Warren fight for second place, at 14% and 12%, respectively. Buttigieg (8%) and Harris (6%) are the only other candidates to get above 1% of the vote.

Biden's support is strongest among moderate and conservative Democratic voters, 51%, who said they'll support the former VP in the primary, and those older than 50 (52%).

Trump's approval sticks at 41%, with 51% saying they disapprove of the job he's doing, similar to his most recent approval rating in Quinnipiac's national poll. Only a third of voters want Congress to begin the process of impeaching Trump, including two-thirds of Democrats. Half of the voters in the poll said they're better off financially today than they were in 2016, strongly divided by partisan lines -- 84% of Republicans, 23% of Democrats and 55% of independents.

CNN reported that Just as Donald Trump prepared to jet to Orlando to formally kick off his bid for a second term in 2020, a new Quinnipiac University poll was released that showed the President trailing former Vice President Joe Biden in the Sunshine State by 9 percentage points.

Which is a big headline! After all, Trump isn't choosing to announce his 2020 bid in Florida by accident. It's a state he won in 2016 and one that he knows he badly needs if he wants to win in 2020. So a poll that has him losing by almost double digits to the Democratic front-runner feels like a Very Important Development. And it might be! But there's also reason to take this latest Florida poll with a grain of salt. Actually several grains. Consider:

(1) The November 2020 election is 504 days away. Which

is -- and this is a technical term -- a long way away. And lots can and will happen in Florida and nationwide between now and then.

2) Past Florida election results don't bear out a blowout, which a 9-point win would be, for either side. Here are the victory margins in Florida in the last five presidential races: 2016 (Trump +1), 2012 (Obama +1), 2008 (Obama +3), 2004 (Bush +5), 2000 (even). There's just nothing to suggest any Democratic candidate would beat Trump by 9 points. (Or that Trump would beat any of the Democrats by that margin.) The story is the same in the 2018 statewide races in Florida; Republicans won both the governor's office and the Senate race by razor-thin margins.

3) Speaking of those 2018 GOP victories, Politico's Florida expert Marc Caputo reminded me that the final Q polls in both the Senate and the governor's race had the Democratic nominees winning by 7 points. Both lost narrowly. That's not to say Quinnipiac is a bad pollster -- it isn't -- but it is to suggest that its idea of what the Florida electorate might look like heavily undersold the Republican nominees for Senate and governor in 2018.

The Point: Florida is going to be one of the handful of most competitive states in 2020. And the eventual Democratic nominee may wind up beating Trump there. But there's reason to be suspicious that the Q poll represents what the race might look like 500 days from now.

GOP frets about Trump's poll numbers
Reid Wilson wrote in The Hill that As Trump kicks off reelection, his party worries he's an anchor. Trump formally kicked off his re-election campaign Tuesday in front of thousands of fans at a boisterous rally in the heart of battleground Florida, even as top strategists in his own party worry that his weak political standing threatens the rest of the Republican ticket.

Trump reacted angrily last week to leaked internal surveys conducted by his own campaign that showed him trailing in virtually every swing state on the map. He fired several pollsters, and his campaign manager insisted that Trump's numbers had improved. But public polls conducted more recently mirror some of the troubling indicators that Trump's own polling found. What's more, in interviews, half a dozen prominent Republican pollsters working on campaigns around the country said their own results showed a president who starts his reelection bid from behind. "His numbers are problematic," said one top Republican pollster, who asked for anonymity to describe private survey data. "Folks are nervous, but no one is surprised."

The Republican National Committee and the Trump campaign have begun holding conference calls with Senate campaigns in some of those states, sharing polling and data analytics studies assessing their chances next November. In the last month, several public polls have showed Trump trailing former Vice President Joe Biden and other Democratic contenders by double digits in Michigan, and by wide margins in North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

Three consecutive polls have showed Trump trailing Biden in deep-red Texas, though he led other Democratic rivals. And a survey from Quinnipiac University Poll of Florida voters released Tuesday showed Trump trailing six of his Democratic rivals. A survey released Tuesday by Firehouse Strategies, a Republican firm run by veterans of Sen. Marco Rubio's (R-Fla.) campaign team, and the data analytics firm Optimus found Trump trailing Biden in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, the lynchpins of his 2016 victory.

The common threads through all of those surveys, analysts said, are Trump's dismally low approval rating and the inelasticity in those numbers. Voters have formed hard



opinions about Trump, whether favorably or unfavorably, and few seem willing or able to move off those feelings. "Trump's numbers are really sticky," said Alex Conant, a partner at Firehouse Strategies. "It's just going to be really hard for him to move his numbers up, and similarly it's going to be hard for the Democrats to move his numbers down."

Some Republican pollsters say they are less concerned about the current state of Trump's numbers because he is being matched against a hypothetical Democrat who has yet to experience the rigors and scrutiny of a general election. "If we learned anything from the 2016 election, it should be that polls this far out from election day are meaningless," said Blair Ellis, the RNC's press secretary. "The RNC's world-class data program that helped Trump win in 2016 shows us that reported polling is wrong, once again, and Americans across the country are just as enthusiastic about him and his record-setting list of accomplishments as they were when they first sent him to the White House."

Others said they are less confident in the stability of the political environment, given global tumult broadly and the challenges facing the polling industry more specifically. "There are plenty of examples in recent political history where candidates have come from far behind to win," the Republican pollster said. "Those candidates have been willing to make adjustments. Not sure this candidate is at all willing."

Trump has become so inextricably linked with the Republican base that party strategists worry his low poll numbers could act as a drag on the rest of the ticket. Seven Republican senators are seeking reelection in states that are either swing states or where Trump has trailed in recent polls. Those Republicans include the three most vulnerable seeking reelection this year, Sens. Martha McSally (Ariz.), Cory Gardner (Colo.) and Susan Collins (Maine). But Trump also appears vulnerable in states represented by Sens. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), David Perdue (R-Ga.), Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and John Cornyn (R-Texas.)

Texas has become a particular concern for Republicans worried about Trump's fortunes. For years, Texas Democrats have waited for a surge that would finally make a deep-red state competitive -- and they nearly scored that long-sought victory in 2018, when Sen. Ted Cruz (R) survived a spirited challenge from former Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D.)

Cornyn is taking no chances in his own bid for a fourth term. He ended March with \$7.4 million in the bank. He is likely to face M.J. Hegar, a business consultant and a veteran of the war in Afghanistan who narrowly lost a challenge to Rep. John Carter (R) in 2018. The most recent survey, conducted by The Texas Tribune, found 50 percent of voters would definitely or probably vote to reelect Trump, while 50 percent would definitely or probably not vote to reelect him. In that survey, 52 percent approved of the job Trump is doing in office, while just 37 percent said the same of Cornyn. ➔13

The end of U.S. arms trade monopoly

TEHRAN (FNA) — Washington is looking at imposing financial sanctions on Turkish firms beyond those that build parts for the Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jet, over Ankara's plans to buy a Russian air defense system.

US officials view Turkey as an important NATO ally and have urged it to drop its plans to buy the Russian-built S-400 air defense system so that its companies could continue to build critical parts for a wide range of other US weapons systems beside the F-35 fighter jet.

Turkey, of course, is not sitting on its hands and doesn't give a toss if this could enable Moscow to glean all sorts of useful intelligence against NATO. Ankara says it will retaliate against US sanctions over its deal with Moscow. Defending the purchase, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu says Turkey will choose its defense equipment. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has also said "the S-400 is coming in a short time".

Indeed, Turkey's S-400 purchase is a done deal under international law as its F-35 jets are yet to leave US soil. Turkey joined the program in 2002 and without its participation the program could collapse. This means Ankara has no other option but to buy fifth-generation fighters from Russia as well.

Turkey won't bow to US sanctions over its agreement to purchase S-400 surface-to-air missile defense system. America's once-formidable global might is going down the drain, and unlike what Vice President Mike Pence would like to suggest, Turkey cannot be forced to choose whether it wants to remain in NATO or buy the S-400s. It now hardly matters that the US has itself to blame. Many probably don't remember, but Trump himself once said the US made the mistake not to sell Patriots to Turkey.

There would be days of outraged media attention and interviews with the "concerned" military brass, diplomatic threats of every sort, but the US will fail to force Turkey to terminate the transaction. Like its failed trade and tariff wars, sanctions and levies on Turkish goods will also fall short, which is not accidental. White House isolationists and Pentagon officials cannot interpret the new macro-level global developments. The decline of American influence, an increased awareness of Trumpism, and the failed military and trade wars have all worked together to erode America's position and arms trade monopoly across significant parts of the globe.

Adding additional tension to the mix, this isn't just a Turkish phenomenon, it's distinctly global. Several other countries plan to buy Russian S-400s as well, despite the threat of sanctions and trade restrictions. As the American arms trade monopoly unravels with unimagined speed, these countries are not mourning its passing either.

Joining Turkey's chorus of good riddance to US military influence, Qatar, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Vietnam and Iraq plan to buy the S-400s. They are in no mood to yield to Washington's pressure, as the S-400 is the affordable answer to Pentagon's expensive Patriot and THAAD platforms. Besides, the laws that regulate Russian weapons exports are not a jumbled mess, especially when it comes to dual-use technologies, such as surveillance and detection networks, or complex technologies with military and civilian applications.

China and India have also signed purchase agreements with the Kremlin. For all the American diplomatic posturing, India is no longer willing to stick with the cumbersome process of buying weapons from the US. New Delhi doesn't want to wait for Washington's regulatory hurdles. The S-400 has no export restrictions and sales have no political strings attached.

The political temperature in Washington is rising fast and dumping America's military influence is not a pretty sight for Pentagon accountants. Turkey's qualified endorsement of Russian platforms stems from motives for adopting independent policies that go hand in hand with its national security and defense doctrine. Washington's grubby hypocrisy, perpetual falsehood and diplomatic pressure have failed to stop this new global trend.

China's semiconductor industry will come out stronger from U.S. crackdown

GLOBALTIMES — Ren Zhengfei, founder and CEO of Huawei, said in a conversation with two US scholars Monday that revenues will be \$30 billion less than forecast over the next two years. But setbacks cannot stop Huawei from moving forward and the company's revenue will bounce back in 2021. He said "we are the birds that will never die." In our view, this will be the doctrine of Huawei's development. The Chinese tech titan's situation may also typify the future growth of China's semiconductor industry.

It is very important to realistically assess the hurdles. It is impossible for any enterprise or even an entire industry to feel easy when being persecuted by a superpower to this extent. We need to do an objective analysis of the difficulties and respond in a constructive way.

Few Chinese believe that Huawei and China's semiconductor industry can be easily crushed. Many weaknesses of China's semiconductor industry have been bared as the US has upped the heat, but its resilience and vitality are obviously underestimated by the US.

If it costs Huawei \$30 billion and two years to weather this wave of attacks from Washington, and the tech giant emerges stronger, the lesson is worth the cost. We believe that Huawei, which has always been pragmatic, can do what it says.

China's semiconductor industry, including other high-tech industries, cannot get around this encounter with the US if they want to grow stronger. In terms of keeping a low profile and honesty, Huawei is a good example in the world. But did the US let it go? Now almost everyone on Earth knows that Huawei is the target of maximum pressure by Washington because it is leading in 5G.

Thirty years ago, the US used various means to annihilate the rise of the Japanese semiconductor industry. Today it is targeting China. The roots lie in the way technological advances in Japan and today's China have struck a raw nerve of Washington.

"That which does not kill us, makes us stronger." This quote by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche has been frequently used on the Chinese internet recently. It has been taken by netizens as a vivid portrayal of Huawei as a private enterprise bravely resisting the crackdown by Washington. It also represents a general optimism among the Chinese about fighting back against the US-launched trade war. The pressure from the US has certainly caused difficulties for us, but it has also resulted in a better understanding of China's current coordinates and future direction. ➔13

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

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

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Apollo astronauts celebrate 50 years since first moon landing

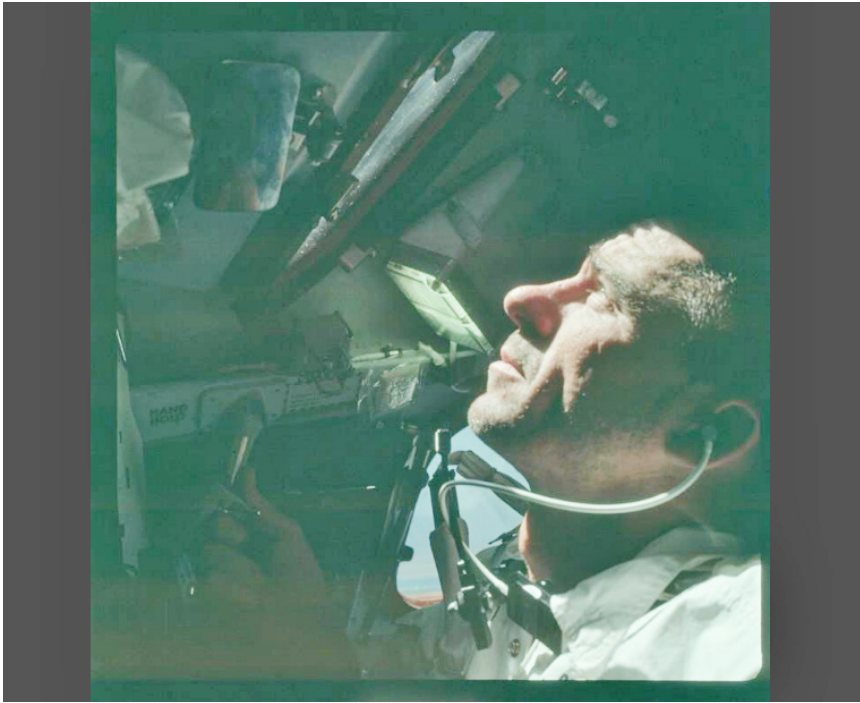
Three astronauts instrumental in the groundbreaking U.S. space program of the 1960s and 70s gathered at the Paris Air Show on Tuesday to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11, the mission that first put a man on the moon.

