



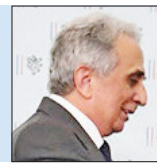
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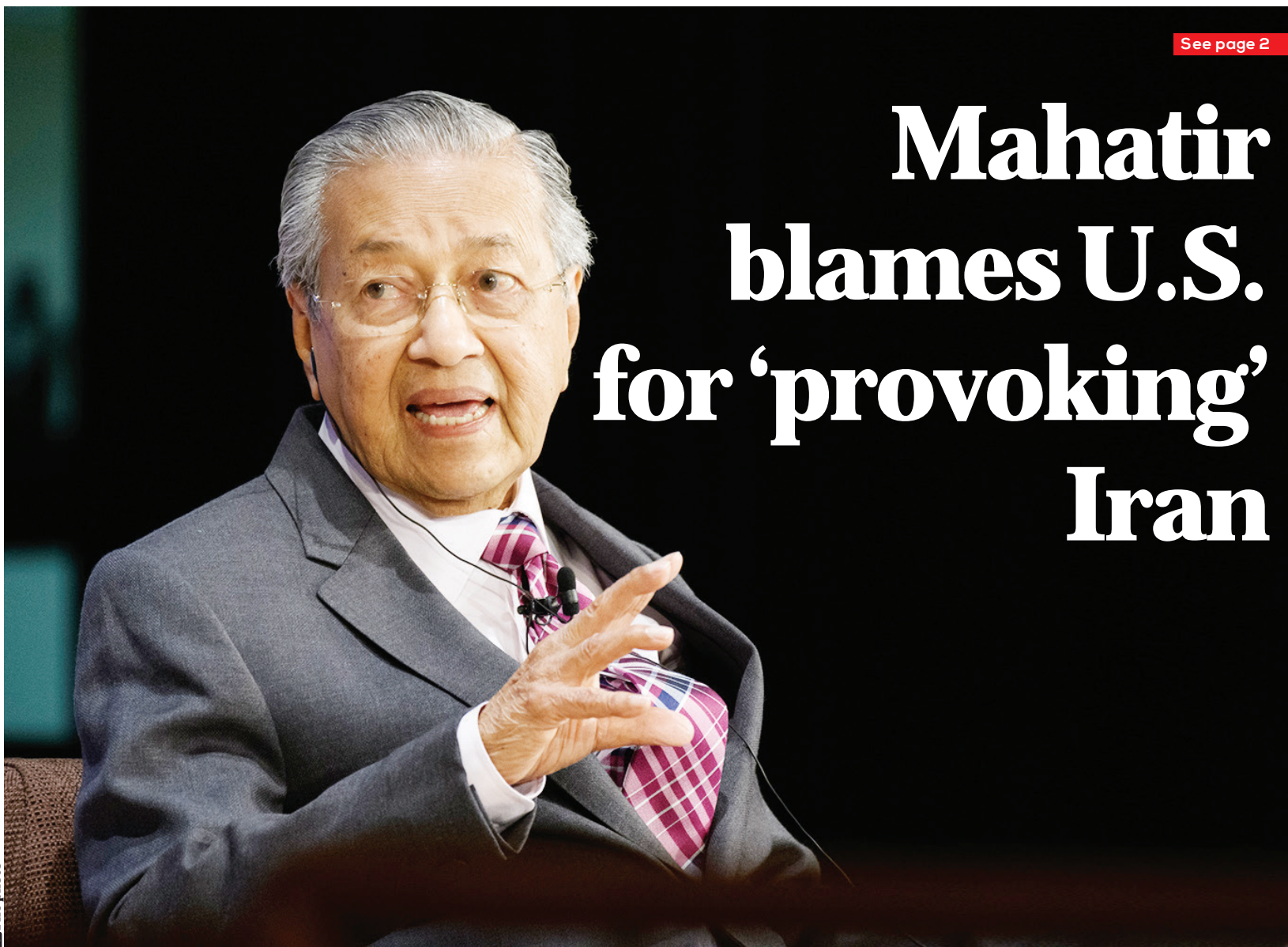
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Mahatir blames U.S. for ‘provoking’ Iran

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CBI unveils plans to compensate oil budget deficit in sanctions era

TEHRAN – The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has said three plans have been developed aimed to compensate the probable budget deficit resulted from the U.S. sanctions on the country’s oil industry, Tasnim news agency reported.

Trying to use different ways to export more oil, issuing government bonds, and using the reserves of the National Development

Fund (NDF) are the plans the government is to implement in order to counter the U.S. sanctions’ economic pressure, Abdolnaser Hemmati wrote in an Instagram post on Friday.

“Even though the central bank is going through a difficult period, I’m very hopeful about overcoming the problems with the mentioned plans in progress,” he noted. ➔ **4**

Iran summons UAE diplomat over U.S. drone incident

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned on Saturday the United Arab Emirates’ charge d’affaires to protest violation of Iran’s airspace by the U.S. drone from a military base in the UAE.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran does not accept providing foreign forces with facilities to aggress Iran’s territorial, wa-

ter and space and the countries cannot evade responsibility in this respect,” head of the Foreign Ministry Department for Persian Gulf Affairs said. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced on Thursday it had shot down an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone after it breached the country’s airspace. ➔ **2**

Yemeni forces captured a Saudi base in Jizan

TEHRAN — The Yemeni forces dominated a Saudi base in the Jizan border town.

Meanwhile, Yemeni army forces, supported by allied fighters from the Popular Committees, have intercepted and targeted an unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to the Saudi-led military coalition while flying in the skies over Yemen’s strategic western coastal province of Hudaydah.

The media bureau of Yemen’s Houthi Ansarullah movement announced in a

statement that Yemeni air defense forces and their allies shot down the drone with a surface-to-air missile on Friday afternoon.

The statement added that the drone was struck as it was on a surveillance mission over al-Fazah area in the al-Tuhayta district of the province. On Thursday evening, the spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree said, said Yemeni army forces, backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees, ➔ **13**



ARTICLE

Ali Shamkhani
Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council

Why Leader has given different responses to different U.S. presidents?

A few years ago, when Barack Obama, former President of U.S. sent a letter to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Leader told the Iranian officials that he will answer the letter. However, in his recent meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Ayatollah Khamenei said Trump does not “deserve” a response.

Undoubtedly, from the perspective of the Islamic Republic of Iran, there is no fundamental difference between different U.S. presidents as they all have had the same goals and have adopted the same deceitful behavior toward Iran. The Leader, also, has always had the same policy of not yielding to the oppressive and arrogant behavior of U.S. presidents.

So, why did Ayatollah Khamenei gave two different answers to the same request of two American presidents?

In fact, Trump has trampled all international rules and regulations. He is merely an international blackmailer who has adopted an unpredictable behavior and thinks that by continuing this policy, he can abolish all the rights of Iranian nation.

By adopting this policy, Trump has continuously aroused commotion in international arena; in few cases, though, it seems that some ignorant tycoons in Persian Gulf region have bitten Trump’s bait and have let him take all the financial gain and in doing so made him even more self-important.

The two different answers of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to two American presidents, can be analyzed from two different angles:

• First; the logic of “politeness in answer to politeness” and “contempt in answer to bullying”.

According to Iran’s foreign policy, which is based on pure Islam, Iran does not want to fight with any country or entity; if the other countries treat us with respect and politeness, they will receive the same level of respect. But, if they try to bully us by using blackmails and threats, we will not succumb to their oppression, conversely, we will have nothing but contempt for them, as it is the nature of free human beings. ➔ **13**

Amnesty International condemns human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN- Amnesty International in a statement has criticized human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia came under intense criticism in 2018 following the October 2 murder of prominent Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul by Saudi agents. After weeks of denials and obfuscations, Saudi Arabia admitted to Khashoggi’s murder and announced the arrest of 18 individuals and firing of senior officials, but the statements appeared to be designed to insulate Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman from further scrutiny over the murder.

In another event, The UK Court of Appeal found that the UK government’s decision to continue licensing exports of military equipment to Saudi Arabia is unlawful, ruling in a judicial review brought by Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) and joined by Amnesty International,

Human Rights Watch and Rights Watch UK.

“This judgment is a rare piece of good news for the people of Yemen. During four years of devastating war the Saudi Arabia-led coalition has killed thousands of civilians in Yemen, flattening homes, schools and hospitals in indiscriminate air strikes,” said Lucy Claridge, Director of Strategic Litigation at Amnesty International.

“This is the first time that a UK court has acknowledged the risks of continuing to lavish Saudi Arabia with military equipment for use in Yemen. We welcome this judgment as a major step towards preventing further bloodshed.”

A crucial aspect that the Court emphasized is the importance of research by Amnesty, other NGOs and the UN as authoritative evidence of the risks of continuing to license arms exports to Saudi Arabia, which the Secretary of State

must now properly take into account in licensing decisions.

On the question of evidence of whether past violations are a relevant consideration when assessing whether there is a real risk of future violation, the Court stated:

“In our view that is obviously correct. How could it reasonably be otherwise?”

As a result of this judgment, the Secretary of State’s decisions not to suspend current licensing exports and to continue to grant further licences will be quashed. He has undertaken not to grant any new licences for export of arms or military equipment to Saudi Arabia for possible use in the conflict in Yemen until those decisions have been re-taken on the correct legal basis, unless he applies for and gets deferral of the Court’s order.

Yellow Vests protest for the 32nd straight week in Paris

TEHRAN- ‘Yellow Vests’ protesters hit the streets of Paris for the 32nd week in a row.

On this occasion, demonstrators are organizing blockages close to the French capital’s city center.

Yellow Vests rallies continue in the French capital and other cities across the country to express ‘opposition to the Macron government’s policies,’ SputnikNews reported.

Some protestors have also gathered at toll roads to prevent them from accepting payments, making them open for everyone for free.

Yellow Vests are holding protests for the 32nd consecutive weekend in parts of France. The movement emerged in France in mid-November over planned fuel tax hikes.

While the French government abandoned its plans and even introduced measures to improve the economic and social situation in the country, protesters continue to take to the streets across France every weekend to express their discontent with the government’s policies.

Nevertheless, those numbers were well below the peaks seen in November and December, when an estimated 300,000 took to the streets on Saturdays in protests that often resulted in widespread violence and vandalism in Paris.

The “yellow vests” protests, named after the bright jackets French drivers have to keep in their cars and which have been worn by demonstrators, began in November after public anger

against fuel tax rises.

Those were subsequently scrapped but the movement has since morphed into a broader anti-government protest.

The number of protesters has gradually fallen as a result of measures taken by President Emmanuel Macron to quell the public anger, such as tax cuts to boost consumers’ spending power.

However, some demonstrators on Saturday said they would continue to protest over Macron’s policies. “What he’s re-offered, it just allows people to maybe reach a level that they had before, that was maybe not enough,” Sebastian Avril, a 42-year old postal services worker in Paris, told Reuters.

Dem Presidential hopeful: Trump should return to Iran deal in interest of America

TEHRAN – Democratic presidential hopeful Tulsi Gabbard believes that President Donald Trump needs to return to the 2015 nuclear deal if he thinks about the interests of the United States.

Gabbard made the statement in a tweet on Friday in reaction to the downing of a U.S. spy drone by Iranian forces in the Persian Gulf.

“Iran war is HIGHLY likely unless Trump

swallows his pride & returns to the Iran nuclear agreement he tore up. But I fear he won’t put the interests of our country & those who’ll be killed in such a war ahead of his own pride & personal political interests,” she tweeted.



Public Tender 98-1



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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.

For more information contact:

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PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari
Head of the Tehran Times
Politics Desk

Does Sanders disrupt Biden’s calculations?

Former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden does not have a good days! Although most of the public and state polls in the United States are against Donald Trump, Biden is heavily polluted by domestic polls. The gap between Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders’ votes in the Democratic primaries has now reached 22%. This could end in the near future to the detriment of Joe Biden and his entourage. In other words, Biden can not now consider himself the victor of the Democratic Party’s internal election.

In the presidential race of 2008, polls showed that Hillary Clinton can easily overcome Barack Obama and reach the final stage of the electoral race. But this did not happen! Obama managed to overcome Hillary Clinton in many other states after winning the small state of Iowa. Obama eventually ended up in the 2008 US Presidential Election Campaign. At this point, he defeated Republican candidate John McCain and was elected President of the United States.

Will such a thing happen to Biden? The reality is that if Biden fails to compete with other Democrat candidates in states like Iowa and New Hampshire, he can hardly continue to run for electoral competition. Eventually, Biden will have a lot of concerns about the 2020 presidential election. On the other hand, Donald Trump, the president of the United States, considers him the main rival. Some U.S. sources believe Biden, despite the charges, does not intend to withdraw from participating in the 2020 presidential election. Obama’s vice presidential contender for the upcoming presidential election has been the most important election over the past 100 years.

4 years after fighting a surprisingly competitive Democratic primary race against Hillary Clinton, Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent, is making another run for the White House. Bernie Sanders, the old American senator, continues to oppose U.S. President Donald Trump. This confrontation started at the time Trump entered the White House (by early 2017). Sanders, in one of his most recent positions against the White House, called for an end to Washington’s support for Riyadh in the Yemeni war. Here are some of the latest news on the American political situation and polls in the United States: ➔ **6**

Mousavi to Brian Hook: ‘Diplomacy for diplomacy, respect for respect, firm defense for war’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** – Tehran has slammed U.S. special representative for Iran Brian Hook for his remarks over Iran’s downing of a U.S. spy drone, saying “the Iranian nation responds to diplomacy with diplomacy, respect with respect and war with firm defense.”