Walter Cunningham, 87, who was part of the Apollo 7 mission, Al Worden, 87, who flew with Apollo 15, and Charlie Duke, 83, who walked on the moon with Apollo 16, recounted their extra-terrestrial experiences before a captive airshow audience.

Worden, who orbited the moon alone for days in 1971, holds the feat of having been the world's most isolated human, while Cunningham is notable for being part of a team that talked back to Mission Control in 1968, getting them blacklisted from future flights.

Despite that setback, which came after the astronauts asked Mission Control if they could reenter the atmosphere without helmets on and were told no, Cunningham remembers his experiences fondly.

“Five hundred years from now there is



only going to be one thing they remember about Apollo, and that is that man landed on the moon,” he told the audience.

“That’ll be it. And people will have no idea how hard it was, for example, to get the first Apollo mission off. Apollo 7 was the fifth mission that Wally Schirra, Donn Eisele and I were on, and finally we flew.”

NASA pioneered space flight in the 1960s, amid competition from Soviet cosmonauts, but not without serious risks.

The Apollo 1 mission burned up on the launch pad during a test in 1967, killing the crew and prompting NASA to halt all attempts at manned flights. Only two years later, once the Command Module and spacesuits had been redesigned, was Apollo 7 cleared for launch.

Charlie Duke was a part of the Apollo 16 mission in 1972, and became the youngest person to walk on the moon at 36.

“It’s like ‘well I’m home, I know where to go, I know what’s over here,’” he said of the experience, which only 12 people have ever had.

(Source: Reuters)

Huge “Star Trek” logo spotted on the surface of Mars



NASA has spotted strange chevrons on Mars – and they look more than a little like an appropriate logo.

The curious shapes look remarkably like the famous logo from Star Trek and is carved into the surface of our nearby neighbor.

But the space agency is keen to stress that the icon has not been carved into the red planet by the Starfleet. “Enterprising viewers will make the discovery that these features look conspicuously like a famous logo: and you’d be right, but it’s only a coincidence,” it wrote.

Instead, it’s a natural phenomenon that shows how Mars has developed over its history. The shapes – spotted on the Hellas Planitia plane on the south of Mars – were formed by a confluence of dunes, lava and wind that tell the story of the red planet’s surface.

On ancient Mars, there were huge

crescent-shaped dunes that moved over the area. At some point, an eruption meant that lava flowed around the dunes but did not reach their top.

When the lava became solid, the dunes were higher up, like islands. But the wind was still able to shift them, and it continued to blow – pushing the sand piles away.

That left behind the gaps in the lava plain that the dunes once filled. They are known as “dune casts”, and set like casts made out of plaster – leaving an unchanging record of the now disappeared dust.

Zooming out, it’s possible to see that there are actually a variety of the chevrons visible on the surface.

The images were taken by NASA’s HiRISE camera, which is floating over the Mars surface onboard the space agency’s Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter.

(Source: The Independent)

Diamond detectors could aid the search for dark matter



A new idea for detecting dark matter really sparkles.

Diamonds could be used to search for the mysterious substance, a team of scientists suggests. Detectors containing the crystals could spot potential dark matter particles with relatively low masses.

Dark matter is an unidentified substance that scientists think must exist to explain cosmic observations such as the speeds at which stars move in galaxies. The most popular idea has been that dark matter consists of subatomic particles known as WIMPs, or weakly interacting massive particles. But extensive searches for those massive WIMPs have come up empty.

With the WIMPs wimping out, scientists have begun looking for potential dark matter particles that are less massive. That’s where the diamond detectors could shine. And lab-grown diamonds are now available and relatively affordable.

The crystals would be cooled to near absolute zero (–273.15° Celsius) and outfitted with sensors to detect sound waves that could be produced when a dark matter particle slams into an atomic nucleus or an electron in the diamond.

Scientists previously have made similar detectors using other types of crystals, such as germanium and silicon. But diamond has some additional benefits. The carbon atoms that make up diamond are lighter than atoms of silicon or germanium, so diamond detectors could detect lighter dark matter particles colliding into the atomic nuclei. And diamond can be made more pure than other crystals, composed mostly of a single type, or isotope, of carbon. That makes it easier to measure vibrations set off by potential dark matter particles, says study coauthor Noah Kurinsky, a physicist at Fermilab in Batavia, Ill. “It is the ultimate perfect crystal.”

(Source: sciencenews.org)

“Sneezing” plants may spread pathogens to their neighbors

Next time you pass a wheat field on a dewy morning, you might want to say “gesundheit.”

That’s because some sick plants can “sneeze” — shooting out tiny water droplets laden with pathogens, scientists report June 19 in the Journal of the Royal Society Interface. In wheat plants infected with the fungus Puccinia trititica, coalescing dew droplets flew away from the leaves they were on and carried fungal spores with them, experiments showed. The pathogen, which causes a destructive disease known as leaf rust, might then be able to infect other wheat plants.

The flinging effect, which can happen on healthy plants too, is the result of a quirk of fluid dynamics: When two water drops unite, surface tension is released and converted into kinetic energy that can hurl the fluid away.

It’s a “surface tension catapult,” says mechanical



engineer Jonathan Boreyko of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. The effect occurs only on extremely water-repellent, or

superhydrophobic, surfaces, like the leaves of certain plants, including wheat.

The drops can jump a few millimeters — high enough to escape the layer of still air that surrounds each leaf, so that a gentle breeze could carry the water and spores to other plants, Boreyko and colleagues report. The catapulting effect was known to occur on other superhydrophobic surfaces, but this is the first time it’s been suggested that it helps transmit disease.

Understanding how leaf rust spreads could be important for controlling it. If “sneezing” turns out to be an important source of transmission, plants could be sprayed with a coating to make them no longer superhydrophobic, for example, Boreyko says.

(Source: sciencenews.org)

NASA boss says ‘no doubt’ SpaceX explosion delays flight program

The explosion that destroyed a SpaceX astronaut taxi in April “no doubt” delays NASA’s drive to return Americans to the International Space Station from U.S. soil later this year, the U.S. space agency’s chief said on Tuesday.

But NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine stopped short of offering a clear flight timeline for its multibillion-dollar Commercial Crew Program, and said he would not prejudice the results of an investigation into the incident.

“There is no doubt the schedule will change,” Bridenstine told reporters at the Paris Airshow. “It won’t be what was

originally planned.”

Bridenstine’s comments cast fresh doubt on billionaire Elon Musk’s goal of returning astronauts to the orbiting research lab from U.S. soil this year, though a person familiar with the matter said SpaceX has privately expressed confidence that it can rebound.

For years, the United States has had to rely on Russia for rides to the space station and the Commercial Crew Program’s goal is to change that.

Boeing Co, the other contractor hired by NASA to develop a separate rocket-and-capsule system to fly astronauts to space, has also delayed its own flights for months.

Adding to the doubts, NASA has said it is considering paying for two more seats to the space station for autumn of 2019 and spring of 2020 to ensure U.S. access.

Originally, SpaceX’s astronaut flight was planned for July following a successful six-day round-trip unpiloted mission in March.

The April 20 accident occurred at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station as SpaceX was about to test eight emergency thrusters designed to propel the capsule, dubbed Crew Dragon, to safety from atop the rocket in the event of a launch failure.

NASA has awarded \$6.8 billion to

SpaceX and Boeing to develop their separate capsule systems.

Bridenstine also pledged better communication and transparency after the agency and SpaceX were criticized over a reluctance to describe in plain terms what happened to the capsule for days after the incident.

That stance was at odds with NASA’s long history of transparency surrounding accidents involving its human spaceflight program.

SpaceX did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

(Source: Reuters)

Mathematicians have proposed a new structure to the periodic table

The periodic table is such a comforting way of cataloguing the Universe, breaking it down into its elements and organizing them in nice neat boxes. What you may not know is it’s not the only way of arranging the elements - and it may not even be the best way, necessarily.

We’ve seen several previous weird and wonderful redesigns, often with flowy organic shapes, like spirals and curling ribbons and even a 3D “flower”.

Now mathematicians at the Max Planck Institute have detailed mathematical methods for cataloguing the elements, creating a series of complex hypergraphs, rather than the more basic periodic table currently in universal use.

In this way, they say, the periodic table can be adapted in a number of ways, providing many different interpretations of elemental classification depending on how they are ordered - with no one way more correct than any other.

The periodic table that we use was devised in 1869 - 150 years ago this year - by Russian chemist Dmitri Mendeleev. He ordered the 63 known elements at the time according to their atomic weight.

Today, they are assorted by atomic number - that is, the number of protons inside the nucleus, from one for hydrogen through to 118 for oganesson.

Also included is the element’s atomic weight, atomic symbol and a color that symbolizes which group with particular chemical and physical properties in common an element belongs to. And elements in the same column tend to have the same number of electrons in their outer shell.

But reality doesn’t always fit into nice, tidy boxes. For instance, the team notes, scientists can’t always agree where lanthanum and actinium belong.

But the hypergraph solution allows for more flexible configurations. According to the team, even when organized by atomic number, they can be grouped according to a number of different ways within an organized hypergraph - their solubility in water, for example, or the types of geological deposits they are found in.

Mathematician Guillermo Restrepo compared the team’s solution to a sculpture. The shadow it casts depends on where the light is coming from.

“The various shadows that the figure casts are the periodic tables,” he said.

“That’s why there are so many ways to create these tables. In a way, the period tables are projections. Projections of the internal structure of the periodic table.”

The defined three conditions required to establish a periodic table: it needs to be ordered, i.e., cataloguing items, such as the elements; it needs to be arranged according to a particular property, such as atomic number or atomic mass; and it needs to be grouped according to a criterion, such as chemical similarity.

“If these three conditions are met, periodic tables can also be created for other chemical objects and even for objects outside chemistry,” Restrepo said.

“We have investigated almost 5,000 substances consisting of two elements in different proportions. We then looked for similarities within this data. For example, sodium and lithium are similar because they combine with the same elements in the same proportions (e.g. with oxygen or chlorine, bromine, and iodine). We thus found patterns we can use to classify the elements.”

This system, based on chemical bonds, rearranges the elements in a new way. Some elements remain grouped together, such as halogens, because they bond the same way; but others are separated, like silicon and carbon, which, when bonded, form very different compounds.

It’s a flexible system, the researchers said, that can be customized across multiple disciplines - not just chemistry, but engineering, environmental sciences, and hydrology, for example.

“Our results contribute to the undergoing generalization of network theory to hypergraphs, where the traditional network description as a graph is being abstracted to that of hypergraphs as a mean to model complex relations among multiple entities,” they wrote in their paper.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Hubble sets sights on an explosive galaxy

When massive stars die at the end of their short lives, they light up the cosmos with bright, explosive bursts of light and material known as supernovae. A supernova event is incredibly energetic and intensely luminous—so much so that it forms what looks like an especially bright new star that slowly fades away over time.

These exploding stars glow so incredibly brightly when they first form that they can be spotted from afar using telescopes such as the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope. The subject of this image, a spiral galaxy named NGC 4051—about 45 million light-years from Earth—has hosted multiple supernovae in past years. The first was spotted in 1983 (SN 1983I), the second in 2003 (SN 2003ie), and the most recent in 2010 (SN 2010br). These explosive events were seen scattered throughout the center and spiral arms of NGC 4051.

SN 1983I and SN 2010br were both categorized as Type Ic supernovae. This type of supernova is produced by the core collapse of a massive star that has lost its outer layer of hydrogen and helium, either via winds or by mass transfer to a companion star. Because of this, Type Ic—and also Type Ib—supernovae are sometimes referred to as stripped core-collapse supernovae.

NGC 4501 sits in the southern part of a cluster of galaxies known as the Ursa Major I Cluster. This cluster is especially rich in spirals such as NGC 4051, and is a subset of the larger Virgo Supercluster, which also houses the Milky Way.

(Source: phys.org)

Magic and mystery on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland

First light at Callanish. The stone circle on the Hebridean island of Lewis may be 5,000 years old, but it would not do to keep it waiting. Besides, coming here at daybreak is, from certain perspectives, positively tardy. Emma Rennie, a local photographer, considers 2am the best time to visit. “It’s beyond mindblowing,” she told me, ahead of my journey. “There’s silence, which the world is so short of nowadays, and millions of stars. I feel small and insignificant, and I love it.”



The Callanish Stones on Lewis predate Stonehenge. (Photograph: Kippiss/Getty Images)

Callanish – or Calanais in Gaelic – comprises 49 standing stones laid out in a shape that, seen from above, suggests a Celtic cross. Despite this resemblance, the site long predates Christianity and, indeed, Stonehenge. The drama is heightened by its location on a ridge above a loch. You can gaze across the water to other prehistoric sites nearby – Calanais II and Calanais III. Like Led Zeppelin albums, the stone circles around here are numbered, and they are heavy. The central monolith at Callanish is almost five meters tall and weighs around 4½ tons. It has a pelt of lichen in pistachio green.

This is one of the delights of Callanish, and something you can’t get from the photographs – the look of the stones up close, and the tingling pleasure of the way they feel beneath your palm. Swirls, crevices, bright patches of pink granite ... each stone offers a drone’s-eye view of some desert landscape. The oystercatchers and swallows, peeping and piping overhead, have the right idea. Don’t get too close: you could get lost in those patterns and never find your way out again.

What, though, was Callanish for? The idea that this was some sort of druidic temple draws the crowds, especially at the summer solstice. The visitor center and information panels play it safe with a lot of “perhaps” and “possibly”; the purpose of the stones, they say, remains a mystery. When I visit Callanish expert Margaret Curtis at her home nearby, she offers greater certainty: the site, she believes, was built as a solar and lunar observatory.

“Be careful of the hairy caterpillars, won’t you?” she says, leading the way through her garden to the exhibition space in an outbuilding where she can better explain her theories. The caterpillars, which have white mohicans, drop from nettles and scout out of the way as we pass. Curtis is 78, with white pigtails and star-patterned wellies, and has devoted much of her life to the study of the island’s prehistoric sites.