Speaking to reporters on Friday during a visit to Saudi Arabia, Hook said Tehran had no right to respond to “diplomacy” with “military force,” a day after the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps shot down the high-tech RQ-4 Global Hawk drone over its territorial waters.

Iran sharply condemned the violation of its airspace by the drone, emphasizing that its aerial and territorial borders constitute a red line.

Responding to the hawkish U.S. official, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi took to Twitter and asked, “Mr. Hook, do you call years of war and economic terrorism imposed on Iranian people and violation of treaties and resolutions as ‘diplomacy’?”

Tensions between Iran and the U.S. have been on the rise since May last year, when the White House under Donald Trump exited a hard-won multilateral nuclear deal with Iran and re-instituted sanctions against Tehran in defiance of international warnings for Washington not to undermine the accord — which was widely hailed as a fruit of successful international diplomacy.

Hook is in a commanding position over the Trump administration’s highly belligerent Iran policy and promotes the White House’s sanctions campaign against the Islamic Republic, which has been criticized by the entire world, including Washington’s own allies.

British diplomat due in Tehran for talks with Iranian officials

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — British Minister of State for the Middle East Andrew Murrison was scheduled to visit Iran on Sunday for talks amid regional tension.

“The UK has an ongoing diplomatic dialogue with Iran. At this time of increased regional tensions and at a crucial period for the future of the nuclear deal, this visit is an opportunity for further open, frank and constructive engagement with the government of Iran,” said a statement published by the UK Foreign Ministry website.

“Dr. Murrison will call for urgent de-escalation in the region and raise UK and international concerns about Iran’s regional conduct and its threat to cease complying with the nuclear deal to which the UK remains fully committed,” the statement added.

The visit is taking place as tensions between Iran and the United States have entered a new stage. On Thursday morning, Iran shot down a U.S. spy drone after it violated Iran’s airspace.

The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps fired at the aircraft after “those who guided the drone received the warnings but did not care,” the IRGC aerospace chief said.

Iran announced last week that its stockpile of enriched uranium will exceed 300 kilograms by June in retaliation for a failure by the remaining signatories to the nuclear deal to shield Iran from the U.S. sanctions.

Iran has said if the remaining parties which include Britain, Germany, France, the European Union, Russia and China do not take concrete steps to offset illegal sanctions it will take the next steps.

Iran decided to partially remove limits on its nuclear activities on May 8, one year after Donald Trump exited the deal and reimposed sanctions on Iran. Iran said the deadline is for 60 days.

July 7 is the deadline for the JCPOA parties to make a decision on how to save the nuclear deal.

Officials in Tehran have insisted that if Iran shielded from sanction it will reverse its decision.

Trump reiterates no pre-condition for talks with Iran

By staff and agency

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that there is no pre-condition for U.S. talks with Tehran.

In an exclusive interview with NBC, he said that he doesn’t want war with Iran.

Trump also discussed his decision-making process that led him to halt strikes on Iran on Thursday night, saying that he hadn’t given final approval to any attack and adding that no planes were in the air.



The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) shot down a highly-sophisticated U.S. stealth drone on Thursday morning after it violated Iran’s airspace.

During a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on June 13, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed Trump as a person not worthy of exchanging messages. The Leader said Iran has “no trust” in the United States and will not at all “repeat the bitter experience” it gained from the negotiations

that led to the conclusion of a 2015 nuclear deal, which Washington later ditched.

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

Back in April, President Hassan Rouhani likened Trump to a knifeman with whom Iran will not negotiate.

“Undoubtedly, accepting the demands of a knifeman who through bullying and lying is seeking negotiation will get nowhere,” Rouhani told a cabinet meeting.

Rouhani said Iran has always been seeking negotiation and diplomacy but negotiation is possible only when there is no pressure.

“We have always been the man of dialogue and diplomacy, as we have been the man of war and defense, but negotiation is possible only when all pressures are lifted and they apologize for their illegal measures and there is mutual respect,” Rouhani stated.

Saudis lobbied UK to attack Iran after Trump pulled back: Middle East Eye

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — A Saudi intelligence official has lobbied the UK to conduct limited strikes on Iranian military targets after U.S. President Donald Trump allegedly cancelled such raids, a senior British official has said.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the official told the Middle East Eye on Friday that the Saudi official had called for Iran strikes during his visit to London alongside Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir.

The Saudi request, however, fell on deaf ears, he said, adding, “Our people were skeptical.” The Saudi intelligence official was told a plain “no” in response to his plea, the British source said.

According to the source, the Saudi official had tried to link Iran to the June 13 attacks against oil tankers in the Sea of Oman, but his British counterparts were “not impressed” with the evidence provided by the official.

At the weekend, the Saudi intelligence chief will head to Jerusalem al-Quds to engage in similar anti-Iran lobbying efforts with Israeli officials and hawkish U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton, he added.

On Thursday, Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) shot down an U.S. surveillance drone after it invaded Iran’s airspace.



The following day, the elite military force put into display the wreckage of the American spy drone, which had been retrieved from

Iran’s territorial waters.

The unmanned U.S. aircraft had been taken down by Iran’s indigenous Khordad

The Saudi intelligence chief will head to Jerusalem al-Quds to engage in similar anti-Iran lobbying efforts with Israeli officials and hawkish U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton.

Mahatir Mohamad blames U.S. for ‘provoking’ Iran Malaysian PM says if Iran and the U.S. go to war it will be a ‘world war’

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The United States is provoking Iran and growing risks of miscalculation that could lead to a “world war,” according to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

“I think as far as I can see, it is America, which is making all the provocation,” Mahathir told CNBC’s Tanvir Gill on Saturday, when asked which side might be responsible for miscalculations.

“First, they withdrew from the (nuclear) treaty, and now they’re sending warships to the (Persian) Gulf, and doing things that will provoke Iran,” he told CNBC in Bangkok, Thailand, where Asian leaders gathered for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

Tensions between the U.S. and Iran tested new highs on Thursday, when Tehran shot down an unmanned American military spy drone after it violated Iran’s airspace.

The shooting of the drone prompted U.S. President Donald Trump to approve military strikes on several Iranian targets — but he abruptly called off the attacks late

Thursday. The president said he withdrew the plan because he believed the loss of life — estimated to be about 150 people — would have been disproportionate to the downing of an unmanned drone.

“I am in no hurry,” Trump said on Twitter Friday. “Our Military is rebuilt, new, and ready to go.”

Even before the latest escalation in tensions, the two countries appeared to be heading closer toward a military conflict — although both sides have said it’s something they hope to avoid. The Pentagon has in recent months announced plans to deploy thousands of troops to the Middle East to counter Iran, amid allegations the Islamic country was responsible for attacks on oil tankers in the region. Tehran has categorically rejected those accusations.

The Malaysian prime minister says “forcing other countries to comply with the big power’s decision (on Iran) is totally undemocratic ... This is bullying.”

Mahathir on Saturday warned: “If they go to war, it will not be Iran against America. It will be a world war.” He explained that other countries that do not want to see nuclear weapons being used “will have to come in and put a stop to it.”

■ Mahathir calls Trump ‘totally unpredictable’

The Trump administration unilaterally pulled out of the international nuclear treaty with Iran in May last year. Since then, the U.S. has reinstated punishing sanctions on the Islamic Republic’s vital oil industry, aimed at crippling its economy.

Malaysia’s 93-year-old leader warned that energy prices will likely go up because “we are knocking out Iran as one of the big suppliers.”

“Actually the sanction is against Malay-



sia also,” Mahathir said. “Because we can’t trade with a good trading partner that Iran provides for us.”

He disagreed with the U.S. sanctions against Iran, saying: “This kind of play of applying sanctions and forcing other countries to comply with the big power’s decision is totally undemocratic ... This is bullying.”

Mahathir called Trump “totally unpredictable” and said that “this one man, with one more term to go, can do a lot of damage to the whole world.”

Iran summons UAE diplomat over U.S. drone incident

1 → The IRGC brought the drone down by firing a surface-to-air missile at it.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Friday that the U.S. military drone entered the Iranian airspace from the United Arab Emirates and it was targeted near Kouh-e Mobarak.

“At 00:14 U.S. drone took off from the UAE in stealth mode and violated Iranian airspace,” Zarif wrote on his Twitter account.

Zarif said, “It was targeted at 04:05 at the coordinates (25°59’43”N 57°02’25”E) near Kouh-e Mobarak.”

Iran has submitted a protest letter to the United Nations over the violation of its airspace by the United States.

Majid Takht-e Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the UN, wrote a letter on Thursday to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the UN Security Council stating that “Iran condemns, in the strongest possible terms, this irresponsible and provocative wrongful act by the United States, which entails its international responsibility.”

“While the Islamic Republic of Iran does not seek war, it reserves its inherent right, under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, to take all appropriate necessary measures against any hostile act violating its territory, and is determined to vigorously defend its land, sea and air,” Takht-e Ravanchi said.

Swiss Ambassador to Tehran Markus Leitner, whose country represents the U.S. interests in Iran, was summoned to the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Friday to receive an official note which he said



will immediately deliver to Washington.

Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the aerospace unit of the IRGC, said on Friday that the drone had received warnings for four times before being shot down.

“Those who guided the drone received the warnings but did not care. Given that the drone breached Iran’s airspace, the aerospace unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps shot it down,” Hajizadeh said in an exhibition held in Tehran to showcase the drone’s wreckage.

The IRGC released GPS coordinates that showed the drone eight miles off Iran’s coast, inside the 12 nautical miles from the shore that is Iran’s territorial waters.

“Two warnings were issued on 2:05 on Thursday morning and two others were issued on 3:55 and the drone was shot on 4:05. In fact, four warnings were given to this drone but they did not pay attention. Another spy plane was also flying near this drone which carried 35 crew members and we had the right to shoot that down, however, we shot down the unmanned drone,” the general explained.

FATF gives Iran until October to complete reforms

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Financial Action Task Force announced on Friday that Iran has until October to complete reforms that would bring it into line with global norms or face consequences.

The FATF praised Iran’s actions in line with reforms to counter money laundering, according to IRNA.

However, it said that the FATF can only consider laws which are approved completely.

The Paris-based body announced on February 22 that Iran has until June to fix its anti-money laundering and terrorism financing rules or face increased international scrutiny of its banks.

The FATF concluded at its February 22 meeting that “there are still items not completed” and said in a statement it “expects Iran to proceed swiftly in the reform path”, according to Reuters.

One of the actions Iran is required to take to appease the FATF is joining the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), which is also called the Palermo Convention, a 2000 United Nations-sponsored multilateral treaty against transnational organized crime.

The other action is to ratify the CFT, the convention combatting financing of terrorism.

On October 7, 2018, the Majlis (parliament) voted in favor of the CFT. However, the oversight Guardian Council rejected the bill by finding 22 faults with it.

To become a law, the Guardian Council should vet the bill for compliance with the Constitution.

In cases when the parliament and the Guardian Council disagree on a bill, the issue is referred to the Expediency Council for final arbitration.

Majid Ansari, a member of the Expediency Council, said in May that the Expediency Council is studying the CFT and Palermo bill.

“The CFT and Palermo should be studied in the related committee and after that be sent to the Majlis,” Ansari told IRNA Plus in an interview.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in March that it is essential to approve the FATF.

Mehrdad Lahouti, the spokesman of the Majlis Independent Velayee faction, said that during a meeting of the faction with the foreign minister, Zarif expressed hope that the Expediency Council would approve the bill to join the FATF.

Zarif said on February 24 that the Expediency Council should decide on the FATF based on the “realities”.

“Our friends should decide based on realities. So far, they have said that nothing will happen but they are now seeing the situation,” Zarif remarked.

Bahram Ghassemi, the former spokesman of the Foreign Ministry, said in March that it is necessary that economic experts help members of the Expediency Council in their decision on joining the FATF.

“It is essential that all experts fulfill their national duty and help the Expediency Council’s members take the best decision that guarantees the country’s national security and interests,” he told IRNA.

He noted that the Foreign Ministry does not have a factional view on the issue.

Iran hangs man for spying for the U.S.

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Prisoner Jamal Haji-Zavareh who was charged with spying for the United States has been executed, according to an announcement by the Judiciary Organization of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Haji-Zavareh, an employee of the Ministry of Defense Aerospace Organization who had been expelled in 2010, had clearly confessed to spying for the U.S. government and the CIA and was found in possession of espionage documents and equipment, the statement read.

The statement said the spy’s case had been addressed by the military court and then referred for approval to the Supreme Court.

Jamal’s wife, Leila Tajik, was found to having assisted him and is sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment.

Military: If enemy fires a single bullet at Iran, it will receive 10

Firing even one bullet at Iran will ‘set fire’ to U.S. and its regional allies, General Shekarchi warns

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, a senior spokesman for the Iranian military, says any act of aggression by Washington and its allies against Iran will impose heavy costs on their interests.

“Firing even one bullet at Iran will set on fire the interests of America and its allies in the Middle East,” Shekarchi said on Saturday, the Tasnim news agency reported.

He stressed that Iran will never start a war, but the enemy’s slightest mistake will draw a “revolutionary response” from the Islamic Republic, from which the attackers would not “survive”.

“Threat for threat means that if the enemy fires a single bullet at us, it will receive 10

bullets and have to pay a heavy cost,” the general reiterated.

He also said the Iranian armed forces hold regular military exercises to maintain their preparedness for “dealing the heaviest blow to the enemy and its interests” in case of any possible attack.