Brought up in Warwickshire, she moved to Lewis in 1974, fed up with the urbanization of the English countryside. She and her young children would take long walks, getting to know the landscape, and in this way developed a knack for finding long-lost standing stones. She discovered the broken tip of one of the Callanish stones being used as part of a wall, located another stone missing from the site’s eastern arm lying beneath the peat, and once identified an unrecorded stone circle while going into Stornoway, the island’s biggest town, on the bus to do her shopping. “That,” she says, “was quite nice.” Curtis is firmly in favor of Callanish getting Unesco world heritage listing – “to recognize the ability our forefathers had” – but she herself might be considered a treasure of the island.

(Source: The Guardian)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic Areas of Istanbul

Situated in a strategic location on the Bosphorus peninsula between the Balkans and Anatolia, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, Istanbul has been associated with major political, religious and artistic events for more than 2,000 years.

Its masterpieces include the ancient Hippodrome of Constantine, the 6th-century Hagia Sophia and the 16th-century Suleymaniye Mosque, all now under threat from population pressure, industrial pollution and uncontrolled urbanization.



The distinctive and characteristic skyline of Istanbul was built up over many centuries and encompasses the Hagia Sophia whose vast dome reflects the architectural and decorative expertise of the 6th century, the 15th century Fatih complex and Topkapi Palace - that was continually extended until the 19th century, the Suleymaniye Mosque complex and Sehzade Mosque complex, works of the chief architect Sinan, reflecting the climax of Ottoman architecture in the 16th century, the 17th century Blue Mosque and the slender minarets of the New Mosque near the port completed in 1664.

Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list as the historic areas of Istanbul, the property embraces the Archaeological Park, at the tip of the Historic peninsula; the Suleymaniye quarter with Suleymaniye Mosque complex, bazaars and vernacular settlement around it; the Zeyrek area of settlement around the Zeyrek Mosque (the former church of the Pantocrator), and the area along both sides of the Theodosian land walls including remains of the former Blachernae Palace.

The Historic Areas of Istanbul include the key attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of Istanbul as the parts of the city that had escaped major changes and deterioration in the 19th and 20th centuries and were already protected by national legislation at the time of inscription.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran to facilitate foreign tourist arrivals

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday issued a decree on facilitating foreign tourist arrivals in the country, saying that visa-stamping waivers should be extended to all airports across the country.

From all the airports of the country, foreign tourists can travel to Iran without their passports being physically stamped or marked, IRNA quoted Ali Rabiei, the government spokesman, as saying.

“This decision could help bringing more tourists to Iran, and people can travel easily and without fear [of possible

U.S. penalties for ones visiting the Islamic Republic],” the official stated.

Arrangements in this regard will be ready soon to be implemented at all airports in the country, he added.

Last November, Iran started issuing electronic visas -- without any entry or exit stamps -- for those traveling to the country, in a bid to facilitate tourist inflow and to cope with sanctions recently reimposed by the U.S.

In 2018, Washington announced those travelers who would visit certain countries from other economic projects; it means cooperation and unity among different to enter the U.S.



Passengers exit an Air France plane after it landed at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini International Airport, south of the capital Tehran.

Rouhani on Tuesday inaugurated a new passenger terminal within the Imam Khomeini International Airport in southern Tehran.

Addressing the ceremony, Rouhani said “The opening of this terminal is different from other economic projects; it means cooperation and unity among different

sectors in completing such an important social, economic and cultural project.”

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.

Tabriz to host major exhibits of tourism, handicrafts

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Iranian city of Tabriz, which was once an influential adherent of the Silk Road corridor and a gateway to Europe, is to play host to major exhibits of tourism and handicrafts, IRNA reported.

Tabriz is set to hold the 9th National Handicrafts Exhibition and the 1st Tourism Exhibition concurrently at Tabriz International Exhibition Center from July 2 to 6, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

A total of 210 stalls will be set up for the handicrafts exhibit that will run by artisans and craftspeople from all over the country, deputy provincial tourism chief said.

Some 50 pavilions is being made to host the tourism event, Farshad Behafarin added.

Talking about concurrent schedules for handicrafts and tourism exhibits, the official said, “We consider that an important factor for introducing talents, capacities and capabilities of the cultural heritage and tourism of East Azarbaijan province.”

“Considering the fact that Tabriz city has become one of the most important travel destinations in the past three years, this exhibition can be a platform for developing this

industry in the province.”

Capital of East Azarbaijan province, Tabriz, which is well-soaked in history and culture for millennia, embraces several historical and religious sites, including Jameh Mosque of Tabriz and Arg of Tabriz, and UNESCO-registered Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex to name a few.

The ancient city was declared a world craft city of carpet weaving by the World Craft in 2016. It also bore the title of 2018 Islamic Tourism Capital last year.

Tabriz became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295–1304) and his successor. Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades later the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital, it was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz.

The city retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548, when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital westward to Qazvin. During the next two centuries, Tabriz changed hands several times between Persia and Ottoman Empire. During the World War I, the city was temporarily occupied by Turkish and then Soviet troops.

Ambassadors’ wives tour Qazvin attractions

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — On Tuesday, several wives of ambassadors to Iran made a one-day tour of Qazvin, visiting attractions and holding talks with local entrepreneurs of the ancient province.

Some wives of Iranian diplomats were also on the tour, which was conducted by Maryam Imanieh, the spouse of Iranian Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, ILNA reported.

They met with a group of female entrepreneurs and managers of economic enterprises exchanging views on females’



roles on Iran’s economy and its untapped potential in this regard, the report said.

The provincial capital, which has the same name, is a major tourist destination with a wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct, some quirky museums and a handful of decent eating options. Famed for carpets and seedless grapes, the city was once the capital of the mighty Persian Empire under Safavids from 1548-98. For most foreign travelers Qazvin is also primarily the staging point for excursions to the famous Castles of the Assassins and trekking in the sensational Alamut Valley.

New study shows how environmental disruptions affected ancient societies

LSU College of the Coast & Environment Distinguished Professor Emeritus John Day has collaborated with archaeologists on a new analysis of societal development. They report that over the past 10,000 years, humanity has experienced a number of foundational transitions, or “bottlenecks.” During these periods of transition, the advance or decline of societies was related to energy availability in the form of a benign climate and other factors.

“Studying the factors that led to the advancement and contraction of past societies provides insight into how our globalized society might become more or less sustainable,” Day said.

Day’s collaborators include Joel Gunn of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, William Folan of the Universidad Autonoma de Campeche in Mexico and Matthew Moerschbaecher of the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinators Office. Gunn and Folan are Mayan archaeologists and Moerschbaecher is a graduate of LSU’s oceanography program.

With the human population having exceeded the

capacity of Earth’s resources, this analysis suggests that a transition toward sustainability for the current energy-dense, globalized industrial society will be very difficult if not impossible without dramatic changes.

The authors say that these past transitions were caused by a combination of social, astronomical and biogeophysical events such as volcanic eruptions, changes in solar emissions, sea-level rise and ice volume, biogeochemical and ecological changes, and major social and technological innovations. One example is the worldwide

A new study shows that over the past 10,000 years, as periods of transition, the advance or decline of societies was related to energy availability in the form of a benign climate and other factors.

Hawaiian Airlines is ‘fastest airline’ in U.S., according to Forbes report

Travelers hoping for the zippiest trips might be wise to avoid booking with Alaska Airlines, according to new data.

The folks at Forbes recently teamed up with Aerospace Engineering and Research Associates (AERA) to determine the fastest airlines operating in the United States, and the numbers were not as kind as the Department of Transportation’s on-time rates would lead some fliers to believe.

“Airlines like to talk about their on-time rates, a bragging right that helps attract frequent business travelers and offsets PR disasters like bumped or mishandled passengers,” the Forbes report reads.

“But the statistics, which have been compiled by the Department of Transportation since 1987, have major flaws, including a forgiving standard:

If a flight lands within 15 minutes of its scheduled arrival time, DOT counts it as on time.”

To determine what Forbes believes to be a more accurate number, analysts at AERA recorded the actual “block time” — or the flight time between

AERA then “estimated the shortest repeatable flight time” for each U.S. route that had at least ten flights per year. This time was then compared to the average “block time” for each specific airline that operates this route.

Forbes used the Miami-to-LaGuardia route as an example: AERA found the minimum “block time” to be 164 minutes, “Airlines’ actual flight times varied from an average of 172 minutes (Frontier) to 192 minutes (American),” the report states.

Forbes’ final rankings for fastest airline were listed as follows: Hawaiian Airlines; Southwest Airlines; Allegiant Air; Delta Air Lines; Spirit Airlines; JetBlue; Frontier Airlines; United Airlines; American Airlines, and Alaska Airlines.

Forbes noted that Alaska Airlines, which ended up in last place on their list of 10 fastest airlines, was recently ranked third by the Department of Transportation’s on-time ratings, while Southwest, which ranked second, came in fifth on the DoT’s list.

Forbes also warned that Hawaiian Airlines’ block times may have been helped by the “gentle,” generally less disruptive weather on many of its flight routes between the Hawaiian islands. By the same token, Alaska Airlines,



which operates more flights in Alaska, may be hindered by the state’s airports, which have runways further from the gate when compared to some other major airports.

(Source: MSN)

Tech solutions for waste management in Iran

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – Waste segregation and management in Iran, especially in big cities, has been a challenge for years.

In late April, Tehran province department of environment announced that approximately 25% of the waste generated in Iran is recyclable. Everyday 8,000 tons of waste is being transferred to landfills in Tehran but not even one kilogram of it is recycled as waste segregation at source is not being practiced.

Recycling is of great importance as waste has a huge negative impact on the natural environment. Harmful chemicals and greenhouse gasses are released from rubbish in landfill sites. Recycling helps to reduce the pollution caused by waste as well as reduce the need for raw materials.

However, generation of waste in metropolis of Tehran has dropped by 1,000 tons per day in the current year (started March 21) compared to a year earlier, director general of Tehran Waste Management Organization affiliated to Tehran Municipality has said.

Technology and startups plan to find a solution for recycling waste and promoting waste segregation through implementing different plans. The Mehr News Agency released a report on Wednesday introducing some of these technology-based solutions as below.

■ Platform to manage urban solid waste

An Iranian knowledge-based company at Sharif University of Technology's science and technology park designed a platform to manage urban solid waste.

Its application, developed by researchers from Sharif University of Technology and Amirkabir University, will be initiated in late June in Tehran, the company's founder Ali Azarian announced.

The application is available in three versions for Android, iOS and web for small and mass solid waste producers and consumers (contractors), he explained.

Based on artificial intelligence and automatic procedure, it decreases operational expenses as well as traffic on road, he added.

The platform register request for delivering solid waste at the origin. The delivery cars collect the solid waste at a specific time, he said.

With this platform, which uses smart management, the number of personnel is decreased, he added.

The absence of infrastructure for waste segregation at origin, motivation for citizens and enough information in the field of waste segregation are the main problems Iran deals with, he explained.

The application tries to manage all above-mentioned issues, he said.

Electronic wallet, cinema ticket and online taxi are other services which are provided by the application, he added.

■ **Biodegradable plastic on the way**
“We plan to design an additive masterbatch (MB) to biodegradable plastic,” producer Mahdieh Zaji said.

Masterbatch is a solid or liquid additive for plastic used for coloring plastics (color masterbatch) or imparting other properties



to plastics (additive masterbatch).

There are two types of masterbatch. Color masterbatch is used to add color to the plastic. By blending different color additives you achieve the desired color and additive masterbatch, which is used to give other properties to the plastic. These properties include the texture of the plastic.

■ Generating electricity from wet garbage

A knowledge-based company at the Isfahan Science and Technology Town has manufactured a machine for generating electricity from wet garbage.

“Due to the high statistics of waste generation in Iran, we decide to design the machine in three different capacities of one, three and five tons,” the company's managing director Hamidreza Azizian said.

The machine can be installed in different academic centers and neighborhoods and in this way, there is no need to transfer garbage in cities, he explained.

■ The procedure

The waste can be converted into electricity during a procedure. To turn organic waste into electricity, organic waste is first drained into an underground digester. Through an anaerobic process, the waste is broken down or digested in the digester. This process of energy recovery releases methane gas. Once the biogas is released from the organic waste, it is then channeled through a valve. Now, the gas is useful for cooking energy and gas heat, but it can also be converted to electricity by combusting it.

Finally, the combustion of the biogas heats water in a boiler, which then moves turbines to generate electricity. Once the electricity is converted into a usable form, it will provide a home or community with electrical power.

■ Waste electric incinerator machine

A student team from Islamic Azad University

branch of Tabriz has designed a waste garbage electric incinerator machine.

The machine is equipped with smart automatic control and is completely eco-friendly, one of designers Babak Khedmati explained.

■ Another smart application for solid waste

The platform provides integration system for waste recycling booths, affiliated to municipalities and contains six web-based applications.

Collection of solid waste from origin as well as waste recycling booths are the services provided by the platform designed by a startup team, the director Aidin Khankeshipour said.

The platform is operating in District 22 of Tehran and is planned to be applicable in districts 15, 1 and 2 as well as in other cities, he added.

■ Smart garbage monitoring

An Iranian knowledge-based company has designed a smart waste management system based on radio frequency identification (RFID).

The waste management organization should use new technologies in order to monitor the quality and quantity of its facilities and services, the director Mehdi Baratpour said.

The first step is identification of garbage bins in cities, which is done by developing a data bank and installing two pieces of tags, which are resistant against climatic conditions, he explained.

Each bin should have a specific code which implies its maintenance and cleaning and should have an ID card as well, he said.

The sweeper, garbage-disposal car and garbage bin are saved in tags and can be reviewed by inspectors of the organization, he explained.

Effective segregation of wastes means that less waste goes to landfill which makes it cheaper and better for people and the environment. It is also important to segregate for public health. In particular, hazardous wastes can cause long term health problems, so it is very important

that they are disposed of correctly and safely and not mixed in with the normal waste coming out of home or office.