The Iranian armed forces are closely monitoring the U.S. moves, General Shekarchi said, warning, “A military mistake from the enemy, particularly from the U.S. and its regional allies, will be tantamount to firing at a powder keg on which are the U.S. and its interests, and it will set the region ablaze and burn up the U.S., its interests, and its allies.”

In comments in April 2018, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei



said the U.S. is well aware of the crushing response it will receive in case of taking military action against Iran.

The era of hit and run is now over, and

the U.S. knows that if it gets entangled in military action against Iran, it will receive much harsher blows, Ayatollah Khamenei underlined.

“A military mistake from the enemy, particularly from the U.S. and its regional allies, will be tantamount to firing at a powder keg on which are the U.S. and its interests, and it will set the region ablaze and burn up the U.S., its interests, and its allies.”

Ex-IRGC chief warns U.S. not to underestimate Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A former chief of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has warned the United States and its allies not to underestimate Iran’s defense power.

“Today, observers and analysts have realized that we are not Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. Americans and their allies should know that lions do not show their teeth for smiling,”

Mohsen Rezaei said in a tweet on Friday.

Rezaee’s tweet came a day after the IRGC brought down a U.S. spy drone after it had intruded into Iranian airspace and was conducting espionage activities.

In a statement on Thursday, the IRGC announced that a U.S.-made Global Hawk surveillance drone was brought down by its Air Force near the Kouh-e Mobarak region,

which sits in the central district of Jask County, after the aircraft violated Iranian airspace.

Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the aerospace unit of the IRGC, said on Friday that the drone had received warnings for four times before being shot down.

To prove that the drone had entered Iran’s airspace, the IRGC on Friday put on display the wreckage of the aircraft.

Iran not favoring war but fully prepared to defend itself: IRGC general

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Commander of the aerospace unit of the IRGC says the Iranian people and the armed forces do not favor a war with the United States but are fully prepared to protect the country against aggressors.

Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh made the remarks on Saturday, two days after the IRGC brought down a U.S. spy drone for intruding into Iranian airspace.

“The Americans’ action was contrary to international rules and conventions and we acted according to our legal duty,” Hajizadeh said, IRNA reported.

“That was our response to an act of aggression into Iran’s airspace, and in the event of repeating such aggression, our response will also be repeated,” he warned.

The general further said Iran has a collection of downed American drones and is ready to add other U.S. military products to its collection.

On Friday, Hajizadeh said the U.S. drone had received warnings for four times before being shot down.

“Those who guided the drone received the warnings but did not care. Given that the drone breached Iran’s airspace, the



aerospace unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps shot it down,” he said in an exhibition held in Tehran to showcase the drone’s wreckage.

“Two warnings were issued on 2:05 on Thursday morning and two others were issued on 3:55 and the drone was shot on 4:05. In fact, four warnings were given to this drone but they did not pay attention,” the general explained.

H also said another spy plane was also flying near the drone which carried 35 crew members and “we had the right to shoot that down, however, we shot down the unmanned drone.”

Tehran denies receiving message from Trump

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Spokesman for Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Keyvan Khosravi has rejected a report which claimed that Tehran had received a message from U.S. President Donald Trump through Oman.

“Iran has received no letter from the U.S.,” Khosravi said on Friday, Mehr reported.

The remarks by the SNSC official came after the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) early on Thursday shot down a U.S. surveillance drone for violating Iran’s airspace.

Reuters claimed on Friday that Tehran had received a message from U.S. President Donald Trump through Oman overnight warning that a U.S. attack on Iran was imminent.

“In his message, Trump said he was against any war with Iran and wanted to talk to Tehran about various issues ... he gave a short period of time to get our response but Iran’s immediate response was that it is up to Supreme Leader (Ayatollah Ali) Khamenei to decide about this issue,” an Iranian official told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

Reuters also quoted another official as



saying: “We made it clear that the leader is against any talks, but the message will be conveyed to him to make a decision ... However, we told the Omani official that any attack against Iran will have regional and international consequences.”

Tensions between the United States and Iran have been escalating since Washington pulled out of the nuclear deal with Iran and reimposed sanctions on Tehran.

Tensions rose further after Washington accused Tehran of a recent attack on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman, a charge vehemently denied by Iran.

Judiciary unveils structural reforms

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — The Judiciary spokesman unveiled a reform of the Judiciary’s structure to optimize the performance of the body.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, Gholam Hossein Esmaili said the structural reform of the Judiciary has been carried out after three months of extensive studies to make it more agile and efficient.

In the new structure, endorsed by Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi, a number of the departments of deputies and bureaus either have been merged or will run under supervision of different departments, he added.

Nearly 40 percent of the bureaus with direct link with the Judiciary chief’s office have been dissolved or merged into other bureaus, the spokesman said, adding that at least 20 percent of the posts at the headquarters of the Judiciary are set to be ditched.

Last week, Raisi called on the people and the intelligentsia



to provide feedback on the judicial processes and help improve the Judiciary’s performance.

He also called on the public to make comments on the Judiciary’s performance and provide feedback on the legal processes for building a “popular, revolutionary and anti-corruption Judiciary.”

Raisi also warned the country’s decision-makers not to make a miscalculation by ruining the opportunity for direct contact with the people through social media, echoing remarks by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that the valuable opportunity provided by the cyberspace should be seized.

In a decree in March, Ayatollah Khamenei appointed Raisi as the new head of the Judiciary. The top judge was the Islamic Republic’s former attorney general and, up to his appointment as the Judiciary chief, served as the chief custodian of Astan Quds Razavi, the organization managing the affairs of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shiite Imam.

Pelosi warns Trump on unapproved move against Iran

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Friday welcomed U.S. President Donald Trump’s alleged decision to call off military strikes on Iran, emphasizing that U.S. military action against Iran “must not be initiated” without congressional approval.

Pelosi told reporters that she was not notified by officials of the president’s decision on Thursday to approve the military strike when she and other congressional leaders went to the White House for a briefing that day, The Hill reported.

“We left with the idea that the president was going to consider some options,” Pelosi told reporters. “I did not receive any heads-up that there was a strike that was in the works.”

“Maybe the other leaders did on the Re-

publican side, but I did not receive any of that,” she added.

Senate Democratic Leader Charles Schumer (N.Y.) said on Thursday that Democrats told Trump in a Situation Room meeting that he needs to get congressional authorization before taking military action.

Trump said on Friday that officials had been “cocked and loaded” to retaliate against Iran after he learned an Iranian missile system shot down a U.S. military drone.

However, the president said he decided to call off the mission after he learned 150 Iranians would die as a result of the strike.

“We were cocked & loaded to retaliate last night on 3 different sights when I asked, how many will die. 150 people, sir, was the answer from a General. 10 minutes before

the strike I stopped it, not proportionate to shooting down an unmanned drone,” Trump tweeted on Friday.

Pelosi emphasized to the Trump administration in a statement that “hostilities must not be initiated without the approval of Congress.”

“During our meeting with the president at the White House, congressional leaders stressed the necessity that we work with our allies,” she said.

Iran shot down the unmanned U.S. aircraft on Thursday morning after it ignored repeated warnings by the Iranian military to leave Iran’s airspace.

To prove that the drone had entered the Iranian airspace in the Strait of Hormuz, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps on Friday put on display the wreckage of the drone.



Judiciary chief visits Imam Khomeini mausoleum

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi and number of other judicial officials on Saturday visited the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Revolution, to mark the start of Judiciary Week.

“This week is a good opportunity to once again review Imam’s views in order to administer justice in the society and form a society based on divine values,” Raisi said, according to ISNA.



Raisi said among the most important plans of the Judiciary are reducing entry of cases to the Judiciary, establishing a fair hearing, issuing fair verdicts and paying attention to the public rights.

“Fighting discrimination while administering justice is one of our plans,” he added.

Assembly of Experts hails IRGC for downing U.S. drone

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Members of the Assembly of Experts have issued a statement to express their gratitude to the aerospace unit of the IRGC after it shot down a trespassing American drone in the Gulf of Oman, ISNA reported on Saturday.

“The downing of the highly advanced U.S. spy drone by the powerful hand of the brave Guards of the Islamic Revolution not only showed a small portion of the might and progress of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s defense industry, but also served as a humiliating defeat and a memorable lesson for the criminal America and also disrupted their technical and military calculations,” the statement read.

It said that the Islamic Republic is entitled to pursue the case legally through international bodies and that the shooting down of the U.S. drone was the legal right of the Islamic Republic.

The Assembly of Experts also strongly condemned the trespassing of the drone into Iranian airspace, saying the Islamic Republic is ready to respond to any act of aggression while it will not start a war.

Tehran condemns terror attack on Shiite mosque in Baghdad

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Saturday denounced a recent terrorist attack on a Shiite mosque in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad that killed and injured several people.

In a statement, Mousavi expressed condolences to the Iraqi people and government as well as the bereaved families over the tragic incident, the Tasnim news agency reported.

The terrorist blast, which occurred on Friday, targeted Imam Mahdi al-Muntadhar Mosque in the al-Baladiyat neighborhood in the eastern flank of Baghdad near the densely-populated district of Sadr City.

It killed at least 10 people and wounded 30 others, according to Iraqi security officers.

“At least one attacker wearing a belt of explosives tried to enter the building but was stopped by the guards, and detonated himself outside,” said one officer.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet.



Europe unable to secure Iran’s nuclear deal interests: ex-envoy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iran’s former ambassador to Norway believes Europe cannot secure Iran’s interests from the 2015 nuclear deal, saying that European countries’ power is restricted to opening a channel for Iran to import foodstuff and pharmaceuticals.

“We should not expect a notable action from the Europeans in the deadline we set for them,” Abdolreza Faraji-Rad said, the Mehr news agency reported on Saturday.

“In my opinion, the Europeans are trying to use the financial mechanism, INSTEX, to exchange foodstuff and pharmaceuticals with us during the deadline set by Iran,” Faraji-Rad said.

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

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



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	233864.3
IFX	2966.21

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	47,752 rials
GBP	53,477 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$64.45/b
WTI	\$57.43/b
OPEC Basket	\$63.95/b
Gold	\$1,400.20/oz
Silver	\$15.40oz
Platinum	\$813.30oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Over \$574m worth of commodities traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During weekdays ending up to June 22, while 660,751 million tons (MT) of commodities worth over \$574 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), the trading volume and value experienced growth of 27 percent and 43 percent, respectively.

According to the report from IME International Affairs and Public Relations Department, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 194,910 MT of various products worth close to \$282 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 179,490 MT of steel, 6,900 MT of copper, 3,500 MT of aluminum, 20 MT of molybdenum concentrates, 5,000 MT of iron ore as well as 18 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 231,303 MT of different commodities with the total value of \$284 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 64,640 MT of VB feed stock, 74,028 MT of bitumen, 47,069 MT of polymer products, 22,269 MT of chemical products, 1869 MT of insulation, 23,000 MT of lube cut oil, 506 MT of base oil as well as 845 MT of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 1,278 MT of commodities were traded on the side market of IME.

‘Boosting exports from mining sector priority of industry ministry’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iranian industry, mining and trade minister said increasing exports from the mining sector to the neighboring countries has been put on the ministry’s agenda for the current fiscal year, ILNA reported on Saturday.



“In this regard, in the upcoming months, over 1 quadrillion rials (about \$23.8 billion) worth of projects are going to go operational in this sector,” Reza Rahmani said.

According to the official, the figure is going to reach 3 quadrillion rials (\$71.4 billion) in the next three years.

Rahmani further mentioned a one-million-dollar project in the steel industry which is due to be inaugurated in the next Iranian calendar month (July 23-August 22).

Earlier this week, head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) said the organization is planning to establish a consortium in order to accelerate exploration projects in the mining sector.

“The consortium is going to help us in areas like exploration and identification of new mines and minerals,” Khodadad Gharibpour said.

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

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

In late May, Gharibpour had said that the country’s mining sector currently requires 18 billion euros of investment.

“The mining sector is one of the country’s most profitable areas for investment so that 30 percent of the profits in the capital market is pertained to the mining and mineral sector,” he said.

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

CBI unveils plans to compensate oil budget deficit in sanctions era

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — “Communicating with people and economic activists, transparency in policy making and implementation, and responding to people are key components of a good governance in modern central banks,” he said, adding “In the complicated conditions facing the country’s economy, I have been trying to implement these guidelines to pass through the current situation.”

The official went on saying that in the past three months, the government has allocated \$5 billion for supplying basic goods and also

\$6 billion for importing basic materials for the country’s production units through the domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA).

In early May, Hemmati had outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country’s economy.

In an Instagram post, the official pointed out some of the approaches that CBI was going to follow in order to counter the U.S. sanctions and to control inflation.

Maintaining and strengthening the rela-



tive stability of the foreign exchange market by strengthening and improvement of the performance of NIMA, setting foreign currency exchange policies to support non-oil and oil exports and providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production and finally establishing a financial mechanism with neighboring countries were some of the

plans which CBI head said is going to execute.

Explaining CBI plans for managing inflation, the official noted that previous monetary policies regarding the controls over cash flow would be modified using the new structure of monetary policy and consequently uncertainty over controlling the cash demand was going to decrease.

20 industrial, mining projects to be inaugurated by March 2020

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — An official with the Iranian Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade informed that 20 industrial and mining projects will be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2020), IRNA reported on Friday.

“The projects will be in various fields including, iron, copper, aluminum, steel, food industry, transportation and carpet weaving, across the country,” Managing Director of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) Sadeq Najafi said.

In late April, the Managing Director of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Khodadad Gharibpour had announced that projects worth \$3 billion are planned to be inaugurated in Iran’s mining sector in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21, 2019).



Last year during the Ten-Day Dawn (February 1-10, marking the victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution), 576 industrial and mining projects were inaugurated across the country.

“The projects have been implemented using 686 trillion rials (about \$16.3 billion at the time) of investments,” Head of Administrative Development and Renovation Center of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade Jahanbakhsh Sanjabi Shirazi said.

According to Sanjabi, the projects provided 35000 workers with jobs.

Paper production up 5.5% in 2 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of paper in Iran rose 5.5 percent during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21) compared to the same pe-

riod of time in the previous year, IRNA reported on Saturday.

According to the data released by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, some 164,900 tons

of different types of paper were produced in the country during the two-month period of this year, rising from 156,200 tons of the product produced in the same time span in the past year.

TEDPIX rises 56,220 points in a quarter

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)’s main index (TEDPIX) has increased 56,220 points or 20.4 percent to 234,879 during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday.

As reported, some 258,055 billion securities worth 723.503 trillion rials (about \$17.226 billion) were traded through 17.999 million deals at TSE during the three-month period.

Based on the already released reports and data, Iran’s exchange markets witnessed fruitful performances and results in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019).

Applying new financial instruments in Iranian capital market was another achievements of the exchange markets during the past year, as TSE officially launched “futures” in mid-December 2018 for more risk management and Iran Mercantile Market (IME) launched “option” in early March 2019 in an approach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products.

Futures contracts (more colloquially, futures) are financial contracts obligating the buyer to purchase an asset or the seller to sell an asset at a predetermined future date and price.

Option is a contract which gives the buyer (the owner or holder of the option) the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an underlying asset or instrument at a specified strike price prior to or on a specified date, depending on the form of the option.

Malaysia’s economic direction clearer despite temporary “chaos”: analysts

Malaysia’s economic direction is clearer now despite the temporary “chaos” during the transition period that has worsened investors’ confidence, analysts said.

According to nst.com.my, some also expect the ringgit to edge higher against the U.S. dollar in the coming months, with Singapore-based OCBC Bank projecting it to trade just above 4.1600 by the year-end.

Malaysia saw a change in government following Barisan Nasional’s

loss in the general election in May last year.

MIDF Research said the country was bracing for a better growth this year than the 4.7 percent posted in 2018.

“As Malaysia currently focuses on free market, quality investment and high productivity, it will have significant impacts on economic growth.

“Despite the temporary chaos during the transition period which deteriorated investors’ confidence, economic direction is clearer now,” the firm said in its latest third quarter market strategy report.

MIDF Research expects Malaysia’s economy to expand 4.9 per cent this year. This would be driven by steady domestic demand amid lower key interest rate effects, low inflationary pressure, stable job market and positive progression in construction sector.

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 98-04/112

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Two-Stage Tender:
IRIB International Offices ENG Equipment according to the tender documents.

Deadline of Receiving Documents:
As of publishing second announcement of advertisement latest by the business hour dated on **Wednesday June 26, 2019.**

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

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:
The amount of **USD 5,000 (equivalent to 500,000,000 Rials)** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee

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

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

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

Public Relations Dept. of IRIB

‘Russia prepared to help Iran for oil exports if INSTEX not realized’

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Russia is ready to help Iran with oil sales and its banking sector if the European trade mechanism is not launched, Interfax cited Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying on Friday.

U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled Washington out of the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and ordered re-imposition 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.

European countries established the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) in January to help shield limited trade with Iran from U.S. sanctions.

On March 20, Central Bank of Iran (CB) Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati announced



that a mechanism similar to INSTEX has been registered in Iran, officially called the Special Trade and Finance Institute (STFI).

Iran has been criticizing the Europe's performance in realizing the trade mechanism.

Earlier this month, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani criticized the role of France in salvaging the 2015 nuclear accord, saying the European banking mechanism has remained on the paper and has not been made operational.

In early June, the British, French and German ambassadors to Iran issued a statement following completion of further expert meetings in Tehran, vowing to deliver INSTEX's first transaction as quickly as possible.

On June 7, Russia's Permanent Representative to the European Union Vladimir Chizhov told TASS that INSTEX is failing to gain momentum.

IRENEX to hold offering of 2m barrels of gas condensate on Tuesday

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) will offer two million barrels of gas condensate at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) on Tuesday, Shana reported.

As announced by NIOC, the base price will be \$58.43 per barrel in this round of offering gas condensate at IRENEX which is the seventh round.

Since the U.S.'s withdrew from Iran's nuclear pact in May 2018, vowing to drive Iran's oil exports down to zero, the Islamic Republic has been taking various measures to counter the U.S. actions and to keep its oil exports levels as high as possible.

One of the main strategies that Iran chose to execute to help its oil exports afloat has been trying new ways to diversify the mechanism of oil sales, one of which is offering oil at the country's stock market.

NIOC offered light crude oil at IRENEX first on October 28, 2018 just few days before new U.S. sanctions on Iran's petroleum sector took effect (November 4). In the first round, NIOC could sell some 280,000 barrels of crude oil at \$74.85 per barrel. With the daily supply amount of one million barrels, the market wrapped up by selling eight 35,000-barrel cargos of oil on the day.

Offering gas condensate at IRENEX came after the successful offering of crude oil at this market. The product has been already offered at the IRENEX in five rounds. The first offering was done on February 13, which failed to attract customers.

And then the turn came to heavy crude. Offering heavy crude at IRENEX came after NIOC offered light crude at this stock market in eight round.

Iranian National Oil Company sold 70,000 barrels of



heavy crude oil at IRENEX for the first time on April 30. In the first round one million barrels of heavy crude was offered at a base price of \$60.68.

Hong Kong's power firms sign LNG deals for first import terminal

By Jessica Jaganathan

Hong Kong's Castle Peak Power Company and Hong Kong Electric Co said on Friday they have signed a supply deal for the nation's first import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and for the lease of an import vessel.

Hong Kong is undertaking a massive shift to use more natural gas to fuel its electric power generation from coal, potentially creating a steady and lucrative demand source in the Asian LNG market.

Both Hong Kong-based power companies said they have signed an agreement with Shell Eastern Trading — a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell — for a long-term LNG supply for the Hong Kong Offshore LNG terminal.

Shell will supply LNG to both companies from its global LNG portfolio once the project has been completed.

They did not specify the supply deal details, but Reuters had first reported the impending deal in March last year citing sources familiar with the matter as saying the supply deal is for 1.2 million tons per annum (mtpa) for 10 years starting after 2020.

■ The floating storage

Castle Peak Power Company and Hong



Kong Electric Co said in a separate statement that their joint venture has signed an agreement with Mitsui O.S.K. Lines Ltd (MOL) for the hire of a floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) on a time-charter basis for the LNG project.

They added that the FSRU vessel will be used for receiving, storing, and regasifying LNG for the supply of natural gas to CAP-

CO and HK Electric for power generation through two separate subsea gas pipelines.

MOL will also be responsible for providing operations and maintenance services for the FSRU vessel and offshore LNG terminal.

Castle Peak Power Company Ltd (CAPCO) is a joint venture of utility CLP Power Hong Kong Limited and China Southern Power Grid International (HK) Co, which is

a wholly owned subsidiary of China Southern Power Grid Co Ltd.

CAPCO owns three power stations — Castle Peak Power Station, Black Point Power Station and Penny's Bay Power Station — which are operated by CLP Power.

As part of its commitment to the Paris Climate Change Agreement, Hong Kong is keen to spike the use of natural gas in its total fuel mix for power generation to about 50% by 2020 from 22%, as of 2012.

The "FSRU vessel, together with the jetty and submarine pipelines, will enable us to have access to diverse gas sources for cost-competitive LNG supplies," HK Electric Managing Director Mr. Wan Chit-in said in the statement.

The "new LNG terminal project will provide HK Electric with greater flexibility and a new channel for Lamma Power Station to obtain natural gas, easing the pressing need to enhance the security of gas supply."

Hong Kong currently produces power using imported fuel in domestic power plants or from imported natural gas from the mainland. The country's coal-fired plants will reach the end of their useful life in the next decade.

(Source: hellenicshippingnews.com)

In other news, renewables just passed coal on the energy capacity racetrack

By Jeff Turrentine

Carrying out the wishes of President Trump, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency formally announced this week that it would be killing the Clean Power Plan, President Obama's sweeping rule intended to cut carbon pollution by limiting emissions from coal-fired power plants. In its place, it rolled out a weak-tea, coal-friendly substitute known as the Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule.

Under the new rule, states are no longer responsible for reducing their CO2 emissions 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. Instead, it lays out a plan for a reduction of 11 million tons of power-sector emissions by that same year. Do the math and this translates to emissions cuts of somewhere between 0.7 percent and 1.5 percent.

The ignominious launch of the ACE is undoubtedly the biggest climate news of the week. But there's another story that's gotten far less attention, even though it provides a comforting counterpoint to the dissonance coming out of the White House.

According to a just-published report by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), America quietly passed a clean energy milestone in April. For the first time in history, renewable energy capacity was greater than the capacity of coal. To put it another way, renewables are now capable of generating more electricity than coal is.

■ The clean energy

Granted, it's a real squeaker: As of April, renewables accounted for 21.56 percent of total U.S. generating capacity and coal accounted for 21.55 percent. But in that one-hundredth of a point difference is confirmation of the sweetest, most satisfying sort. What clean energy advocates have long said was bound to happen has finally happened. Renewable energy is no longer just "catching up" to coal. It's now — officially — beating it.

What's more, if trends continue, this lead is only going to widen over time. Renewables' share of generating



capacity is growing at a rate of about one percentage point annually, while coal consumption is in freefall: Right now, Americans are relying on coal for less of our electricity than we have in 40 years. By 2022, it's estimated that renewables will account for a full quarter of our nation's total available power supply.

It's against this backdrop that Trump's EPA, currently led by the former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler, is making its last-ditch effort to save the moribund coal industry at the expense of clean air, public health, and the global climate. It's an effort as futile as it is dangerous. Take it from Nick Mullins, a fifth-generation coal miner from Virginia who has become a vocal critic of the industry and a champion of increased regulation, including emissions protections. In a New York Times op-ed video posted last year, he accused the administration of trafficking in "false promises that are only going to line the pockets of

coal executives while delaying the inevitable."

If Trump and Wheeler are still having difficulty understanding what "the inevitable" looks like, they might want to turn their attention to another new report that paints a very clear picture. The authors of "Benchmarking Air Emissions of the 100 Largest Electric Power Producers in the United States" have been compiling and analyzing energy generation and emissions data since 1997. They found that 2017 marked the first year that zero-carbon resources accounted for more electricity generation than either coal or natural gas.

■ The zero-carbon category

The zero-carbon category includes nuclear energy in addition to renewables, and nuclear certainly played a large part in this achievement, accounting for more than 56 percent of zero-carbon generation in 2017. But renewable and hydroelectric sources together made up more than 43 percent of it. And it's promising to see that these greener forms of energy are aggressively on the rise, while nuclear energy (which carries environmental, safety, and economic risks) is on the decline.

But let's not fool ourselves into thinking that our president appreciates the monumental change that's taking place. This is, after all, the same man who has suggested that increasing our country's reliance on wind energy could mean that Americans wouldn't be able to watch television on evenings when the wind isn't blowing, and that the noise from windmills causes cancer.

Data, science, and statistics don't matter to him. But they matter to plenty of other people — including, it should be noted, economists, utility managers, business leaders, lawmakers, and average citizens who are concerned about climate change and air pollution. We've just crossed a major threshold: Renewables have now surpassed coal in their capacity to provide us with electricity. It would be terrific if the president supported this momentum. But even if he doesn't, it won't change the trajectory that we're on. Clean energy is the future; coal is the past.

(Source: nrdc.org)

Wind farm commissioner's 2018 report released, debunks misconceptions

Australia's independent wind farm commissioner released his 2018 report on Thursday, which indicates there are still worries from people about wind turbines.

As per thecourier.com.au, as well as recommendations and extensive notes on how companies can best work with communities, Commissioner Andrew Dyer included an analysis of complaints.

The numbers reveal the majority of complaints in 2018 came from Victoria, and most referred to proposed wind farms.

From the 123 total complaints that year, 97 of them were for proposed wind farms, compared to eight for operational wind farms.

There were 57 complaints about amenity, and 18 about health, from across Australia.

The Victorian government has hailed the beginning of the Berrybank Wind Farm, near Lismore - a 43-turbine, 180-megawatt project, which has links to a factory in Geelong and a proposed educational facility in Ballarat.

While residents in rural areas may dislike the aesthetics of wind turbines being built in bucolic hills, the number of complaints shows an interesting trend.

■ Wind turbine operation

New research from Flinders University notes that some noise - amplitude modulation, or rumbling from wind turbine operation - is present 16 percent of the time in residences up to 3.5 kilometers away.

It also noted it could increase to 22 percent of the time at night.

The scientists involved said it was more noticeable in rural areas, with less traffic.

Local wind farm projects have held demonstrations, using simulated noise to help residents understand the potential effects - Lal Lal Wind Farms held one at Bungaree in November, at the community's urging.

The Environment Protection Authority's noise auditing requirements were also changed in December, to ensure more transparency before and after construction.

However, while the noise is noticeable, and reportedly annoying, major health organizations including the Australian Medical Association and the National Health and Medical Research Council have issued position statements that say wind farms have no adverse effect on human health.

"After careful consideration and deliberation of the body of evidence, NHMRC concludes that there is currently no consistent evidence that wind farms cause adverse health effects in humans," the NHMRC position paper says.