In an environmental context, the use of RFID (radio frequency identification) and load cell sensor technology can be employed for not only bringing down waste management costs, but also to facilitate automating and streamlining waste (e.g., garbage, recycling, and green) identification and weight measurement processes for designing smart waste management systems.

Waste management is metropolises especially northern cities of the country have become a serious issue for the past few years. Unfortunately waste segregation at source is not being fully practice in the country.

■ Five types of waste

According to 4waste.com, waste can be classified into five types which are all commonly found around the house. These include liquid waste, solid rubbish, organic waste, recyclable rubbish and hazardous waste.

■ Liquid waste

Liquid waste is commonly found both in households as well as in industries. This waste includes dirty water, organic liquids, wash water, waste detergents and even rainwater.

■ Solid rubbish

Solid rubbish can include a variety of items found in household along with commercial and industrial locations.

Solid rubbish is commonly broken down into the following types:

Plastic waste – This consists of bags, containers, jars, bottles and many other products that can be found in household. Plastic is not biodegradable, but many types of plastic can be recycled. Plastic should not be mixed in with regular waste, it should be sorted and placed in recycling bin.

Paper/card waste – This includes packaging materials, newspapers, cardboard and other products. Paper can easily be recycled and reused.

Tins and metals – This can be found in various forms throughout home. Most metals can be recycled.

Ceramics and glass – These items can easily be recycled.

■ Organic waste

Organic waste is another common household. All food waste, garden waste, manure and rotten meat are classified as organic waste. Over time, organic waste is turned into manure by microorganisms. However, this does not mean that one can dispose them anywhere.

Organic waste in landfills causes the production of methane, so it must never be simply discarded with general waste.

■ Recyclable rubbish

Recyclable rubbish includes all waste items that can be converted into products that can be used again. Solid items such as paper, metals, furniture and organic waste can all be recycled.

■ Hazardous waste

Hazardous waste includes all types of rubbish that are flammable, toxic, corrosive and reactive.

These items can harm human beings as well as the environment and must be disposed of correctly.

Recycling is of great importance as waste has a huge negative impact on the natural environment. Recycling helps to reduce the pollution caused by waste as well as reduce the need for raw materials

Iran, Switzerland discuss sci-tech cooperation

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – The 2nd meeting of Iran-Switzerland Science-Technology Working Group was held from June 16 to 19 in Bern, Switzerland, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Headed by Deputy Minister of Science, Research and Technology for International Affairs Hossein Salar-Amoli, they discussed implementing 16 joint projects and boosting

scientific technology cooperation between the two countries.

Chancellors of Isfahan University of Technology, Sharif University of Technology, Khajeh Nasir Toosi University of Technology, Shiraz University, University of Zanjan, Iran Polymer and Petrochemical Institute, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences as well as Tehran University of Medical Sciences and

Islamic Azad University were the members of the working group.

The first meeting of the working group was held in 2018 in Tehran attended by representatives from 19 Iranian universities and Swiss academic institutes.

Drawing up the roadmap of further academic cooperation between the two countries was also discussed during the meeting.



Traditional industries on the verge of an innovation boom

What do you think about when you hear the terms “disruption” and “technological innovation”? What industries and sectors come to mind?

Autonomous cars, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, genetic testing, cryptocurrencies and various other technologies likely populate the top of your list.

However, if you strictly limit your perception of innovation to these flashy concepts, you could be missing out on transformational booms that are happening across industries that wouldn't be categorized as cutting edge.

Because of significant injections of investment capital and a trauchof fresh ideas, new companies and opportunities are arising in traditional fields that may challenge your perception about which markets are hot versus which are not.

Here are industries that are on the verge of innovation and transformational boom:

■ Baby boomer and senior services

The implications of an aging population in the United States is well known and documented. Yet, by some standards, this demographic is grossly under-served.

Seniors have critical consumer needs, ranging from money-management needs to transportation requirements, to basic social and community needs. The size of these demands will only grow as the population continues to.

Fortunately, it seems that 2019 may be an inflection point where this market is beginning to get addressed in unique and meaningful ways.

To understand the sheer size of the market, you should



know that this portion of the population maintains control of nearly 54% of all United States household wealth, with projections showing this number growing drastically through 2030.

While this is only a small sample size of fast-growing companies in the space, they represent the start of a larger wave of startups serving a big market.

■ Legal services

Similar to healthcare and finance, legal expertise is a closely guarded domain where professionals control the flow of information and demand dictates how high a customer's bill can go. Most legal services that a consumer needs require jumping through hoops and speaking with specialized experts

to get the guidance you need.

While platforms have made some processes easier, the vast majority of legal needs still requires hands-on expertise and servicing. For example, things like estate planning, divorce settlements, legal defense work, among numerous other services, demand large hourly-bills and significant research into historical or situational circumstances.

With the advancements and sophistication of artificial intelligence and machine learning, this is an area where the sphere of services will get unraveled and simplified significantly. Last year, one startup called Atrium raised over \$65 million to address part of this challenge, using technology to digitize the document creation and review process and lower the cost of services.

Their customers, which are other startups and small businesses, can now minimize expenses usually allocated for these important items.

■ Education

The concept of education has forever been a paramount part of society, but the value of certain educational institutions have come into question in recent years.

Amid rising university costs and student debt surpassing \$1.4 trillion, post-secondary education is facing a crisis because many graduates aren't receiving the value of a degree that they were once promised.

Paying \$100k for an education that gets you a \$40k/year job doesn't necessarily make sense, yet that is the case many graduates fall into. (Source: forbes.com)

First Iranian accelerator for seafood to be set up

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** – The first Iranian accelerator center for seafood will be set up in order to transform the ideas of entrepreneurs into business, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

The biotechnology development council of vice presidency for science and technology has agreed on the formation of an accelerator with one of the most renowned seafood producers in the country.

The accelerator center will be probably launched by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020).

Demands of the technology and the food industry as well as capacities of the applicant companies are observed for setting up the accelerator.

In June 2016, Iran's Fishery Organization announced that the annual per capita consumption of seafood in Iran is 10 kg against the global per capita fish consumption of more than 20 kg.

The consumption rate is also low at only 14 kg in the northern Mazandaran Province bordering the Caspian Sea, while the average rate of fish consumption is 40 kg in other coastal cities of the world.

Meanwhile, in late May, the Organization announced that the annual fishery output is anticipated to reach 455,000 tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2020).



According to Goldstein Research, global seafood market is expected to reach USD 150 billion by 2024, growing at a CAGR of 4.3% over the forecast period 2016-2024. High nutritional values of seafood are increasing the demand for seafood across the globe which is thus propelling the global seafood industry growth. Global seafood market segmentation has been done on the basis of type of seafood, product type, distribution channel and geography.

Italy's banks to use blockchain to boost settlements and improve transparency

Italian banks will deploy blockchain technology to run reconciliations starting in March 2020, financial technology news outlet Finextra reported on June 18.

The Italian Banking Association (ABI) has announced that Italy's banks will integrate distributed ledger technology (DLT) into internal processes to boost settlements. The deployment of blockchain is also set to improve transparency in transactions between banks and efficiency of communication between counterparties.

The initiative comes as part of a program managed by ABI Lab dubbed Spunta Project, a blockchain interbank solution based on blockchain consortium R3's open-source distributed ledger platform. The ABI began testing Spunta in February. At the time, Spunta was undergoing testing by 18 banks that together represent 78% of the Italian banking sector by number of employees.

ABI's blockchain-powered interbank system successfully passed the initial phase of testing last October, with the participation of 14 local banks. The application of blockchain was also expected to assist in specific aspects of banking operations that usually involve a number of complex discrepancies such as storing data on multiple nodes shared by the banks, with the implementation of smart contracts.

In February of this year, the Italian House of Representatives approved a bill defining DLT and blockchain, as well as the technical criteria that smart contracts will have to comply with in order to have legal validity.

In May, Prince Lorenzo de' Medici, president of the eponymous Medici Bank, said he had been motivated by advancements in blockchain technology to start the new venture, which aims to “create seamless, digital customer experiences and expand financial opportunity across global markets.”

(Source: Cointelegraph)

Top five cities in the world for innovation

The 2thinknow makes a yearly estimate of how friendly cities are for innovation, taking into account where a city has been, as well as multiple indicators like cultural assets, human infrastructure, and networked markets. The top spot used to be obvious—Silicon Valley—but it's not there anymore. Let's take a look at the top five cities for innovation.

• Tokyo: Some may think of Japan as the tech leader of the 1990s, but Tokyo's support of new technologies, some of which is spurred by the 2020 Olympics, put them on top. If you're watching trends in robotics, you might have suspected this.

• London: The old financial capital of Europe has plenty of money skimming around to fund startups. London held the top spot last year, but uncertainties over Brexit may have had an effect.

• San Francisco and San Jose, aka, Silicon Valley: The home of Apple, Google, Facebook, HP, and the list goes on.... You might blame the tech backlash for the ranking, but keep in mind it's up from number four from the last time.

• New York: The city that never sleeps dropped two spots this time. Certainly driving Amazon's second headquarters out of town wasn't a good look.

• Los Angeles: Silicon Beach propped Tinseltown up a notch. Companies like Snap and Spaces call LA home, as do the studios for every big streaming video provider.

The crowd is tight after the top five, with Singapore at six and Boston, Toronto, Paris, Sydney, and Chicago all neck and neck. (Source: TechRepublic)

SOCIETY

TEHRAN

Azerbaijan calls for stronger ties with Iranian labor unions

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Azerbaijan’s Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Population Sahil Babayev has called for cementing ties with Iranian labor unions.

According to a report by Iran’s Ministry of Cooperation, Labor and Social Welfare, Babayev made the remarks over a visit with Iranian Labor Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari on the sidelines of the 108th Session of the International Labor Conference being held in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 10-21.

Cooperating with labor unions in both countries would be very beneficial, Babayev said.



He went on to say that “we are inclined to use Iran’s experience in employment and entrepreneurship.”

The Azerbaijani minister added that “we are also supporting people with disabilities and we wish to use your experience in this regard as well.”

The Iranian minister, Shariatmadari, for his part, named various capabilities and services provided by his ministry, including vocational trainings, health and safety at work, and the ministry’s capacities in the economy sector.

He further highlighted that there are various arenas to collaborate on for the two ministries.

Developing a joint action plan and signing a memorandum of understanding on exchanging workforce between the two countries are among examples of cooperation between the two sides, he added.

He expressed hope that a delegation from Azerbaijan will travel to Tehran upon an official invitation by Iran’s Ministry of Cooperation, Labor and Social Welfare.

Iran and Azerbaijan can also cooperate on social security, economic affairs and pension funds, Shariatmadari suggested.

This year the 108th International Labor Conference brings together over 6,000 delegates from around the globe to find solutions to the challenges of the future of the world of work, and celebrate the Centenary of the International Labor Organization.

The conference, which is often called an international parliament of labor, has several main tasks.

The crafting and adoption of international labor standards in the form of conventions and recommendations, supervising the application of conventions and recommendations at the national level, and representing a forum where social and labor questions of importance to the entire world are discussed are some of the main tasks.

The conference also passes resolutions that provide guidelines for the ILO’s general policy and future activities.

The agenda of the 108th session of the International Labor Conference will cover thematic debates and events connected to the future of work, including various centenary initiatives.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Singapore’s baby shortage

(24, August 2000)
Worried that falling birthrates may damage Singapore’s economic success, the Prime Minister encouraged citizens to have more children. BBC reporter Clive Myrie reported.

This isn’t the first time Singapore’s leaders have asked citizens to **‘go forth and multiply’** for the good of the nation. In the early nineteen-eighties, **‘the then prime minister’**, Lee Kuan Yew, not a man **‘to mince his words’**, said it was the duty of every Singaporean to do their bit and it was important the well-educated had as many babies as the less educated to maintain economic standards. The **‘elitist undertone smacked of eugenics’** and the comments **‘caused a stir’**. Now the current Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, in trying to address Singapore’s declining birthrate, has **‘shied away from’** similar language but nonetheless made it clear that the island state’s population was **‘shrinking’** to unacceptable levels.

Singapore is one of the most **‘prosperous’** countries in the world and the fear, of course, is that falling birthrates might lead to a skills **‘shortage’**. As well as the **‘baby bonus scheme’**, Prime Minister Goh says his government is to encourage more immigration as a way of bringing in more talent and he **‘cited’** America as a country whose economic strength was based on letting in skilled foreign workers.

■ **Words**
go forth and multiply: expression from the Christian Bible meaning ‘go and have children’
the then Prime Minister: the Prime Minister at that time
to mince his words: if you don’t mince your words then you are direct, you say what you mean
elitist undertone smacked of eugenics: the suggestion that well-educated people should have as many children as less educated people is compared in a negative way to the to the study of how to improve the human race by carefully selecting parents (eugenics)
caused a stir: caused discussion and opposition
shied away from: did not want to get involved in, wanted to avoid
shrinking: if something is shrinking, it is getting smaller
prosperous: financially successful
shortage: when there is not enough of something there is a shortage
baby bonus scheme: plan or system with money or other incentives for couples that have children
cited: if you use something as an example you cite it

(Source: BBC)



Interior Ministry, Sharif University, Traffic Police, Cycling Federation to promote clean transportation

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The Municipalities and Village Administrators Organization, affiliated to the Ministry of Interior, along with Traffic Police, Sharif University of Technology, and Cycling Federation of Iran have agreed to cooperate on promoting clean transportation, IRNA news agency reported on Tuesday.

Within the framework of a memorandum of understanding signed between the Municipalities and Village Administrators Organization and Traffic Police, the two bodies will cooperate on encouraging clean transportation among the public by promoting the culture of using public and clean transport options, the report highlighted.

Moreover, the Municipalities and Village Administrators Organization and Sharif University of Technology’s energy research institute have agreed on advancing clean transportation through research and developing modern technologies in urban transportation.