"Individuals residing in the vicinity of wind farms who do experience adverse health or well-being, may do so as a consequence of their heightened anxiety or negative perceptions regarding wind farm developments in their area. Individuals who experience heightened anxiety or diminished health and well-being in the context of local wind farms should seek medical advice," the position statement reads.

The "reporting of 'health scares' and misinformation regarding wind farm developments may contribute to heightened anxiety and community division, and over-rigorous regulation of these developments by state governments."

Oil holds steady amid small rig count decline

The number of active oil and gas rigs in the United States fell again this week according to Baker Hughes, as the overall rig count reaches the lowest point since February 2018.

According to oilprice.com, the total number of active oil and gas drilling rigs in the United States fell by 2 according to the report, with the number of active oil rigs increasing by 1 to reach 789 and the number of gas rigs decreasing by 4 to reach 177. Miscellaneous rigs saw an increase of one.

The combined oil and gas rig count is 967, with oil seeing a 73-rig decrease year on year and gas rigs down 11 since this time last year. The combined oil and gas rig count is down 85 year on year.

Year-to-date, the oil rig count has fallen from 877 active rigs since the beginning of the year to 789, while gas rigs have fallen from 198 to 177 during that same time.

Despite the rig decline year on year, U.S. production is still almost 2 million barrel per day higher year on year.

The WTI was up \$0.40 (+.70%) at \$57.47—an almost \$5 per barrel increase from last Friday on increased tensions between the United States and Iran continue to push up prices.

The Brent benchmark was trading up on the day as well, by \$0.86 (+1.33%) at \$65.31—a \$3 per barrel increase from last week.

Robust U.S. oil production is also keeping the prices in check, although falling back for the second week in a row on June 14 to 12.2 million bpd down from the all-time high of 12.4 million bpd.

Canada's overall rig count increased by 12. Canada's oil rigs are still down by 23 year on year, with gas rigs down 18 year on year.

More and more homes and businesses are using solar energy in Mérida

The installation of solar energy equipment has grown exponentially in the state capital due to the greater diffusion and knowledge regarding this technology and its savings in the consumption of electric power.

As stated by theyucatantimes.com, the use of clean energy is advancing tremendously in the country; in 2018 the industry grew about 350 percent more compared to 2017, with Mexico City and Merida as the two cities where the installation of solar panels increased more significantly, declared the Professor in Science and project manager of Solar Energy of the Southeast, Juan José Aguayo Puuc.

He indicated that one of the factors for which there has been significant growth in the Yucatan is because the integrating companies of the most important projects throughout Mexico are settling down in our state, therefore, there's more competition, costs are reduced, originating a greater offer and consequently more and better options for the people of the Yucatan Peninsula.

The specialist added that the high demand for this product is also due to the fact that the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) no longer has bidirectional meters, which serve to differentiate between energy generated by parastatal suppliers, and energy generated by the solar panels.

"Solar Energy has seen an exponential growth in the last three years, and every year the consumption is higher. In 2017 there was a photovoltaic generation of 273.45 gigawatts, in 2018 1,365,000 gigawatts, that is 340.50 percent more," he said.

Xi's North Korea visit set to cement traditional friendship

By Zhao Lixin

GLOBALTIMES — Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to North Korea on Thursday and Friday is undoubtedly of momentous significance. This is the first visit to North Korea by China's top leader in 14 years.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited China four times in the past one and half years, and reached a series of important consensus with Xi on bilateral relations and the situation on the Korean Peninsula. As 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of China and North Korea's diplomatic ties, Xi's visit is not only a proactive response to Pyongyang's initiative to mend fences between the two countries, but also a great opportunity to improve relations and to shoulder responsibility on the peninsula issue. The second Kim-Trump summit held in February ended without an agreement, and the issue of denuclearization on the peninsula was caught in a logjam. Washington's uncooperative approach makes Pyongyang feel worried. President Xi's visit to North Korea can be regarded as coming at the right time.

North Korean mainstream media including state newspaper Rodong Sinmun on Wednesday published a signed article by Xi. The article states the purpose of Xi's visit - to endow China-North Korea "traditional friendship with new connotation," to "inject new impetus into the development of bilateral relations" and to "make new progress in securing regional peace and stability." If these goals can be achieved, China-North Korea relations will enter a new era.



China-North Korea relations will see traditional friendship going beyond the nuclear issue. China will keep following its principled stance of helping achieve denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and opposing North Korea's nuclear plan. China will also emphasize that relations go beyond the nuclear issue, which is a multilateral dispute involving regional security.

Given that North Korea has halted nuclear tests, unless premeditated provocations or malicious interventions by external forces take place, turmoil on the peninsula can be controlled. In this context, China-North Korea relations confined to the nuclear issue will become history. And traditional friendship will still be the cornerstone of ties. Moreover, economic and trade cooperation will comprehensively strengthen bilateral ties and communications.

Based on strong economic complementarities and geographical advantages, there is enormous potential for future economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. China is currently implementing UN sanctions against North Korea. President Xi's visit may not immediately open up new prospects for economic and trade cooperation. But China will be better understanding Pyongyang's shift of strategic focus and socialist development with North Korean characteristics. At this stage, China can provide North Korea the historical experience of reform and opening-up as well as governing the party and country; China can also help train talent and officials who can help North Korea develop its economy and maintain social stability.

In addition, cooperation between China and North Korea in education, culture, sports, tourism, youth activities and people's livelihood will usher in a new hope. Good political relations and close economic ties will reduce the psychological distance between Chinese and North Korean people, and the historical memory of fraternal relations between the two nations will be revived. There will be an opportunity for China to demonstrate its achievements in socialist development to the North Korean people. China will be the most important window and stage for the North Korean people to understand the world and go global. In the near future, more North Korean students will study in China, and more Chinese people will go to North Korea to experience different customs and cultures.

Last but not the least, China and North Korea will be on the same page on security issues, which involve security of the two countries and the Korean Peninsula as well as of Northeast Asia and the world. Beijing and Pyongyang will maintain free exchange of views on the Korean Peninsula issue, regional security and major international issues via high-level visits.

China-North Korea relations in the new era are based on equality, mutual assistance and respect. China didn't and won't intervene in the choice of North Korea. For China, it is a priority to help North Korea get rid of isolation and poverty. Only in this way can Sino-North Korean traditional friendship get stronger and create conditions for resolving the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue.

The game is complex in the Democrats campaign

Does Sanders disrupt Biden's calculations?



Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent, is making another run for the White House. Bernie Sanders, the old American senator, continues to oppose U.S. President Donald Trump. This confrontation started at the time Trump entered the White House (by early 2017). Sanders, in one of his most recent positions against the White House, called for an end to Washington's support for Riyadh in the Yemeni war.

among blacks age 45 and over, compared to 34 percent among blacks under age 45. So I'm skeptical that this controversy will substantially erode that support, particularly among older black voters who have such positive feelings about Biden. In the early stages of this race, he has already weathered another issue that involves race: his treatment of Anita Hill during the Supreme Court confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas in 1991, when Biden was the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I'm not predicting that Biden, in a much different primary race, wins black voters by Clinton-level margins. But the idea that black voters will swing wildly away from a candidate because a gaffe or controversy involves race just isn't borne out by history or the data. In 2016, Hillary Clinton faced a lot of flak over a 1994 anti-crime bill that many Democratic activists now argue was overly punitive, specifically toward African-Americans, since her husband was the person who signed it into law. But she still overwhelmingly won the black vote in the Democratic primary. Biden was heavily involved in that bill — but so far, that has not dented his support with black voters. And amid this week's controversy, several members of the Congressional Black Caucus publicly defended Biden.

In fact, Biden's comments might reinforce one thing some black voters like about him: Biden might be relatable to people with some racist views, making Biden more electable than, say, a black candidate. It's hard to get at these dynamics in formal polls. But in interviews I've done (and other reporters have found this as well), black voters often express the view that the U.S. elections in 2008 and 2012 were somewhat of an anomaly (that Americans would elect a black president). For them, 2016 was a return to normal (Americans

elected a president who had expressed some anti-black sentiments). One of the challenges for Harris's campaign in particular has been that many African-Americans voters, having watched the hatred of Obama from some Republicans and then Trump's victory, believe that America is too racist and sexist to elect a black female president. In short, black voters care about "electability" too — and that is likely benefitting Biden, at least at this stage of the campaign. Lots of polls have found a majority of Democrats are prioritizing beating Trump over issues and policy. That includes black voters. The firm Avalanche Strategy, in data provided to FiveThirtyEight, found that about a quarter of black voters would prefer a different 2020 candidate than the one that they currently favor if they could wave a "magic wand" and just make the person president without him or her having to win the primary or the general election. That share is about the same for Latino and non-Hispanic white voters.

It's hard to predict what will happen to Biden's standing in the wake of this week's news. But I think it's increasingly clear that the way we think about racial controversies (with the implication that minorities are particularly triggered by them) and the black vote (assuming it is fairly monolithic) are off. Biden's positive mentions of his work with segregationist senators may have annoyed nonblack Democrats as much or more than black ones. And the biggest question is not whether it pulls all black people from Biden — the younger ones are already kind of ambivalent about him — but whether it breaks his bond with older black people.

Biden leads Sanders by 22 points. As The Hill reported, Former Vice President Joe Biden leads his closest competitor in the field of Democratic presidential candidates by 22 percentage points, according to



Sanders now considers himself the United States' potential president! Some analysts in the United States note that Sanders's opposition to Donald Trump and the White House policies have paved the way for his re-appearance in the upcoming presidential election. Polls recently conducted in the United States indicate Sanders' proper position among Democratic voters.

a Hill-HarrisX poll released Monday. In the June 14-15 survey, Biden garnered support from 35 percent of registered voters who identified as Democrats or as independents who favored the party. The next closest candidate was Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), at 13 percent.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) came in third with 7 percent, followed by former Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-Texas) at 6 percent, Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) at 5 percent and South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg at 4 percent. All other candidates who were named by poll participants received 1 percent support or less. Several were not named by any participants: New York Mayor Bill de Blasio (D), former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper (D), Washington Gov. Jay Inslee (D) and former Sen. Mike Gravel (D-Alaska).

Biden's 35 percent matches the support rating he received in a Hill-HarrisX survey conducted June 1-2. In that poll, Sanders had 16 percent support. Biden was slightly more popular among male respondents than among female voters in the most recent survey, with 37 percent of men favoring him compared to 32 percent of women. For Sanders, 16 percent of men supported him, compared to support from 10 percent of women. Harris received more support from female respondents than males, with 8 percent of women backing her compared to 2 percent of men.

Biden had support from 22 percent of Hispanic respondents, compared with 15 percent for Sanders 13 percent for O'Rourke and 10 percent for Harris. In the previous poll, Biden and Sanders were tied among Latino respondents at 25 percent. The former vice president fared much better among African-American voters, with 42 percent support. None of the other candidates received double-digit support. In the previous three surveys, Biden was the overwhelming favorite among black respondents.

Biden has also maintained an edge among white Democratic voters, at 36 percent. Sanders was next at 12 percent, followed by 9 percent for Warren. The June 14-15 Hill-HarrisX poll was conducted online among a statistically representative sample of 424 respondents who identified themselves as registered voters who were Democrats or independents who favored the Democratic Party. It has a sampling margin of error of 4.8 percent and a 95 percent confidence level.

Biden, Sanders edge Trump in North Carolina

Former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) hold narrow leads over President Trump in North Carolina ahead of the 2020 presidential race, according to a new Public Policy Polling survey released Thursday. Forty-nine percent of registered voters surveyed said they would back Biden in a match-up against Trump, while 46 percent said they would support the president. Five percent, meanwhile, said they are unsure who they'd back.

In a match-up against Sanders, 48 percent of North Carolina voters polled said they'd back the Vermont senator, compared with 47 percent who said they would vote for Trump; 5 percent said they were unsure of their pick. No other candidate leads Trump in the poll. Trump, who won North Carolina with nearly half the vote in the 2016 election, has an approval rating that is underwater, according to the poll. Forty-six percent of voters say they approve of the job he's doing as president, while 49 percent disapprove.

"North Carolina's evenly divided on Trump's reelection," said Dean Debnam, president of Public Policy Polling. "That's not good news for him given that he won the state by 4 points in 2016. North Carolinians are moving against him."

An Emerson College poll released earlier this month showed Trump trailing Biden, Sanders and South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg in the Tar Heel state. Polls have shown Biden and Sanders leading Trump in several key battleground states ahead of the general election, including Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, all states that helped secure Trump's victory in 2016. Public Policy Polling surveyed 610 registered voters from June 17-18. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Conclusion

Sanders now considers himself the United States' potential president! Some analysts in the United States note that Sanders's opposition to Donald Trump and the White House policies have paved the way for his re-appearance in the upcoming presidential election. Polls recently conducted in the United States indicate Sanders' proper position among Democratic voters. Accordingly, Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders have both a good position among Democrat supporters and they both have a good chance to reach the final round of the 2020 presidential elections. If Sanders can defeat Joe Biden in Democrat elections, he will have a great chance to defeat Trump.

Palestinians keep their right of return alive

By Ramzy Baroud

ANTIWAR—The United Nations' World Refugee Day, observed annually on June 20, should not merely represent a reminder of "the courage, strength and determination of women, men and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict and violence."