Domestic production of clean transportation to decrease currency outflow, developing electric transportation technologies and utilizing them in production of motorcycles, bicycles, and scooters and supporting startups and knowledge-based companies in this regard are among the other issues agreed upon by the Municipalities and Village Administrators Organization and Sharif University of Technology.

And finally, as per an agreement reached between the Municipalities and Village Administrators Organization and the Cycling Federation, the federation is tasked with promoting cycling among the public and most importantly students and recognizing cities with best potentials for cycling.

Current transportation systems come along with a wide range of problems including global warming, environmental



Today over 90% of all road transportation relies on oil, going hand-in-hand with the total global oil consumption, which stands at 60%. Out of the total greenhouse gas emissions, road transport takes up a lion share, 75% to be precise and this trend is projected to increase in the future if it continues unabated.

degradation, health implications (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual), and emission of greenhouse gases. Transportation is the sector being targeted since it is the major contributor to greenhouse gas emission. The immediate and obvious solution to this wanton environmental pollution is greening of the transport sector. Thus green transportation is being developed to promote transportation practice or vehicle that is eco-friendly and does not have any negative impact on the immediate environment.

According to the envibrary.com, today over 90% of all road transportation relies on oil, going hand-in-hand with the total global oil consumption, which stands at 60%. Out of the total greenhouse gas emissions, road transport takes up a lion share, 75% to be precise and this trend is projected to increase in the future if it continues unabated. All this puts a lot of pressure on the national governments to devise policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as oil demands.

Half of corals survived bleaching in Chabahar Port

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Based on the latest field operation carried out by Chabahar Oceanography Center in southeastern Chabahar Port, half of the corals which have turned completely white survived the bleaching event, ISNA news agency reported on Tuesday.

According to the results of the abovementioned field operation nearly 43.8 percent of the corals bleached in Chabahar Port mostly species of staghorn coral and cauliflower coral survived bleaching.

Last summer a vast bleaching event occurred in the area, the report highlighted.

Since the Iranian calendar year of 1383 (March 2004-March 2005) the Iranian National Institute for Oceanography Atmospheric Science has been preparing annual reports on the state of coral reefs in the country, sharing the reports with the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN). Warmer water temperatures can result in coral bleach-



ing. When water is too warm, corals will expel the algae (zooxanthellae) living in their tissues causing the coral to turn completely white. This is called coral bleaching. When a coral bleaches, it is not dead. Corals can survive a bleaching event, but they are under more stress and are subject to mortality.

According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, climate change and ocean acidification can result in mass coral bleaching events, increased susceptibility to disease, slower growth and reproductive rates, and degraded reef structure.

There are no quick fixes when it comes to a changing climate. In the long term, coral reefs around the world will benefit the most from the reduction of greenhouse gases. In the short term, we can improve coral reef resilience by addressing local stressors, like runoff from land-based sources of pollution and overharvesting of fish.

Robust and coordinated action needed to save Asia-Pacific’s forests: new FAO report

Highlighting the ongoing decline of biodiversity and resilience in natural forests in the Asia-Pacific region, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in its newest comprehensive report regarding the future of forest in Asia-Pacific region has asked country members to take firm measures to reverse this trend.

According to the report titled “Forest Future: Sustainable pathways for forests, landscapes and people in the Asia-Pacific region,” forests and landscapes in the Asia-Pacific region are under increasing pressure from climate change, economic growth, infrastructure development, forest conversion, conflicts and other stressors. Biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in natural forests are declining along with the capacity of these forests to deliver water

and soil protection, climate regulation, and other important factors.

This report finds that sustainable development will only be achieved in the region if we commit to transformational change by working cross-sectorally and across borders, investing massively to restore forests and landscapes, reforming forest tenure and outdated institutions, empowering communities, and embracing innovation.

This new FAO publication asserts that demand for forest products and ecosystem services goes beyond borders. Water, wildlife, fire and forest pests don’t recognize administrative or sectoral boundaries.

Primary forests are those forests largely unaffected by human activities, and they are therefore extremely important for biodiversity conservation and other reasons. Of the

region’s 723 million hectares of forest, this reports reveals that, only 19 percent (140 million hectares) is primary, which is much lower than the global average (32 percent). The conservation of primary forests in the region and the sustainable management of other natural forests are urgently needed to safeguard biodiversity, ecosystem services and the quality and health of the physical environment.

According to FAO report the region’s population is projected to grow from 4.1 billion people in 2017 to 4.7 billion in 2050. Home to 55 percent of the world’s population, the Asia-Pacific region contains only 18 percent of global forests. There is an urgent need for societies to reduce consumption, increase reuse, and sustainably produce biomaterials

in forests. We need to find innovative ways to balance competing demands that will benefit us all.

Realizing an aspirational future – and avoiding catastrophic outcomes – FAO urges all countries in the region to implement the seven robust actions recommended in this report. These are to 1) adopt adaptive landscape management; 2) increase cooperation among stakeholders; 3) improve forest quality; 4) invest in alternative economic models; 5) achieve good forest governance; 6) build resilience; and 7) commit sufficient resources for forest and landscape management. With strong political will, these actions will give countries the best chance of ensuring the sustainability of ecosystems, economies and communities.

(Source: FAO)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Kish to host World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2019

The 7th World Health Summit Regional Meeting will be held on April 29-30 in the Persian Gulf island of Kish, IRNA reported on Monday.

Ali Jafarian, international president of World Health Summit 2019, said that it is the first regional meeting in West Asia and North Africa to host 700 participants, including 150 foreign guests.

Pointing out that playing host to the event is an important opportunity for the country, he added that over 100 health experts from different countries have expressed readiness to attend the meeting.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“demi-”

■ **Meaning:** half or partly

■ **For example:** Putting deities and *demigods* aside, investors must also worry about interest-rate risk.

PHRASAL VERB

Hit out

■ **Meaning:** to try to hit someone

■ **For example:** When he felt someone grab him, he hit out wildly.

IDIOM

On the back burner

■ **Explanation:** decide to deal with an issue at a later date because you do not consider it to be that urgent or important
■ **For example:** When Julie was offered a promotion she put her MBA plans on the back burner.

نشست منطقه‌ای مجمع جهانی سلامت در کیش برگزار می شود

به گزارش روز دوشنبه ایرنا هفتمین نشست منطقه ای مجمع جهانی سلامت در روزهای ۹ و ۱۰ اردیبهشت ۹۸ در جزیره کیش برگزار می شود.

علی جعفریان نماینده دانشگاه علوم پزشکی تهران در مجمع جهانی سلامت گفت: این نخستین نشست منطقه‌ای در غرب آسیا و شمال افریقا است که قرار است ۷۰۰ شرکت کننده از جمله ۱۵۰ مهمان خارجی در آن حضور یابند.

جعفریان، میزبانی از این نشست منطقه‌ای را برای جمهوری اسلامی ایران فرصتی مهم دانست و گفت: حدود ۱۰۰ نفر از افراد سرشناس حوزه سلامت کشورهای مختلف جهان به عنوان سخنران برای شرکت در این نشست اعلام آمادگی کرده اند.

MEK operatives to carry out false flag ops in region

TEHRAN (MNA) – According to reports, Mojahedin-e Khalq has attempted to buy speed boats in the Persian Gulf to do false flag operations that can be blamed on Iran.

In an article on May 13 published on Iranian.com, Massoud Khodabandeh had warned that MEK operatives, with the help of U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton, were planning to conduct false flag operations in the Persian Gulf. And now, one month later, this prediction seems to come true as two oil tankers were attacked in the Sea of Oman on Thursday.

“An Albanian source told me off the record that alongside the delegation to the ship he witnessed the presence of Shish operatives taking some Farsi speakers on board the USS Abraham Lincoln who were not disembarked before the ship moved on. Kuwaiti media also reports that MEK operatives have been arrested attempting to buy speed boats in the Persian Gulf. Such a combination is highly concerning. MEK operatives were trained as suicide bombers by Saddam Hussein’s Republican Guard and in the MEK’s camps in Iraq. They have transferred this training to their new closed camp in Albania,” noted the author.

“Bolton’s unrelenting drive to attack Iran and his unstinting support for the MEK can only lead to one conclusion: MEK operatives, brought from Albania, will be deployed to carry out false flag ops that can be blamed on Iran – such as a suicide attack. Their unique value is that as Iranians they can be passed off as Iranian naval personnel. This ties in with the attempted purchase of speed boats which are used by the Iranian naval forces.



The attack on commercial vessels in the gulf for which no details are forthcoming hint that this was a trial run to see what Iran’s reaction would be. In this context, a false flag op that could trigger Bolton’s war in the Middle East is almost certainly already planned and underway,” the article adds.

It should be noted that Albania is now home to the Iranian Mojahedin-e Khalq terrorist cult (MEK) and John Bolton has long believed he can use the MEK to facilitate regime change in Iran.

Two oil tankers, one owned by Norway and the other by Japan, were struck by blasts in the Sea of Oman on Thursday. The U.S. was quick to point the finger of blame at the

Islamic Republic, a month after it accused Tehran of involvement in attacks that crippled four tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates. U.S. president Donald Trump said on Friday that Iran was behind Thursday’s blasts without providing evidence to back up his claim.

The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) terrorists also released a video late Thursday purportedly showing “Iranian sailors” removing a mine from the Japanese-owned Kokura Courageous’ hull. In the video released, a small boat is shown coming up to the side of the Japanese-owned tanker. An individual stands up on the bow of the boat and can be seen removing an object from

the tanker’s hull. The U.S. claims that the object is likely an unexploded mine.

Reports from Yemeni outlets also indicate that an armed group has been formed by the Israeli Mossad in cooperation with intelligence services of some Persian Gulf countries to carry out sabotage attacks in the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean. The Al-Najm al-Thagheb’s report quoted a former member of the Israeli Knesset by the name of ‘Talab Abu Arar’ as saying that Israel had a hand in the earlier attacks on four commercial vessels in the Fujairah port off the UAE coast and continued its attempts to create more tensions in cooperation with some Arab states in the region.

The report added that there have recently been several meetings between Israeli and Emirate officials that agreed on the formation of a new armed group comprised of radical Islamists to carry out sabotage attacks in the Indian Ocean, the Oman Sea, and parts of South Asia.

Citing informed sources, the Yemeni website said that the former members of the Yemeni Al-Qaeda group form the core of the new armed group, with their command stationed in Hadhramaut desert of Yemen under the supervision of Mossad and intelligence services of Arab states in the Persian Gulf.

According to the report, the armed group was formed 8 months ago and its members were trained in Israeli military bases in Eritrea and training bases of Arab countries. Their number is about 175, of which 80 were former members of Al-Qaeda in Yemen.

UN: ‘credible evidence’ links MbS to Khashoggi killing

TEHRAN (FNA) — Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman (MbS) should be investigated over the killing of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a UN rights expert concluded, citing “credible evidence”.

In her long anticipated report, which was released on Wednesday, UN extrajudicial executions investigator Agnes Callamard said Khashoggi’s death “constituted an extrajudicial killing for which the State of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is responsible”, Al-Jazeera reported.

Khashoggi’s killing by a team of Saudi operatives in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in early October provoked widespread revulsion and marred the image of the crown prince. Callamard stated that she had “determined that there is credible evidence, warranting further investigation of high-level Saudi Officials’ individual liability, including the crown prince’s”.

The report stressed that “no conclusion is made as to guilt. The only conclusion made is that there is credible evidence meriting further investigation, by a proper authority, as to whether the threshold of criminal responsibility has been met”.

Al-Jazeera’s diplomatic editor James Bays, reporting from the UN headquarters in New York, described the findings as “damning”.

“It’s a report that is pretty certain of who is to blame – she (Callamard) says Saudi Arabia is responsible for premeditated murder,” Bays said. “It completely blows away the official Saudi cover story that this was a botched plan to seize Khashoggi and take him back to Saudi Arabia,” he added.

There was no immediate reaction from Riyadh which was sent the 100-page report in advance.

Al-Jazeera’s Hashem Ahelbarra, reporting from outside of the Saudi consulate in Istanbul where Khashoggi was killed, stated that the report’s findings were likely to provide Turkey with “momentum” to put pressure on US President Donald Trump to “come out and take action against bin Salman”.

The report also noted that Saudi Arabia must apologise to Turkey for “abuse of diplomatic privileges”.

Callamard in her report confirmed earlier findings after a visit to Turkey this year that the evidence pointed to a brutal crime “planned and perpetrated” by Saudi officials. Khashoggi’s remains have not been found but Callamard has said that she and her team of forensic and legal experts had access to a part of “chilling and gruesome audio materials” of his death obtained by the Turkish intelligence agency.

Matthew Bryza, a former US ambassador and a non-resident senior fellow at the US-based Atlantic Council think-tank, noted that the findings made clear Khashoggi’s killing was “a premeditated murder, planned carefully”.

“The Saudi government must come up with an explanation for who ordered this, who’s responsible and where is the body,” Bryza told Al-Jazeera from Istanbul, adding that “this report builds and restores momentum for justice to be done”.

The CIA and some Western countries reportedly believe bin Salman, also known as MbS, ordered the operation to kill Khashoggi, a critic of the crown prince’s policies and Washington Post columnist. Saudi officials have denied these suspicions.

Callamard had earlier denounced the lack of transparency



at the kingdom’s secretive hearings for 11 suspects accused in the murder. She called on Saudi authorities to reveal the defendants’ names, the charges against them and the fate of 10 others initially arrested.

The Trump’s administration announced it was pressing its close Middle East ally Saudi Arabia to show “tangible progress” towards holding to account those behind the Khashoggi killing. Washington wants the Saudis to do so before the one-year anniversary of his murder, a senior administration official stated last week.

Callamard is due to present it on June 26 to the UN Human Rights Council, whose 47 member states include Saudi Arabia. The French national is also director of the Global Freedom of Expression initiative at Columbia University in New York.

Yemen warns to target UAE ports, airports if Emirati attacks go on

TEHRAN (FNA)- Yemeni Deputy Minister of Information Nasr Eddin Amer warned the UAE that the drone and missile units of the country’s army will strike Emirati ports and airports if Abu Dhabi does not stop anti-Yemen aggressions and support for the terrorist groups.

“The Saudi-led coalition’s war has entered its 5th year,” said the Yemeni minister in an interview with FNA on Tuesday, adding, “The war is still going on with massacre of the innocent, civilians, children and women in Yemen, and it is growing bigger, and the aggressors have laid an all-out blockade on the people of Yemen.”

“The operations of the Yemeni Army are in the framework of the natural right of self-defense against these aggressions to pose pressure on the invading states to

stop strikes against civilians and remove the blockade. These operations will go on to materialize these objectives [of us], and surely these goals will soon be met,” he highlighted.

Asked about the next step of the Yemeni Army against the assailants, Amer said, “Undoubtedly, air strikes by drone and missile units of the Yemeni Army will increase. Also on the battlefield, the Army has been conducting operations and unique attacks were staged along borders. Inside, also we are completely countering the mercenaries and armed people affiliated to the Saudi-led coalition.”

“All options are on the table in fighting against the invading states, as so far the Yemeni Army and popular forces have disrupted all calculations and equations of



the aggressors,” he highlighted.

“All airports of the aggressing states of Saudi Arabia and the UAE can be stricken by drone and missile units of the Yemeni

Army. These airports had already been hit. Striking vital targets, like ports and airports, in the invader states is among the options of the Yemeni Army,” he underscored.

“The UAE is playing an active role in the aggression against Yemen, and it is now occupying a number of Yemeni islands and ports, and is currently stoking further clashes inside the country with supporting terrorist groups in Yemen. Hence, the UAE will not remain safe, escaping from the Yemeni Army’s reaction, and if it does stop its aggressions, they will sooner or later witness our reaction,” he underlined.

On Monday, UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock painted a horrifying picture of the war in Yemen, saying about half a million people will die by 2022 if the war continues.

Disturbing video shows U.S. police officer aiming gun at black family

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A chilling video captured a police officer aiming a gun, yelling obscenities and threatening to shoot a black family in Phoenix, US state of Arizona, after their 4-year-old daughter walked out of a store with a doll last month.

Disturbing Video Shows US Police Officer Aiming Gun at Black Family

Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego reacted in a statement Saturday that “there is no situation in which this behavior is ever close to acceptable.”

Police Chief Jeri Williams launched an investigation into the confrontation after recently receiving the video that was recorded by a bystander. “I, like you, was disturbed by the language and the action of the officer,” she said in a Facebook posting, HuffPost reported.

Police released the video to the public. Another video

shot from a different angle, also taken by a witness, was posted to YouTube.

The officers involved in the confrontation have been assigned to desk duty. The couple is now suing the police department and the city of Phoenix for \$10 million.

The mayor of Phoenix also apologized and called a community meeting for this week amid public anger over the viral video.

Palestinian succumbs to wounds sustained from beatings by Israeli forces

TEHRAN (FNA)- A 60-year-old Palestinian man from occupied East Jerusalem succumbed to wounds he sustained when he was beaten by Israeli forces two weeks ago, according to local sources.

Mousa Abu Mayala, from Shufat refugee camp, was attacked by undercover Israeli soldiers and beaten in the chest in front of his house in the camp, Wafa reported. He was taken to hospital where he remained until he was

pronounced dead this morning.

Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds during the Six Day War in 1967. It later annexed East Jerusalem al-Quds in a move not recognized by the international community.

Tensions have been running high in the Israeli-occupied territories and the besieged Gaza Strip since December 2017, when President Donald Trump decided to recognize

Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel’s “capital” and moved the US embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied Palestinian city.

The decision has emboldened the Israeli regime which regularly opens fire on Palestinians.

Human rights groups have repeatedly slammed Tel Aviv for its shoot-to-kill policy, saying many of the Palestinians killed in such attacks did not pose any serious threat to Israelis.

Surveys that have worried the White House

“The president should win Texas, but it is no longer a fait accompli,” said Rob Jesmer, a top Cornyn adviser. “They are going to have to fight for it because I promise you this, the Democrats are already fighting for it.” At least some of those Republicans up for election next year may be able to find enough crossover voters to survive even if Trump loses their states. In 2016, 17 Republican senators won their elections by wider margins than President Trump won their states. But in battleground states, those Republicans who overperformed Trump did so by narrow margins. Rubio took 52 percent of the vote, 3 points higher than Trump’s 49 percent. Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) won 51 percent of the vote, just over 1 percentage point more than Trump’s 49.8 percent. Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) bested Trump’s take by a single percentage point, and Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) scored 3 points higher than Trump.

“Just because Trump loses a state doesn’t mean the Republican Senate candidate can’t win. Trump is going to lose some votes among Republicans who simply don’t like him, but they still may vote for the Senate candidates. Similarly, there may be some soft Democrats who would never vote for Trump but might vote for Joni Ernst,” Conant said. Republicans can survive if Trump loses their states by narrow margins, but “outperforming Trump by 7 points is hard,” Conant said. “That just puts us on defense in a lot of states.”

Conclusion

Florida Residents’ opposition to Donald Trump’s re-election as president of the United States is the worst possible news for him. In the 2016 presidential elections, Trump won the rival Democratic Party in states like Florida, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan. However, it seems that if the Presidential elections are held today in the United States, These important and decisive states are becoming signs of the defeat of Trump.

Many American analysts believed that, due to the slight difference in electoral trump votes with Hillary Clinton in the four states, it would be possible in 2020 that the outcome of the election would be to the detriment of the current president of the United States.

China’s semiconductor industry will come out stronger from U.S. crackdown

Painful lessons have taught us time and again that strength is the only thing that matters. Huawei and the semiconductor industry as a whole need to hone their skills and come out of the quagmire as soon as possible. We are now facing fierce attack halfway up the mountain, but when we do reach the top, Washington will be willing to shake hands.

External pressure has strengthened unity in Chinese society and given the people a better understanding of the word “unity.” Today’s China needs not only the solidarity of society, but also the solidarity of and mutual assistance among different industries. With help from the Chinese people’s wisdom and diligence, coupled with unity, it will be invincible.

Egypt condemns UN call for independent probe into Morsi’s death

The OHCHR’s call angered Egypt, with the North African country’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Hafez condemning it “in the strongest terms” on Wednesday.

Hafez described the call as a “deliberate attempt to politicize a case of natural death.”

Rupert Colville, spokesman for the OHCHR, had said “Any sudden death in custody must be followed by a prompt, impartial, thorough and transparent investigation carried out by an independent body to clarify the cause of death.”

Morsi, a senior figure in Egypt’s now-outlawed Muslim Brotherhood organization, was elected as Egypt’s president after the 2011 revolution, which ousted former dictator Hosni Mubarak.

However, Morsi was deposed through a bloody military coup led by his then-army chief and now President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in July 2013.

Morsi, 67, had been serving prison terms on several charges, including passing intelligence to Qatar.

He suffered from medical neglect during his imprisonment as well as poor conditions in prison.

Last year, a report by a panel of UK legislators and attorneys warned that the lack of medical treatment could result in Morsi’s “premature death.”

The Muslim Brotherhood has labeled Morsi’s death as a full-fledged murder.

The organization said Egyptian authorities were responsible for his deliberate slow death.

During the past few years, Sisi has faced growing criticism about his way of treating dissidents, especially those linked to the Muslim Brotherhood movement.

After vote, will EU change approach to China?

Amid growing tensions with the US, Europe is more important for China. Although some European countries are small, their core technology prowess and advanced ideas are worthy of China’s attention.

The US is trying to decouple from China and persecuting its technology business. It remains to be seen whether Europe can directly link with China, bring its good ideas and high technology to the Chinese market and make new norms for multilateral cooperation. There are new lessons for China to learn in its relationship with Europe and opportunities galore for both sides

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No case opened against Platini in World Cup probe: French police

Former UEFA president Michel Platini will not face formal legal proceedings in an ongoing French probe into the awarding of the football World Cup to Qatar.

The 63-year-old was released from custody late on Tuesday after being questioned by anti-corruption police into possible offences including private corruption, conspiracy and influence peddling.

French authorities are investigating an alleged lunch meeting between the powerful football administrator, French president Nicolas Sarkozy and Qatar's Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani ahead of the 2010 vote.

FIFA, the world governing body for football, has previously investigated the award of the World Cup to Qatar but did not find evidence of improper behaviour.

News agency AFP quoted Platini as saying he faced "a multitude of questions", not only over the Qatar 2022 issue, but also the 2018 tournament in Russia awarded on the same day in 2010, Euro 2016 in France and FIFA in general.

"It was very long, given the number of questions, it was obviously always going to be long, since they asked me questions over Euro 2016, the World Cup in Russia, the World Cup in Qatar, Paris Saint Germain, FIFA," Platini told reporters as he left the police station outside Paris where he had been detained.

"I replied to all the questions calmly, while still not knowing why I was there," he added.

Former French captain Platini, who voted for Qatar in 2010, has long denied any wrongdoing. His counsel William Bourdon insisted Platini had not been arrested but rather underwent "a hearing as a witness in the context desired by the investigators".

Platini was suspended by the FIFA ethics committee in 2015 for receiving a "disloyal payment" of \$2m from the then FIFA president Joseph Blatter.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Cuban player defects at Gold Cup

A member of Cuba's beleaguered CONCACAF Gold Cup squad has defected in the United States, coach Raul Mederos said on Tuesday.

Speaking in Denver, Mederos confirmed that midfielder Yasmani Lopez had left the squad after the Cubans were thrashed 7-0 by Mexico in their opening game of the tournament in Pasadena, California on Saturday.

"Regarding the case of Yasmani, it is a decision of him," Mederos said.

"None of the rest of the delegation had anything to do with it, it is a decision of him. He took it and made it," Mederos told a press conference.

Lopez, 31, is one of Cuba's most experienced players, making his debut in a Gold Cup clash against Belize in 2013.

The midfielder has been capped 28 times, scoring a single goal and has participated in five Gold Cup games.

Athletes from communist Cuba participating in sports events in the United States and Canada have a long history of defecting.

In 2015, several members of Cuba's Gold Cup squad defected during the tournament, despite thawing relations between the then administration of President Barack Obama and Havana.

(Source: AFP)

Paul Scholes fined £8,000 for breaking betting rules

Former England and Manchester United midfielder Paul Scholes has been fined £8,000 after admitting breaking Football Association betting rules.

Scholes was charged after it was alleged that he placed 140 bets on football matches between 17 August 2015 and 12 January 2019.

The FA also warned him as to his future conduct.

"I would like to apologise and I understand and fully accept the fine imposed by the FA," said Scholes.

"It was a genuine mistake and was not done with any deliberate intention to flout the rules.

"I wrongly believed that as long as there was no personal connection between me and any of the matches that I bet upon, then there would be no issue.

"However I understand now that this is not the case and I should have taken steps to verify this at the time."

Scholes, who spent 31 days in charge of Oldham Athletic before resigning on 14 March this year, has a 10% stake in League Two newcomers Salford City. The 44-year-old, who won 11 Premier League titles with Manchester United and was capped 66 times by England, retired from playing in 2013 and became a part-owner of Salford in 2014 alongside former United players Gary and Phil Neville, Ryan Giggs and Nicky Butt.

(Source: BBC)

Ferland Mendy: It's an honour to join the best club in the world

Ferland Mendy has admitted that he's honoured to join such a prestigious club in Real Madrid.

The French left-back was presented at the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday lunchtime and gave a short speech before taking to the pitch.

"It's an honour to be at the best club in the world," Mendy said.

"Thank you to the president for his trust and to the club. Hala Madrid!" Florentino Perez was the first to speak to a room filled with Mendy's family and club ambassadors like Roberto Carlos among others.

"We've been through truly exciting days. We want to elevate the history of Real Madrid," the president said.

"Three Champions Leagues in a row and four in five years are in the heart of Madridismo. It's a feat achieved by these players.

"It has to continue. This club has improvement in its genetics. Today is another great day.

"We welcome someone who has been named the best left-back in the French league by his fellow professionals: Ferland Mendy.

"A man how really knows what it's like to fight against adversity. You have chosen Real Madrid because it was your great desire, despite the big European teams that wanted you.

(Source: Marca)

Neymar 'tells PSG once and for all that he wants Barcelona return'

Neymar has told Paris Saint-Germain he 'wants to go home' and admits he should 'never have left' Barcelona.

The Brazilian swapped Barcelona for Paris in 2017 for a world-record fee of £198million.

But his future with the Ligue 1 champions has remained a constant source of debate, with reports in Spain revealing he has finally told them his stance as he pushes for a move back to Barcelona.

PSG boss Thomas Tuchel, as report Mundo Deportivo, is said to be exasperated by the 'problems' Neymar creates in the dressing room and is not against a potential departure.

The £198m man has now made private feelings about wanting a move back to Barcelona known to the PSG board as he steps up his exit plan.

Neymar is reported to have told PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi: 'I do not want to play more in PSG. I want to go back to my house, where I should never have left.'

Further to Neymar's desire to return to the Nou Camp this summer, Lionel Messi wants to see the Brazilian come back, according to El Mundo.

Their report details that the Catalan giants could try to 'transfer their existing agreement for Atletico Madrid ace Antoine Griezmann' directly to PSG, in a bid to secure Neymar.

Griezmann, who looks set to swap Madrid for Barcelona, would then go to PSG and Neymar would return to Spain.

Relations between Neymar and the club appear to have soured in recent months with president Al-Khelaifi taking a swipe at the forward in an interview this week.

'I want players willing to give everything to defend the honour of the jersey and to join the

club project,' he said in an interview with France Football.

'Those who do not want, or do not understand, we see each other and we talk to each other.

'There are of course contracts to be respected, but the priority now is total membership of our project.

'Nobody forced him to sign here. Nobody pushed him. He came knowingly to join a project.'

Neymar's contract in Paris runs until 2022 but with interest from Barcelona and Real Madrid, few expect him to see out his contract.