It should also be an opportunity for the international community to truly understand and actively work towards finding a sustainable remedy to forced displacement, for no woman, man or child should be forced to endure such grueling, shattering and humiliating experience in the first place. Palestinians who have withstood the degradation of exile for over 70 years embody the harshness of this collective experience more than any other group. To be a refugee means living perpetually in limbo — unable to reclaim what has been lost, the beloved homeland, and unable to fashion an alternative future and a life of freedom, justice and dignity.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are currently 68.5 million people around the world who have been forced out from their homes, with 25.4 million of them classified as refugees. Of the officially listed refugees, 5.4 million are Palestinians, registered with the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). For Palestinians, the grim reality of being a refugee is compounded through the absence of any political horizon, enough to convey a sense of hope that, 70 years after the genesis of the Palestinian refugee crisis, a remedy is at hand. Abandoned in this seemingly eternal quest for a homeland, Palestinians hold tighter onto hope, because it is hope alone that feeds their own sense of determination, which neither time nor distance will stand between them and their Right of Return. This internationally-honored right is etched in the hearts and minds of millions of Palestinians everywhere.

The archetypal image of a refugee — a man, a woman, a child holding on to the pole of a tent, charting a path of exile to no specific place, imploring UN officials for help, and the world for mercy — is, by itself, not enough to deconstruct the complexity of that identity. To belong to a place that has ejected you, yet to seek an alternative home in places to which you do



not belong, culturally and in every other way, confuses one's sense of being. The psychological trauma alone is shattering. While Palestinians continue to hold on to a sense of identity in their various spaces of exile — refugee camps across Palestine and the Middle East — their prolonged odyssey is seen as a "problem" to be haphazardly fixed, or entirely dismissed, in order for Israeli Jews to maintain their demographic majority.

The mere fact that the Palestinian people live and multiply is a "demographic threat" to Israel, a "demographic bomb," even. This unmistakably racist notion is wholly embraced by Israel's allies in Washington and elsewhere.

When Israel and its friends argue that the Palestinians are an "invented people", not only are they aiming to annihilate the Palestinian collective identity, but they are also justifying in their own minds the continued killing and maiming of Palestinians, unhindered by any moral or ethical consideration. Israel and the US will do anything in their power to trivialize the centrality of the Palestinian refugee question and its relevance to any future just peace in Palestine. Nearly a million Palestinian were made refugees following the establishment of Israel on the ruins of historic Palestine in 1948. Hundreds of thousands more acquired that dismal status in subsequent years, especially during the Israeli war and occupation

of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza in 1967.

The 5.4 million refugees registered with UNRWA are those original refugees and their descendants. Israel has never agreed to take responsibility for the consequences of its violent inception — the ethnic cleansing, the untold destruction of towns and villages and the very erasure of historic Palestine.

Even during the Oslo Peace Process, Israel refused to discuss the core issue of refugees, relegating it to the "final status negotiations", which have never taken place and will, most likely, never actualize. In the meantime, Palestinian refugees have been sentenced to subsist in this unfair status — neither here nor there. If there was such a status as second, third and fourth time refugees, Palestinians would have acquired that, as well.

Indeed, millions of Palestinian refugees have been exiled more than once, from Palestine to Jordan or Lebanon; from there to Syria, and back and forth. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the current war in Syria have taught us that Palestinian refugees with relatively better living conditions are not safe, either.

The small Palestinian refugee community in Iraq was persecuted after the invasion, to the point that they were forced to leave, en masse, to any country willing to take them. Many of them ended up as refugees in South America. The same

sordid scenario was repeated in Syria and will, tragically, be replayed elsewhere in the future.

Instead of remedying the crisis with a degree of moral and legal accountability, successive US administrations have tried to marginalize the importance of the Right of Return. Israel, on the other hand, has targeted refugee communities through wars and massacres, most notably during the 1982 war and invasion of Lebanon, and the subsequent Sabra and Shatila Massacre in September of that same year.

Now, with the help of the Donald Trump's administration, Israel and the US are orchestrating even more sinister campaigns to make Palestinian refugees vanish through the very destruction of UNRWA and the redefining of the refugee status of millions of Palestinians. By denying UNRWA urgently needed funds, Washington wants to enforce a new reality, one in which neither human rights, nor international law or morality are of any consequence. What will become of Palestinian refugees seems to be of no importance to Trump, his son-in-law and adviser, Jared Kushner, and other US officials. The Americans are now watching, hoping that their callous strategy will finally bring Palestinians to their knees so that they will ultimately submit to the Israeli government's dictates.

The Israelis want the Palestinians to give up their Right of Return in order to get "peace". The joint Israeli-American "vision" for the Palestinians basically means the imposition of apartheid and keeping Palestinian exiles in a never-ending ordeal. The Palestinian people will never accept this injustice.

The Right of Return remains a driving force behind Palestinian resistance, as the Great March of Return demonstrated in Gaza, starting March of last year. All the money in Washington's coffers will not reverse what is now a deeply embedded belief in the hearts and minds of millions of refugees throughout Palestine, the Middle East and the world.

Palestinian refugees may not top the political agenda of the Middle East at the moment, but it is their persistence, determination and undying hope that will keep their cause alive until international law is respected and human rights are truly honored.

Barry Grossman: March of return familiarized new generation worldwide with brutal nature of Zionist occupation

TEHRAN (FNA) — International lawyer Barry Grossman says the "Great March of Return" rallies "introduced a whole new generation of people around the world to the brutal nature of the occupation."

Barry Grossman, in an exclusive interview with FNA, said that March of Return rallies "further exposed the fanatical and criminal nature of both the decision makers and garden variety civilians who comprise the squatter nation which some people choose to call Israel."

Barry Grossman is an international lawyer and political commentator focused on human rights related issues. He has been extensively published on various legal subjects and is a frequent commentator on political affairs. He is often interviewed by Press TV and other media outlets.

FNA has conducted an interview with Barry Grossman about Israel's brutal crackdown on Palestinian protesters, the Israeli legislation known as the Nation State Law and also Trump's so-called "deal of the century".

Below you will find the full text of the interview.

■ It seems that killing scores of people and maiming thousands more over the past several months aren't an indication of what Israel thinks is enough to keep Gaza in check. Do you think Israel's deadly clamp down on Palestinian protesters is going to end anytime soon?

A: No. Why would they stop after having resolved to do what they are doing and implemented that decision in a domestic environment that celebrates it and a global political environment incapable and wholly unwilling to hold the occupation for any of its long running campaign of war crimes and crimes against humanity?

■ It's been a year since the start of the protests known as the 'Great March of Return.' What do you think the march has accomplished so far?

A: It has, at considerable cost to Palestinians in Gaza, introduced a whole new generation of people around the world to the brutal nature of the occupation and further exposed the fanatical and criminal nature of both the decision makers and garden variety civilians who comprise the squatter nation which some people choose to call Israel.

■ How do you think the US and some Arab states are complicit in crimes against the Palestinians especially in light with the discreet links between Israel and Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states?

A: "Complicity" hardly seems to cover it.

Israel, like Saudi Arabia, we must always remember, is a creation of the US and UK which has only survived because, since its inception, it has never been taken off of the life support it receives from them and their Atlantic World allies.

It has become fashionable, in some circles, to focus on the corrupting effect of undue influence exerted by

the Zionist lobby on the democratic process in both the US and UK but the reality is that Israel, although it certainly has far, far more influence in the wider Atlantic World than can ever be justified, has always existed and, for the most part, acted at the will of the USA, bearing in mind that many of the same individuals who fund the Zionist lobby in the USA and UK, also wield very significant political influence in Israel itself.

As for Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations like Jordan, Egypt, and the [Persian] Gulf States which are under its thumb, it can hardly be contested that there is nothing about those nations which complies with or properly manifests the basic imperatives of Islamic governance and, as a result, they have all fallen entirely under the Atlantic World's corrupting influence when it comes to the occupation of Palestine and all other geopolitical issues in the region.

■ In July 2018, the so-called nation state law was adopted by Israeli Knesset. What do you think the legislation shows about the nature of the regime in Tel Aviv?

A: What I "think" is irrelevant, although I would hesitate to refer to the occupation command structure as a "regime", since even that pejorative term presumes the existence of a legitimate state which has been commandeered by an illegitimate government; ergo the term "regime."

That said, the "Nation-State Law", as so many soft Zionist in Israel argued in opposing it, stands as irrefutable proof that, at its core, the squatter nation and its command structure, reject the core precepts of democracy, equality, liberty, the rule-of-law, and "the rights of man" which the Atlantic World still pretends to embrace as the defining characteristics of its member nations and the wider "International System" it seeks to impose by force on all other nations by any and all available means.

The fact that the flow of Atlantic World military aid and political support has continued unabated despite the enactment of this law simply exposes the Atlantic World's own hypocrisy and abandonment of the principles it falsely claims its own systems of governance are based on.

■ Many believe that the continuing illegal Israeli settlement activities have hammered nail after nail into the coffin of a diplomatic solution. What do you think about that?

A: Well, insofar as that is true, I suppose there has been some golden-lining in that long running, program for creeping territorial appropriations which are considered illegal by pretty much a global consensus.

That said, the occupiers have made it clear since even before the Nakba, that they will never be amenable to any kind of diplomatic solution and, in reality, will accept nothing less than a complete capitulation



by Palestinians, while making it equally clear that a formal capitulation is not very important to them since, strictly speaking, they prefer to proceed with their policy of incremental genocide, much as the UK, the US and other colonial powers did around the world during the colonial era.

■ The current administration in the US has been boasting about their new plan for Palestine and even calling it the deal of the century. What do you think would be in the new deal for Palestinians?

A: Well, it's been a while now since Trump's deal of the century was first touted and many of the usual suspects got together in Riyadh for a photo-op picturing them "touching" up the "globe" in what came across to many observers as some kind of bizarre, secret society ritual; but we still have heard nothing about what this promised deal would offer to the Palestinian people.

Perhaps the usual suspects are still too busy bribing Arab World leaders and what passes for the Palestinian leadership to unveil the deal. But my own, purely speculative view based on what we have seen of the Trump Administration's policies on Palestine and the wider region, is that the misguided plan was probably nothing more than a re-implementation of Theodor Herzl's original plan to buy off Arab leaders so they would not oppose the Zionist plan to usurp Palestine and accept expelled Palestinians into their own lands as citizens. One thing is clear and that is that Trump has no less chutzpah than Herzl did and Trump certainly seems to see everything as being for sale, with the only issue being to arrive at a negotiated price.

That said, whatever provisional deal was made by or on behalf of the nascent Trump Administration with Mohammad bin Salman, that particular scion's own very serious problems, along with political resistance from Arab peoples, including King Salman himself, to the open normalization of ties with Israel, let alone to supporting the occupation and abandoning Palestinians, seems delivered a death knell to the "Deal of the Century" sold to Trump.

President Xi's visit to NK a new milestone

GLOBALTIMES —Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Chinese president, paid a state visit to North Korea on Thursday and Friday. Surprising scenes were on display one after another during the highest-level reception from the North Korean government and people. The Chinese people, who witnessed the spectacle, have been touched. It showed the strong and sincere friendship and respect from the North Korean government and people toward the Chinese leader and people.



The visit has greatly brought China and North Korea closer, as well as people from both countries. It provided an opportunity for the two sides to comprehensively summarize their intrinsically close ties and the strategic value for one another, and to ponder how to consolidate and develop friendly China-North Korea relations in the current international environment.

During his talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, Xi stressed that adhering to being socialist countries under the leadership of the Communist Party is the essential attribute of Beijing-Pyongyang ties. Shared ideals, beliefs and goals are the driving forces of the relationship. The top leaders' friendship and their strategic guidance are the biggest advantage of relations, and the geographic proximity and cultural affinity strongly link the two nations. The public's previous obscure recognition of China-North Korea ties and distractions from the international situation have led to vague understandings from the inside and misunderstandings from the outside. But Xi's latest visit delivered an unmistakable message.

The Beijing-Pyongyang relationship cannot isolate itself from the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue and the shadow of the Cold War. But under any circumstance, strengthening the friendship will have much to gain and nothing to lose for the two countries and their peoples. China and North Korea must have the strength to go through all the regional and international issues without hurting their ties. Kim's four visits to China since 2018 and Xi's just concluded visit show Beijing-Pyongyang ties are capable of withstanding disturbances.

The relationship between China and North Korea is not exclusive. It is full of goodwill toward the region and the world. It is playing a constructively supportive role in the denuclearization of the Peninsula. Facts have shown that Beijing's initiative to solve problems on the peninsula is realistic and without self-serving interests attached. Today's situation on the peninsula reflects the China-proposed double suspension and dual-track approach. After going through twists and turns, the situation returned to what China advocated as it is the most reasonable path.

Clearing misunderstanding on BRI imperative for China

By Ai Jun

GLOBALTIMES —According to reports, violence that erupted between Bangladeshi and Chinese workers at a China-funded power plant in southern Bangladesh had cooled off by Wednesday.

China hopes the incident will be resolved based on local laws. But it also wishes that after comprehensive investigation into the cause and possible rumors in this case, the controversy that triggered the fight can be calmed in a thorough and just manner so as to create a safer environment for Chinese companies. The trend can no longer be overlooked that from time to time opposition voices are raised among local citizenry as their governments sign deals with China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Lessons must be learned.

Contradictions and disputes could happen whenever there is cooperation between people from different countries. But opposition against Chinese companies operating overseas mostly stems from local residents' suspicions of Chinese motives. Take the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway that Indonesia signed in 2015 as part of the BRI. Negotiations between developers and local citizens who owned the land had been time-consuming and arduous. More importantly, the hype by Western media played a vital role in complicating the situation.

Before any official information was released about the conflict in Bangladesh, a previous clash in 2016 was dug up. Both AFP and BBC noted that protests against the construction of two China-backed power plants. But any rational reader would wonder how come people from a place in urgent need of development would choose to boycott power plants? It is hard not to think malicious forces were stirring up troubles behind the scenes. "Chinese institutions committed or offered to finance 13.8GW of coal-fired capacity in Bangladesh," reported the Financial Times. This would equal 90 percent of Bangladesh's power capacity, mirroring how crucial cooperation with China is to the country.

There have been some ridiculous rumors over the years about the BRI, such as the initiative is facilitating millions of unemployed Chinese to steal job opportunities from other countries, creating a debt trap and flexing its economic muscle for political gain. China must learn to clear up these rumors in a timely fashion.

When Chinese firms expand business overseas, they confront a more complicated social environment than they can imagine. Some countries do not understand China well with their deep-rooted traditional mind-set over the Middle Kingdom, while others are trapped in struggles among different interest groups. Against this backdrop, when rumors are hyped, forces with ulterior motives may make a big fuss about the BRI. Yet these challenges won't stop the China-proposed initiative. The process of Chinese companies going global will not be smooth. It is believed they are prepared to take a long time before winning the trust and respect of people from other countries. But China-initiated projects will benefit local people in the long run. The past six years have seen fruitful results between China and countries along the BRI. Take Bangladesh. Chinese companies are helping build the country's largest bridge, its first-ever under-river tunnel, a power grid network and other mega infrastructure programs, all of which are genuine efforts to boost the country's economy and development.

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4th floor, 112 sq.m, 2 Bdrs. furn, 2
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Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in South Dibaji
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800 sq.m land, 600 sq.m
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4 parking spots, **\$7000**
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SpaceX Falcon Heavy’s third launch set for Monday night in Florida

A SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket is set to launch Monday night from Kennedy Space Center in Florida, carrying 24 government satellites and kicking off a busy summer of space activity.

It will be the third launch for the Falcon Heavy, the most powerful rocket in use today. SpaceX is calling the launch one of its most challenging ever, because it must release satellites into three different orbits.

It’s also the first time that a Falcon Heavy will use previously flown side boosters, which have been refueled and fitted again after the Arabsat 6A satellite launch in April.

Among the satellites on board will be a government experiment to test a less toxic, more efficient spacecraft fuel and a new atomic space clock that will help coordinate space exploration, especially on missions to the moon and Mars.

Large crowds are expected to watch the nighttime launch, which is set for 11:30 p.m. EDT with a four-hour window in case of delays. Weather predictions as of Friday indicate there’s a significant risk of storms for the latter part of Monday, bringing into question whether the launch will be postponed.

Not only is the rocket a sight to see at liftoff, but two side boosters should be visible as they fly back to a Cape Canaveral Air Force Station landing pad.

Kennedy Space Center will be open for the launch for a limited number of ticket holders.

The launch will elevate SpaceX’s role with the military for complex national security missions, which have been dominated for years by United Launch Alliance, a joint venture of defense contractors Lockheed Martin and Boeing.

Three days later, on Thursday, the Air Force intends to launch the fifth of its national security communications satellites -- the Advanced Extremely High Frequency-5 mission. That will launch aboard a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket, with five solid boosters. It will mark the 80th Atlas V rocket launch.

On July 2, NASA will conduct its Ascent Abort-2 mission, the third of five launches required for certification of the Orion spacecraft intended to carry people to the moon and later to Mars. The launch abort system will be tested to ensure crew safety during the climb into space. The test will



utilize a refurbished first-stage motor from a Peacekeeper intercontinental ballistic missile.

On July 21, SpaceX aims to launch another cargo mission to the International Space Station, CRS-18.

Then on July 25, a United Launch Alliance Delta IV Medium rocket is scheduled to carry an Air Force global positioning satellite into space.

(Source: UPI)

Ancient hyenas once roamed the Arctic feasting on woolly mammoths, fossilized teeth reveal



Fierce Ice Age hyenas were roaming Canada’s Arctic as long as 1.4 million years ago, according to researchers who identified a pair of fossilized teeth found in Yukon Territory in 1973.

The “running hyenas” would have eked out an existence hunting herds of horses and caribou, as well as scavenging carcasses of woolly mammoths or sabre-toothed cats living on the vast semi-frozen steppe.

The mysterious teeth, which had been sitting unidentified in museum drawers for more than 40 years, are the first evidence that highly adaptable wolf-sized hyenas were in the North American Arctic, according to the paper published in the journal Open Quaternary.

The fossilized teeth belonged to Chasmaporthetes ossifragus hyenas that roamed the Arctic between 850,000 and 1.4 million years ago, researchers say.

The findings fill an important gap in scientists’ knowledge of how hyenas reached North America, according to lead palaeontologist Dr. Jack Tseng from the University at Buffalo.

He said: “Fossils of this genus of hyenas had been found in Africa, Europe and Asia, and also in the southern United States. But where and how did these animals get to North America? The teeth we studied, even though they were just two teeth, start to answer those questions.”

The bones suggest that ancient hyenas

entered North America via Beringia where the Bering Land Bridge formed, connecting Asia with North America during periods of low sea levels.

From there, the animals made their way south to Mexico. The first hyenas known to have crossed into North America date back to around five million years ago.

“These rare records of hyenas in the Arctic fill in a massive gap in a location where we expected evidence of their crossing between continents, but had no proof until now,” said Dr Tseng.

The specimens were tucked away in the collections of the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa and largely forgotten about until Dr Tseng discovered some old field notes describing the mysterious teeth. He drove to the museum and quickly identified them as belonging to the genus Chasmaporthetes.

Ancient hyenas had a diverse family history, with many dozens of species found in localities spanning the Northern Hemisphere.

Hyenas arose in Europe or Asia around 20 million years ago. They later made their way to Africa and a small number would have reached North America.

Chasmaporthetes had longer and more evenly sized legs than today’s hyenas and they also had a shallower skull, giving them a more wolf-like appearance.

(Source: The Independent)

Costs, delays mount for Boeing’s NASA launch system, audit finds



NASA’s flagship space launch system being built by Boeing is taking years longer than expected with cost overruns of nearly \$2 billion, an audit found on Wednesday, raising questions about meeting a goal of returning humans to the moon by 2024.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) identified \$1.8 billion in cost overruns, including \$800 million that NASA obscured in previous reports on its Space Launch System (SLS), the rocket and capsule that will eventually take humans back to the moon.

The issues around the rocket’s development, led by Boeing Co, mean that the first launch of the SLS originally scheduled for late 2017 could be delayed until June 2021.

Boeing’s space division restructured the SLS leadership team in 2018 and early 2019 to adjust to the program challenges and simplified its manufacturing process, Boeing spokesman Jerry Drelling said.

“No one is building a rocket like this, and we’re creating a very in-depth database for all future rockets,” he said.

The Trump administration directed NASA in March to land humans on the lunar surface by 2024, part of a broader program called Artemis that will use the moon as a staging ground for eventual missions to Mars. The accelerated timeline, four years faster than originally planned, is likely to cost \$20 billion to \$30 billion over the next five years, NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said in an interview with CNN last week.

The \$1.8 billion cost overrun was nearly double what NASA reported to its inspector general in 2018 for SLS and the Orion capsule - the crew pod built by Lockheed Martin that will launch atop the rocket - the report said. “NASA’s reporting of cost data for the SLS and Orion programs is not fully transparent,” it said.

NASA obscured the full cost growth of the SLS program by shifting roughly \$800 million to future SLS missions to downplay the cost of the initial mission, the GAO report said.

Officials from NASA and Boeing also underestimated the manufacturing complexity of the “core stage” of four attached rocket engines, which could increase the cost and cause delays of two years or more, the report said.

Despite the cost overruns, NASA has awarded Boeing at least \$146 million and Lockheed \$87 million in “award fees” to stay on schedule, but “the programs have not always achieved overall desired outcomes,” the report said. The space agency agreed to the report’s recommendation to re-evaluate its incentive system.

NASA’s associate administrator for human spaceflight and operations, William Gerstenmaier, said in a response to the GAO’s report that the audit “does not acknowledge NASA is constructing some of the most sophisticated hardware ever built.” A NASA spokeswoman declined further comment.

(Source: Reuters)

Cool halo gas caught spinning like galactic disks

A group of astronomers led by Crystal Martin and Stephanie Ho of the University of California, Santa Barbara, has discovered a dizzying cosmic choreography among typical star-forming galaxies; their cool halo gas appears to be in step with the galactic disks, spinning in the same direction.

The researchers used W. M. Keck Observatory to obtain the first-ever direct observational evidence showing that corotating halo gas is not only possible, but common. Their findings suggest that the whirling gas halo will eventually spiral in towards the disk.

“This is a major breakthrough in understanding how galactic disks grow,” said Martin, Professor of Physics at UC Santa Barbara and lead author of the study. “Galaxies are surrounded by massive reservoirs of gas that extend far beyond the visible portions of galaxies. Until now, it has remained a mystery how exactly this material is transported to galactic disks where it can fuel the next generation of star formation.”

The study is published in today’s issue of the Astrophysical Journal and shows the combined results of 50 standard star-forming galaxies taken over a period of several years.

Nearly a decade ago, theoretical models predicted that the angular momentum of the spinning cool halo gas partially offsets the gravitational force pulling it towards the galaxy, thereby slowing down the gas accretion rate and lengthening the period of disk growth.

The team’s results confirm this theory, which show that the angular momentum of the halo gas is high enough to slow down the infall rate but not so high as to shut down feeding the galactic disk entirely.

The astronomers first obtained spectra of bright quasars behind star-forming galaxies to detect the invisible halo gas by its absorption-line signature in the quasar spectra. Next, the researchers used Keck Observatory’s laser guide star adaptive optics (LGSAO) system and near-infrared camera (NIRC2) on the Keck II telescope, along with Hubble Space Telescope’s Wide Field Camera 3 (WFC3), to obtain high-resolution images of the galaxies.

“What sets this work apart from previous studies is that our team also used the quasar as a reference ‘star’ for Keck’s laser guide star AO system,” said co-author Ho, a physics graduate student at UC Santa Barbara. “This method removed the blurring caused by the atmosphere and produced the detailed images we needed to resolve the galactic disks and geometrically determine the orientation of the galactic disks in three-dimensional space.”

The team then measured the Doppler shifts of the gas clouds using the Low Resolution Imaging Spectrometer (LRIS) at Keck Observatory, as well as obtaining spectra from Apache Point Observatory. This enabled the researchers to determine what direction the gas is spinning and how fast. The data proved that the gas is rotating in the same direction as the galaxy, and the angular momentum of the gas is not stronger than the force of gravity, meaning the gas will spiral into the galactic disk.

“Just as ice skaters build up momentum and spin when they bring their arms inward, the halo gas is likely spinning today because it was once at much larger distances where it was deposited by galactic winds, stripped from satellite galaxies, or directed toward the galaxy by a cosmic filament,” said Martin.

The next step for Martin and her team is to measure the rate at which the halo gas is being pulled into the galactic disk. Comparing the inflow rate to the star formation rate will provide a better timeline of the evolution of normal star-forming galaxies, and explain how galactic disks continue to grow over very long timescales that span billions of years.

(Source: Science Daily)

Reversible superglue proves strong enough to hold average man

A reversible superglue that mimics the under-appreciated properties of dried snail mucus has proved strong enough to bear the weight of an average man.

Scientists who tested the slime-inspired product found that two sticky squares the size of postage stamps were sufficient to hold an 87kg (192lb) weight in the form of a volunteer engineering student.

The unusual substance overcomes a problem with which researchers in the field have wrestled for decades, namely that glues can be weak and reversible, or strong and irreversible, but never, it seemed, both strong and reversible.

Scientists at the University of Pennsylvania were pondering the problem when they realised that molluscs may have the answer. “Snails are the perfect example,” said Shu Yang, a professor of materials science who led the work. “When they move around, the mucus they produce is a viscous liquid, but when it dries they become firmly stuck.”

Yang and her colleagues created the new glue from hydrogel, a form of polymer network that contains a lot of liquid water. In its wet state, the hydrogel seeps and spreads into the tiniest cracks and contours on a surface. But when it dries, it locks into position.

Experiments with the new glue showed that it was incredibly strong in its dry state, but quickly softened and gently released its grip when water was added to rehydrate the hydrogel. Laboratory tests showed the glue could be applied and then detached from butterfly wings without harming the delicate tissues.

Rather than a liquid that is squeezed from a tube, the adhesive is coated on to small, thin wafers patterned with tiny channels to allow water in and out. The glue dries naturally in air, or faster when it is heated, and is detached with a well-placed squirt of water. The use of water to undo the adhesive means it can only be used in dry environments, though Yang said her team was now hunting for similar materials that softened with heat or electricity instead.

The hydrogel glue mimics a trick that snails use to protect themselves from dehydration in dry weather. Instead of gliding around on a layer of wet mucus, the molluscs create a hard, dry layer that locks on to the grooves and pits of the surface they are on. Known as an epiphragm, the membrane seals the base of the snail and prevents it from losing too much water.

As with an epiphragm, the glue works best on rough surfaces, but Yang said the adhesive was still effective on glass. “The surface doesn’t have to be very, very rough, because any kind of surface has some roughness,” she said. Details of the work are published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

A reversible superglue would be welcomed by medics, if case studies of accidents with the bonding agent are anything to go by. Medical journals describe numerous incidents of people glueing up their ears, and sticking their eyelids together, after mistaking the adhesive for ear or eye drops. In one case, a carpet upholsterer stuck his hands together with superglue. He was only freed when doctors referred him to a cosmetic surgeon who dissolved the glue with acetone.