The Brazilian is currently sidelined through an ankle ligament injury, missing the entire Copa America and so his club future is the big talking point around the player right now.

Another factor in any potential exit for Neymar involves his relationship with team-mate Kylian Mbappe.

The relationship between the World Cup winner and Neymar is reported to have been strained for parts of last season with both feeling they are the superstar of the side.

While Neymar's future continues to look less and less likely it is in Paris for the long-term, Mbappe poured cold water on a potential exit this month by insisting he 'will be at PSG next season'.

(Source: Daily Mail)



'Viva el VAR,' sing Venezuela after draw with Brazil

The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) rode to Venezuela's rescue once again at the Copa America on Tuesday, denying hosts Brazil two goals in a surprise 0-0 draw in Group A.

Brazil, who had another goal chopped off by the referee, were left to rue a series of missed chances in another sub-par performance that did little to excite the home fans.

Roberto Firmino had a goal disallowed late in the first half after the referee awarded a foul against the hosts, before substitute Gabriel Jesus found the net on the hour mark only for a VAR review to deem Firmino offside in the build-up.

Philippe Coutinho looked to have found the winner when he netted from close range but VAR intervened again, this time for Firmino appearing to handle the ball before it dropped to Coutinho.

After the game, Venezuela coach Rafael Dudamel sang the praises of the technology, which has saved his side on four occasions so far. Peru were also denied two goals by VAR in their opening 0-0 draw with the Venezuelans.

"Long live VAR," Dudamel said.

"We played an almost perfect game against a team of brilliant individuals. Brazil put us to the test but the team understood what needed to be done and remembered what tactics we needed to deploy," he told reporters.

Brazil lead the group on four points ahead of Peru, who beat Bolivia 3-1 earlier in the day and also have four points.

Brazil meet Peru in their final group game on Saturday with both sides needing only a draw to seal their place in the quarter-finals. Venezuela have two points while Bolivia are without a point, with the two facing each other on Saturday.

The top two in each group are guaranteed a place in the last eight, along with the two highest-ranked teams finishing third.

Brazil had faced criticism from fans for their slow start to their opening game against Bolivia, which they went on to win 3-0, and while they made a stronger start here they failed to take the numerous chances that came their way.

■ Wasted chances

David Neres and Firmino missed the target and Richarlison was thwarted by Venezuela goalkeeper Wuilker Farinez early on, while substitute Jesus and defender Filipe Luis both wasted chances to win the game after the interval.

The final whistle was greeted by loud boos from the unimpressed 39,000 supporters at the Arena Fonte Nova, the hosts again failing to attract a full house after underselling the opener, with over 10,000 seats left empty this time.

Brazil defender Thiago Silva said his side did not deserve the flak they were getting.

"In the second half they (Venezuela) practically never got out their own area. We didn't win because of small details. But when you don't score goals it looks like everything is wrong," he said.

(Source: Eurosport)

Adidas three-stripe trademark ruled invalid by EU court



Adidas' three-stripes have been ruled invalid as a trademark by a European Union court which said they lacked a distinctive character recognizable throughout the 28-country bloc.

But the German sporting goods company, whose shares were down 1.3% in a broadly weaker market, said the court's ruling on Wednesday only affects a particular use of the symbol.

The sporting goods industry has seen a rise in trademark and patent disputes as the biggest players try to differentiate their products and justify premium pricing.

High-profile cases have included Adidas clashing with Skechers USA and Nike taking on Puma.

The General Court of the European Union said it had upheld a 2016 decision of the European Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) to annul a previous acceptance of the trademark, which Adidas registered in 2014 for clothing, footwear and headgear.

Adidas said its trademark consisted of "three parallel equidistant stripes of equal width applied to the product in whichever direction" but this was challenged by Belgium's Shoe Branding Europe after a decade-long dispute with Adidas.

The same EU court had rendered Shoe Branding's own two-stripe trademark invalid last year, saying the stripes were too similar to those of Adidas.

Shoe Branding bought Patrick, which was founded in 1892 and says it is the oldest sports

brand in Europe, in 2008. Patrick features two stripes on its shoes and clothing.

Adidas needed to show the three stripe mark had acquired a "distinctive character" throughout the EU based on its use so that consumers inherently knew a product was from Adidas and could distinguish it from products of another company.

The court said the mark was not a pattern but an "ordinary figurative mark" and it was not relevant to take into account specific uses involving colors.

Adidas, which can still appeal to the European Court of Justice, said in a statement the ruling was limited to a "particular execution" of the three-stripe mark and did not impact other protected uses of the trademark in Europe. It was not immediately clear which use Adidas was referring to.

"Whilst we are disappointed with the decision, we are further evaluating it and are welcoming the useful guidance that the court will give us for protecting our 3-stripe mark applied to our products in whichever direction in the future," it said.

The court said Adidas had provided evidence related to the mark's use in five EU countries, but not throughout the bloc.

Geert Glas, an intellectual property lawyer at Allen & Overy in Brussels, said the decision seemed to be more based on procedure and that Adidas should be able to produce evidence showing that the three stripes had distinctiveness in Europe.

(Source: Reuters)

Expanded Cup of Nations has new look but clouded by concerns



The African Cup of Nations gets underway in Egypt on Friday sporting a fresh new look but the 32nd edition is clouded like none before by security concerns and the foibles of the game's administrators.

A switch to mid-year hosting and an expansion to 24 teams hold out high hopes that the continent's showcase sports event will continue to enjoy growing international attention.

However, the changes come hot on the heels of a crisis of confidence for the game in Africa, where leading officials stand accused of corruption.

Controversy raged for years over the event's previous timing in January, when top African players were forced to leave their European clubs mid-season to play in the tournament, and the change to mid-year has been universally welcomed.

The decision to expand to 24 teams produced a more sceptical reaction given that many of the past tournaments have been characterised by the poor standard of matches and further dilution of the field might exacerbate that problem.

But the success of UEFA's expanded European Championship in France three years ago emboldened the Confederation of African Football to follow suit.

It means three new faces in this year's lineup although Burundi, Mauritania and Madagascar are not expected to make much impact.

But this is not a tournament with any clear favourites.

Hosts Egypt are seeking a record-extending eighth title but much of their hopes rest on the form of Liverpool's Champions League winner Mohamed Salah.

He has been given time to go on holiday after a long season, only joining up with his team mates last Wednesday, but there will be questions over whether mental and physical fatigue will affect his potential for another talismanic performance.

The same is true for club mate Sadio Mane, who leads a credible challenge from Senegal.

Mane will miss his country's first Group C game against Tanzania in Cairo on Sunday as he is suspended because of an accumulation of yellow cards in the qualifiers.

Nigeria return after missing the last two finals and are always contenders, while Ghana continue their quest for a first title since 1982.

Ghana have reached at least the semi-finals in the previous six Cup of Nations finals, going back to 2008, but have fallen short of the winners' podium — losing the 2010 and 2015 finals.

Cameroon were surprise champions at the last Nations Cup in 2017, when they beat Egypt 2-1 in the final in Gabon, and they are in a similar position this time with mediocre form since that triumph leaving them as outsiders to retain the title.

(Source: Mirror)

Branko Ivankovic sends message to Persepolis fans

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Branko Ivankovic **d e s k** has thanked Persepolis fans for supporting him in his four-year career in the Iranian popular club.

The 65-year-old coach left the team to join Al Ahli of Saudi Arabi on a two-year contract.

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

“I’m saying goodbye to you, Persepolis, Iranian football. I made a tough, impossible decision. There is no ideal time to leave. If we could probably, we will stay together for many years. My coaching staff and I gave the best of us, knowledge, experience, love, passion for the greatest results and success in club history and history of Iranian football. Thank you for four years of support, immense love for me and coaching staff. Love that I will not forget and will remain eternal in me. Sorry for few defeats, bad game or mistake, but we always wanted the best for you, club and Iranian football,” Ivankovic wrote on his Instagram.

Now, the Iranian giants are looking for a new coach while there’s not much time left for the club.

Yahya Golmohammadi, Afshin Ghotbi and Mehdi Mahdavia have been shortlisted to replace Ivankovic.



© VJC/ Mohammad Reza Jafari

Reza Ghoochannejhad to stay in Cypriot club Apoel



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran **d e s k** international forward Reza Ghoochannejhad is going to remain in Cypriot club Apoel.

Nicknamed ‘Gucci’ joined Sydney FC Apoel on loan for six months on 31 January and became the first Iranian international in the A-League. Now, he has returned to Cyprus and is going to stay in Apoel.

Iranian football teams Persepolis, Tractor Sazi and Esteghlal had reportedly shown interest in signing the player.

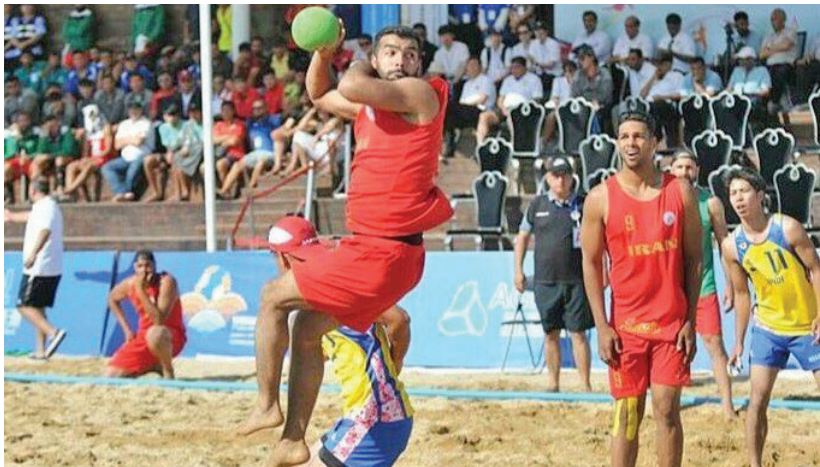
Ghoochannejhad, who scored Iran’s

only goal at the 2014 FIFA World Cup, has had a successful career in Holland, England and Belgium.

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

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

Iran beat Pakistan at Asian Beach Handball C’ship



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran **d e s k** extended winning run at the Asian Beach Handball Championship 2019 to four wins on Wednesday.

Team Melli defeated Pakistan 2-0 (13-10, 17-10) in Weihai, China.

Iran, who have already defeated Japan, Thailand and Saudi Arabia, will meet Oman on Thursday. 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.

The competition serves as a qualifier for both the 2019 ANOC World Beach Games in Qatar and the 2020 IHF Men’s Beach Handball Championships to be held in Italy.

The top two teams will receive a direct ticket to Italy.

Home win was crucial, admits Doi

Shoma Doi has admitted that it is vital Kashima Antlers will start the second leg of the 2019 AFC Champions League Round of 16 against Sanfrecce Hiroshima in the lead after the holders secured a hard-fought 1-0 victory in the first leg on Tuesday.

The clash at Kashima Soccer Stadium paired the two sides against Japanese opposition for the first time ever in the Continental competition and it was Sanfrecce who went into the game as the form team having won five in a row in the group stage.

But in a closely contested match it was defending champions Kashima who gained the upper hand after Brazilian Serginho scored the only goal of the game midway through the first half following excellent work from Doi.

“I believe we had to win at home in order for us to build some momentum ahead of the second leg,” said Doi, who played a key role in helping Kashima win their first AFC Champions League title in 2018.

“But although we won 1-0 today, the lead we have is



almost nothing. We have the mindset that the game is still level and we will prepare for the second leg in Hiroshima as if the score was 0-0.”

After an even beginning in which the visitors marginally

shaded, it was a moment of brilliance from Doi that led to the only goal of the game.

Collecting the ball from a Serginho knockdown just inside the opposition half, Doi burst forward into the penalty area before his deflected cross found the Brazilian for the forward to head home from close range.

Defeat for Sanfrecce was their first since the opening game of the tournament and halts an impressive five-game winning run as Kashima will now travel to Hiroshima for next week’s return meeting with a slight advantage.

“I was able to capitalize on the loose ball and saw there was space in front of me to run into,” explained Doi of the goal.

“I was in two minds whether to shoot or cross but in the end I chose to cross and we ended up scoring so it was the right decision.

“I want to thank the supporters who came here and created an amazing atmosphere despite it being a weekday – I am very grateful for them.”

(Source: the-afc)

Iran two matches away from AFC U-20 Futsal Championship title

Iran are two matches away from defending their AFC U-20 Futsal Championship title, but will face a daunting challenge in the form of Japan in the semi-finals at the Pour Sharifi Stadium on Thursday.

■ **IRAN**
Goals scored: 13
Conceded: 7

Top scorer: Salar Aghapour (5 goals)

Two goals in extra time proved the difference as host nation Iran beat Lebanon 3-2 in the quarter-finals. Iran had taken an early lead, but an array of missed chances and countless strikes against the frame led to Lebanon pushing the game into extra time with a last minute goal.

Head coach Hamid Moghadam, however, was not disheartened by his side’s lack of finishing, as he praised his players for creating chances.

“Not scoring goals and creating chances are two different things, because sometimes you create chances but you’re just not lucky,” Moghadam said.

“That’s futsal, sometimes your player finishes, and sometimes they don’t hit. We lost so many chances, and hit the upright so many times, I lost count.

“Each match played in a tournament or even friendly adds experience to the players. Of course, in this match, we gained experience, and this was added to our previous experience, which helps the overall improvement.”

While Moghadam understands that Japan pose a different threat compared to Lebanon, the 42-year-old coach is going into the semi-final as if it’s the final.

“This is going to be our fourth final. We will, of course, prepare to play against Japan.

“Thailand were eliminated from the competition and anything is possible in futsal, that’s the beauty of it. We want to beat Japan, and we want to win the title.”

■ **JAPAN**
Goals scored: 7
Conceded: 2

Top scorers: Hagiwara Manatsu, Osawa Masahi, Takahashi Yudai, Matsukawa Kota, Yamada Kaito, Motoishi Takehiro, Otsuka Hiroto (1 goal each)

Japan were in a joyous mood after overcoming a tenacious Iraqi side with a goal in each half, as they exacted revenge for the 2017 quarter-final exit to the same opponents.

Japan are strong contenders for the title after seeing off Tajikistan, Vietnam and Iraq, and head coach Ryuji Suzuki is more than satisfied with his side’s growth.



“My philosophy of the game hasn’t changed, but we faced a really strong team (in Iraq), and all the players grew during the match,” said Suzuki.

“We have to prepare for the semi-final, and focus on our defense. Yes, we have an issue with our finishing, and we will continue training on that too.”

(Source: the-afc)

Ivankovic appointed as new Al Ahli head coach

Former Persepolis and Islamic Republic of Iran boss Branko Ivankovic has been appointed as new Al Ahli Saudi FC head coach, the club announced on Tuesday.

Confirming the appointment of the Croatian on their official Twitter account, Al Ahli said Ivankovic has signed a two-year contract with the club.

The 65-year-old replaces local coach Yousif Anbar who had been installed as caretaker in April following the dismissal of Uruguayan manager Jorge Fossati who lasted just over two months at Al Ahli.

Anbar led the club to two wins from their last three 2019 AFC Champions League group matches to help the club book their ticket to the Round of 16, where they will face rivals Al Hilal on August 6th in what will be Ivankovic’s first test with his new club.

Ivankovic first arrived in Asian football in 2002 as head coach of Iran, leading them to a third-place finish at the 2004 AFC Asian Cup and to qualify to the 2006 FIFA World Cup. After a spell in Croatia, he returned to Asia through Chinese side Shandong Luneng, winning the Chinese Super League title in 2010.

The Al Ahli job is Ivankovic’s second in Saudi Arabia, having previously led Ettifaq to fourth place in the Saudi Pro League in 2011-12.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran’s Mohammad Mousavi a doubt for VNL week 4

TASNIM — Iran middle blocker Seyed Mohammad Mousavi is a doubt for the 2019 Volleyball Nations League Week Four.

Mousavi suffered a foot injury in the match against Russia in Week Three.

Team Melli will face Portugal on Friday in Ardabil’s Hossein Rezaadeh Hall.

Iran will also meet Australia and France on Saturday and Sunday.

Mousavi will miss Iran’s first two matches.

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

Rasoul Khatibi named Machine Sazi coach

TASNIM — Rasoul Khatibi has been named new head coach of Iranian top-flight football club Machine Sazi.

The details of Khatibi’s contract have not been disclosed.

Khatibi has replaced Reza Mohajeri, who has been linked with a move to Nassaji.

Under coaching of Mohajeri, Machine Sazi finished in 13th place in the Iran Professional League.

Khatibi, who already worked in Machine Sazi as player-coach in 2011, has also coached Gostaresh Foolad, Tractor Sazi and Siah Jamegan.

Mats Hummels returns Dortmund

Borussia Dortmund have confirmed that an agreement has been reached to re-sign Bayern Munich defender Mats Hummels, subject to a medical.

Hummels left Dortmund for Bayern in 2016 having spent eight years at Signal-Iduna Park and establishing himself as one of the best center-backs in world football.

He has continued to enjoy success in Bavaria, winning three Bundesliga titles, but will now return to Dortmund in a deal worth a reported €38 million (£33.8m/\$42.5m).

The German defender picked up his fifth Bundesliga title last season as they recovered from a poor start to win the league by two points, edging out Hummels’ former club Dortmund.

The 30-year-old also won his second DFB Pokal as Bayern beat RB Leipzig 3-0, but it was far from a straightforward season for the central defender.

Hummels started just over half of Bayern’s league games last season, losing his place in the starting lineup for several matches throughout the campaign after coming under fire for poor displays at the back.

He was also heavily criticized for his comments following the 3-2 loss against Dortmund in November, with the defender claiming he had blurred vision and felt sick in the buildup to the game. Hummels was later substituted in the second half of the match.

(Source: Goal)

Enrique steps down as Spain manager after 11 months

Spain manager Luis Enrique has stepped down ‘for personal reasons’ and will be replaced by assistant Robert Moreno after less than a year in charge.

The former Barcelona boss signed a two-year contract in July 2018.

Enrique had been absent since March because of “a family matter of an urgent nature” according to the Spanish Football Federation.

The 49-year-old took over the national team following their exit from the 2018 World Cup in the last 16.

“It was a decision Luis Enrique took himself, which we are grateful for,” said Luis Rubiales, president of the Spanish Football Federation.

“We will have a perfect memory of him. It’s a personal matter which doesn’t depend on us. We think it’s the best thing to do. “We are convinced that the best response is the most prepared team, and that team is represented by Robert [Moreno] and his group, who arrived with Luis Enrique.”

Enrique took charge of Spain’s Nations League campaign, where they failed to reach the semi-finals, and began their Euro 2020 qualifying campaign before flying home.

(Source: BBC)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Adopt generosity, and avoid vain severity and oppression; for, severity compels people to emigrate, and oppression incites revolt, and puts an end to your rule.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iranian pianist makes video to observe World Day against Child Labor

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian pianist Bardia Sadrenoori has made a music video to mark the World Day against Child Labor.

The 2-minute video named “Child Worker” has been directed by Shahu Zandi at the Rad No-Andish Art and Cultural

Institute, Sadrenoori, who is the director of the institute, said in a press release on Wednesday.

“The video aims to raise people’s awareness of the issue... I tried to do my share to attract people’s attention to this problem,” he noted.

The video begins with the motto, “Child workers with all their childhood dreams and innocence are children.” “Therefore, we should help eliminate this great social problem and support them to find their right path in life,” Sadrenoori said.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) launched the World Day against Child Labor in 2002 to focus attention on the global extent of child labor, and the actions and efforts needed to eliminate it.

Each year on June 12, the day brings together governments, employers and workers organizations, civil society, as well as millions of people from around the world to highlight the plight of child laborers and what can be done to help them.

“Children shouldn’t work in fields, but on dreams!” was ILO’s motto for the 2019 World Day against Child Labor.

Adaptation of “A Streetcar Named Desire” to go on stage at Tehran theater

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian director Alireza Mehran will stage an adaptation of American playwright Tennessee Williams’ famous play “A Streetcar Named Desire” at Tehran’s Neauphle-le-Chateau Hall tonight.

Mehran has renamed the play “Desire and 7 Minutes” to perform it in Iran.

“A Streetcar Named Desire” tells the story of Blanche DuBois, a schoolteacher from Laurel, Mississippi, who arrives at the New Orleans apartment of her younger sister, Stella Kowalski.

Blanche has been fired from her job and lost their family home and she has decided to live with her pregnant sister and her abusive husband, Stanley, for an indefinite period of time.

Published in 1947, the play won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and has garnered numerous Tony and Olivier awards since its first production.

The play was adapted for screen by American director Elia Kazan in 1951 and has won four Academy Awards.

Mahlaqa Baqeri, Leila Bolukat, Farzad Hassani and Amir Karbalai are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage for one month.

Photo: A poster for the play “Desire and 7 Minutes” by Iranian director Alireza Mehran.

Polish Pro Contra festival picks plays from Iran

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Two plays from Iran will be performed during the 17th International Theatre Festival of Pro Contra in Poland, Iran Theater, a Persian website for theater news, has announced.

Ebrahim Arabnejad will direct “The Requiem” and Hamidreza Mollahosseini will stage “Look at Your Shoes” at the festival, which will take place in Szczecin from September 6 to 8.

The plays have been selected by the festival’s artistic director Tatiana Malinowska last year when she attended the Alef International Theater Festival in the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz.

Troupes from Italy, Russia, Romania, Georgia and Cuba are expected to take part in the Pro Contra festival.

Art Bureau’s satire club kicks off with song mocking Trump’s appeal to Iran

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — The Music Center of the Art Bureau has launched a satire club with the song “Hello, Trump!” that mocks U.S. President Donald Trump’s appeal to Iran to call him for talks.

“Satire is an influential topic, in which bad social behaviors, political events, or even international issues can be discussed,” the director of the center, Milad Erfanpur, told the Persian service of MNA on Wednesday.

“A young group of musicians mostly eager to work on satire and comedy is collaborating with the bureau at the club,” he said.

“What we mostly care about are the satirical compositions produced by the bureau, which can provide an opportunity not only to make others laugh but also to present important and sometimes bitter facts to the listeners,” Erfanpur explained.

He said that he believes the society needs a new atmosphere of music, which is something that has not received much attention over the past few years.

Earlier in May, the White House contacted the Embassy of Switzerland in Tehran that represents U.S. interests to share a phone number that Iran could use to call Trump.



U.S. President Donald Trump speaking on the phone in the Oval Office of the White House in an undated photo.

Armenian Ambassador Toumanian, Deputy Culture Minister Hosseini meet

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Armenian Ambassador Artashes Toumanian met Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini in his office in Tehran on Tuesday to discuss the expansion of cultural relations.

Toumanian said he is eager for the art and culture of his country to be better known in Iran.

He announced an Armenian choir’s plan to give a performance in Tehran in the near future in memory of Armenian composer Komitas.

Soghomon Soghomonian or Solomon Solomonian who used as his pseudonym the name Komitas was an ethnomusicologist and composer that created the basis for a distinctive national

musical style in Armenia.

On his part, Hosseini said that Iran has a lot in common with Armenia, especially in the music field.

“With these close relations we expect the art and cultural relations to develop further,” Hosseini said.

He added that Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance also welcomes the idea of strengthening bilateral ties through art and cultural programs and visits of artists from the two countries.

Hosseini also pointed to Iran’s various cultural events such as the Fajr festivals of film, theater and music, and said that the festivals are good opportunities for Armenian artists to participate and exchange ideas.

“Travel to the Morning” to commemorate Abbas Kiarostami at Tehran gallery

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Tehran’s E1 Gallery will organize an exhibition entitled “Travel to the Morning” in memory of legendary artist Abbas Kiarostami.

A collection of photos, sets of installation and videos will be showcased at the exhibition, which will open on Friday, the director of the gallery, Huri Qavimi, told the Persian service of MNA on Wednesday.

The exhibit will be held in three sections, one of which has been dedicated to displaying rarely-seen photos by Kiarostami, who also was a prominent poet and photographer.

A section will hang works by a group of film photographers and the other one will showcase artworks by about 70 young and independent artists.

“This will be the third time that the gallery has commemorated the death anniversary of Kiarostami by organizing art exhibitions,” Qavimi said.

Organized in collaboration with the Association of Iranian Cinema Photographers, the exhibit will be running until July 5 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebbeh St., off Mahdiah St., in the Elahieh neighborhood.

Kiarostami died of cancer on July 5, 2016.



A poster for E1 Gallery’s exhibition “Travel to the Morning”, which will open on June 21, 2019.

Defense lawyer for Harvey Weinstein asks to leave New York case



Film producer Harvey Weinstein arrives at New York Supreme Court in the Manhattan borough of New York City, U.S., December 20, 2018. (Reuters/Brendan McDermid)

NEW YORK (Reuters) — One of the lawyers representing Harvey Weinstein in his rape trial due to begin in September has asked a judge to let him drop the former movie producer as a client, the New York Post reported, citing a letter from the attorney to the New York court.

The attorney, Jose Baez, asked a Manhattan justice to let him off the case six months after Weinstein, 67, hired him because of their strained relationship, the newspaper reported on Monday.

“Mr. Weinstein has engaged in behavior that makes this representation unreasonably difficult to carry out effectively and has insisted upon taking actions with which I have fundamental disagreements,” Baez wrote to Manhattan Supreme Court Justice James Burke last week, according to the newspaper.

Baez did not immediately respond

to Reuters’ request for comment.

Weinstein faces five criminal charges, including rape, and could be sentenced to life in prison if convicted.

He has pleaded not guilty to the charges. The trial is scheduled to begin on Sept. 9.

More than 70 women have accused Weinstein of sexual misconduct. He has denied all accusations and said any sexual contact was consensual.

Weinstein hired Baez and Harvard University law professor Ron Sullivan after his former attorney Ben Brafman left the case in January. Sullivan left the case last month after his defense of Weinstein sparked an outcry at Harvard and led to his dismissal from a dean role.

Baez previously represented Casey Anthony, a Florida woman found not guilty in 2011 of murdering her 2-year-old daughter Caylee in a high-profile criminal case.

“Yesterday” comedy movie gets Beatles’ seal of approval



Cast members Ed Sheeran, Lily James and Himesh Patel attend the UK premiere of “Yesterday” in London, Britain, June 18, 2019. (Reuters/Henry Nicholls)

LONDON (Reuters) — Imagine a world where The Beatles never existed? That is what British director Danny Boyle asks audiences to believe in his new movie “Yesterday”.

The comedy, arriving in movie theaters next week, tells of struggling British musician Jack who wakes up after a traffic accident and finds himself in an alternate timeline where only he can remember the music of the 1960s band.

Boyle, who won an Oscar for the 2008 movie “Slumdog Millionaire”, said the band gave permission for their music to be used in the film despite it being a story where “they are literally erased from the consciousness of the world.”

“I think they (The Beatles) must have loved the idea - how quirky the idea was. It appeals to their sense of humor I think,” Boyle said on the red carpet in London on Tuesday.

“That is so typical of their sense of humor

- and their bravery as well - because they are experimenters. So I think they like the fact that it’s a bit left field,” he added.

Boyle said Ringo Starr and the widow of George Harrison had seen the film and sent notes of support.

As for Paul McCartney, Boyle said: “I don’t think Paul has seen the movie, but he’s seen the trailer and he said ‘Oh that seems to work!’”

Boyle said he had also written to Yoko Ono, the widow of John Lennon.

The movie also features Grammy Award-winning British singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran, playing himself, as the person who helps Jack, played by British actor Himesh Patel, recreate some of the band’s most famous hits, sending his career soaring.

The movie, with a screenplay by “Love Actually” writer Richard Curtis, also features Lily James, Kate McKinnon and James Corden.