(Source: The Guardian)

Harvard scientists say radiation from black holes could create life

In the hunt for alien life, scientists often focus on the “Goldilocks zone”, the region around a star where the temperature would be just right for liquid water to exist on an orbiting planet’s surface.

But now, a team from Harvard University is suggesting there’s another kind of Goldilocks zone we should consider in our hunt for alien life - and instead of having a star at its center, it has a supermassive black hole.

Supermassive black holes are surrounded by swirling disks of gas and dust called active galactic nuclei (AGN). These disks emit incredible amounts of radiation and light, and many researchers assume this radiation would destroy the atmospheres of any nearby planets, creating a “dead zone” around the black hole.

But now, the researchers behind this new Harvard study, which was published in The Astrophysical Journal, are challenging that assumption.

“People have mostly been talking about the detrimental effects [of black holes],” researcher Manasvi Lingam told



Live Science. “We wanted to reexamine how detrimental [the radiation] is... and ask ourselves if there were any positives.”

To do that, the researchers created computer models of AGNs. Using them, they were able to identify “galactic Goldilocks zones” surrounding black holes.

If positioned within this region, they write in their study, a planet’s atmosphere would remain intact, while the AGN’s radiation could break its molecules into life-supporting compounds.

The light from the AGN, meanwhile, could facilitate photosynthesis.

The team also revisited the assumed negative effects of AGN radiation on a nearby planet and concluded that they’ve been greatly exaggerated.

While previous studies suggested that the damaging effects of a black hole the size of the Milky Way’s Sagittarius A* would strip away the atmosphere of any Earth-like planet within 3,200 light-years, they think the damage would end at a distance of just 100 light-years.

“Looking at what we know about Earth, it does suggest that maybe the positive effects seem to be extended over a larger region than the negative effects,” Lingam told Live Science. “That was definitely surprising.”

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Sales exhibit of handicrafts opens in Tehran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — On Saturday, a major sales exhibition of handicrafts opened to the public at the Eshraq Cultural Center, northeast Tehran.

Artisans and craftspeople from 10 provinces are taking part in the event, which also features live workshops, said Parham Janfeshan, who is tourism chief of Tehran province.



He invited citizens of Tehran to bargain handicrafts directly from makers, adding “Tehran is considered as the best target market for the supply of handicraft products in the country.”

Titled “Support for Domestic Products”, the event will be running through June 26.

Iran’s handicrafts exports reached \$289 million in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended March 20), showing three percent growth year on year, according to data compiled by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

Acropolis Museum opens ancient Athens neighborhood site below its base

ATHENS (Reuters) — Greece’s Acropolis Museum opened an excavation site underneath its modern building on Friday, allowing visitors for the first time to walk through an ancient Athenian neighborhood that survived from the Classical era to Byzantine times.

The museum, which sits at the foot of the Acropolis hill in Athens, houses masterpiece sculptures of Greek antiquity, including works from the Parthenon, one of the most influential buildings in Western civilization.

“Visitors can come down and see ancient ruins of the city of Athens, especially in the area south of the Acropolis,” Acropolis Museum Director Dimitris Pantermalis told Reuters.

“We hope to also present the movable finds of the excavation soon, to give a picture of the daily life of ancient Athens.”

Below the museum’s base which floats on concrete pillars, lies a neighborhood of excavated homes, workshops, baths, streets and drainage trenches, uncovered during works to build the museum.

Walking through the site along metal ramps, visitors can see the baths of lavish mansions, which at the time included chambers where bathers could warm up before taking a dip in heated pools.

One of the highlights is the home of a wealthy Athenian, dating back to the sixth century CE.

“It was fascinating, an amazing experience,” said Carl Hoover, 63, a visitor from Colorado. He said he was most impressed by the mosaic floor and the sophisticated pipes and drainage systems.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Joya de Ceren Archaeological Site

A UNESCO World Heritage, Joya de Ceren is an archaeological site located at the Canton Joya de Ceren, in the Department of La Libertad in El Salvador. The property has an extension of 3,200 ha.



The archaeological site contains the remains of a pre-hispanic farming village that was covered by a volcanic eruption in the seventh century AD.

Around 500 CE, the central and western parts of the territory of the modern Republic of El Salvador were buried beneath thick layers of volcanic ash from the Ilopango volcano.

The area was abandoned until the ash layer had weathered into fertile soil and the Joya de Ceren settlement was founded. Not long afterwards, it was destroyed by the eruption of the Loma Caldera. The site was discovered during the construction of grain-storage silos in 1976, when a clay-built structure was exposed by a bulldozer. Excavations were resumed in 1989 and been continuing since that time.

The circumstances of the volcanic event led to the remarkable preservation of architecture and the artefacts of ancient inhabitants in their original positions of storage and use, forming a time capsule of unprecedented scientific value that can be appreciated in present times.

Underneath the layers of volcanic ash, the best preserved example of a pre-hispanic village in Mesoamerica can be found, with architectural remains, grouped into compounds that include civic, religious and household buildings. To date, a total of 18 structures have been identified and 10 have been completely or partially excavated.

(Source: UNESCO)

Visit Portuguese Castle of Hormuz

Where you may soak up silence while traveling through time

TOURISM d e s k

TEHRAN — The crumbling Portuguese Castle of Hormuz Island, built in the early 16th century, is one of the last surviving monuments of the colonial rule in the Persian Gulf. It is now a tourism attraction where you can soak up the silence while traveling through time. For visitors it seems to be easy to imagine the hustle and bustle of Portuguese military forces five centuries ago!

History of the Portuguese Castle of Hormuz Island goes down in time when Commander Afonso de Albuquerque ordered the construction of a fortress in 1507 after his troops captures the island in early 16th century.

Made from reddish stones on a rocky promontory at the north end of the island, the castle was cut off from the rest of the island by a moat, traces of which still remain. The stronghold involves arms depot, water reservoir, barrack, prison, church, command center and central hall.

Muscular-looking walls, chambers and archways as well as sets of rusting cannons in the courtyard still give the area a scenic beauty. A subterranean church featuring vaulted ceilings, a watchtower, and a submerged cistern are amongst other attractions of the site.

In addition, upper levels of fort offers wonderful views of the island, its village,



Hormuz Island is teemed with colorful soil used as a kind of spice by the locals



People tour the Portuguese Castle of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf

rugged mountains all surrounded by the blue waters of the Persian Gulf.

There are some Portuguese fortresses (commonly called as Portuguese castles by the locals) scattered across the Persian Gulf, including Qeshm Island, Kong Port, Oman, Ras al-Khaimah (UAE), and Chabahar.

Hormuz, which is mostly barren and hilly, is situated some eight kilometers off the coast on the Strait of Hormuz. It remained occupied by the Portuguese from 1514 to 1622 when it was recaptured by joint Anglo-Persian forces.

Under travelers’ eyes

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the island have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

“Awesome Hormuz”

It has been a super stay on Hormuz. Together with a friend who knows all about this island. There are so many

beautiful nature and geologic things to see. So many colors right in nature. Also the people here are super nice. An island you must go! (Leo V. from Leeuwarden, the Netherlands; reviewed November 2018)

“Spend a few days on Hormuz Island!”

This last summer I visited Hormuz Island and it was an incredible experience. I have never seen a more magical place! In this review, I will present some tips and a recommendation for room rental in case you want to spend a few days without having to leave back and forward the island.

We already had prepaid accommodation on Qeshm Island so one day we just decided to take the boat early in the morning and visit Hormuz Island for one day. We had done some research, but not much practical information is available online. First of

30 hotels being built in East Azarbaijan province

TOURISM d e s k

TEHRAN — A total of 30 hotels and apartment hotels are under construction by the private sector across East Azarbaijan to develop the hospitality industry in the northwestern Iranian province.

Of the hotels, four will be 5-star and seven will be 4-star, provincial tourism chief Morteza Abdar said, IRNA reported.

Once the hotels are inaugurated, 2,234 rooms with 4,580 beds will be added to the hospitality sector of East Azarbaijan province, the official said.

Elegant hotels are mainly being constructed in the cities

of Jolfa and Tabriz, he said.

Some 28,070 billion rials (about \$670 million) will be invested in the projects, which has so far reached an average completion of 65 percent, he said.

Last July, tourism chief Ali-Asghar Mounesan said that 1,700 tourism-associated projects were running across the Islamic Republic.

The number of four- and five-star hotels which have been launched since 2013 equals to that of from the beginning of hotel-making industry in the country, Mounesan said.

Battery powered sky taxis: the future of travel?

A new generation of plane has joined the ranks of luxury private jets and helicopters on display at this week’s International Paris Air Show.

After years of pressure to bring to bring down the environmental impact of plane travel, engineers have succeeded in creating electronic planes.

Battery powered sky taxis are taking center stage as the next innovation in air travel. Producing zero emissions during transit, they could provide a greener alternative to the gas guzzling jets of today.

Some 150 companies are clamouring get ahead of the game in the emerging field of electronic flying, according to the AP. Such planes would create options to personalize air travel over super short distances.

Jean Botti, CEO of electronic planes specialist VoltAero, even stepped down from an executive role with aerospace manufacturing giant Airbus to get ahead in the burgeoning market.



For now, those planes are small, private vehicles as the tech is not yet developed enough to power commercial planes. But engineers are working hard to bring battery power to regional flights, says deputy editor of Aerospace magazine, Bill Reed.

Initially, it’s likely that electronic planes will have to combine battery

power with jet fuel for a hybrid engine, he adds. Firstly, to power bigger planes, and secondly to meet currently safety regulations as a backup should the battery fail or need charging.

Meanwhile, Airbus is making its own inroads into electric sky travel. It’s showcasing its autonomous air taxi prototype, the Vahana.

This fully electric single-seater has flown 80 test flights, according to the company. The craft is part of the company’s research into perfecting eVTOL – or electric vertical take-off and landing.

Its rival Boeing is also displaying its own single-seater air taxi, which has gone from design to testing within a year. Such products are the “future of how you’ll travel around cities”, believes vice president and general manager of Boeing Next, Steve Norland. In fact, he thinks entire city designs will evolve to accommodate changes in air travel.

“A challenge of moving out in this new space of future mobility is you really need to develop an entire ecosystem, it’s not just about the airplane – although that is a key component. It’s really about the infrastructure that’s going to be needed. The safety of integrating it into the airspace to coexist with manned and unmanned aircraft way into the future.”

(Source: Euronews)

Japan’s rural economies cash in on foreign tourists

Foreign tourist spending in rural parts of Japan is surging faster than it is nationwide.

Consumption by overseas visitors in rural areas came to 1.036 trillion yen (about \$9.67 billion) in 2018, up 58% from 2015, according to the 2019 White Paper on Tourism, released on Friday by the government-affiliated Japan Tourism Agency.

Foreign tourist consumption in rural areas as a percentage of total tourist spending reached 28.5% last year, an improvement from 23.6% in 2015, as more travelers visited farms and fishing villages, went skiing and indulged in other winter sports, and took in nature and Japanese culture.

The white paper considers eight prefectures -- Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama, Aichi, Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo -- as metropolitan and the remaining 41 as rural.

Foreign tourist consumption in Japan -- including travel expenditures while in the country -- totaled 4.5 trillion yen in 2018, up about 30% from 2015. Consumption in rural areas soared at a much faster pace, nearly 60%, during the same period.

In Osaka and Tokyo, foreign tourist spending made up nearly half of total tourist spending. In Fukuoka, Hokkaido

and Okinawa, all of which are blessed with a multitude of tourist attractions, the ratio was around 20%. In Nara, it was 17%. The figure for Gifu and Oita was 10%.

More foreign tourists are finding their way out of the Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka metropolitan areas. In 2018, 18 million foreign tourists trekked into rural areas, about 5 million more than those who simply enjoyed city indulgences. The gap is wider than it was in 2015, when 10.2 million foreign tourists ventured into the countryside and 9.5 million contented themselves in one of the big burgs.

A desire for experiences and an urge to mix with locals are pushing the trend, according to the white paper. In the first regard, skiing and snowboarding are particularly popular activities.

This is helping the Hokkaido town of Niseko cement its image as a world-class ski resort. It is also making Niseko one of Japan’s hottest real estate markets as more condominiums pop up to accommodate foreign skiers.

Winter sports were the biggest lure in bringing tourists away from the three metropolitan areas, but farming and fishing villages, springtime cherry blossoms, and fall colors also enticed large numbers of foreign tourists into rural Japan.

“Foreign visitors seem to prefer authentic experient-



es rather than artificial tourist spots,” a Japan Tourism Agency official said.

But the visitors are also bringing congestion and poor manners with them, causing friction with locals at some tourist destinations.

As tourist numbers climb, Japan will have to adapt, come up with sustainability measures and upgrade its infrastructure.

(Source: Nikkei Asian Review)

Seven technological, strategic products for health sector unveiled

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Seven new technological and strategic products for the health sector were unveiled during a ceremony attended by the vice president for science and technology Sourena Sattari on Thursday, Mehr reported.

The products are digital radiography machine, tabletop flash autoclave, liquid helium for MRI machines, light tube with disinfection lamp, BiPAP oxygen concentrator, carbonated nano hydroxyapatite, and active ingredient of sitagliptin.

“This [the unveiling] is just a small part of cooperation between the vice presidency and the health ministry, Sattari said during the ceremony.

The emerging knowledge-based companies can be successful by investing in these fields to improve living standards of citizens by their products, he said.

These companies also create jobs for experts and entrepreneurs, he added.

Sanctions caused many knowledge-based companies to become active in various fields, he explained.

■ Technological achievements in the field of health

- Liquid helium is used to cool down the superconductive magnets coil in MRI scanners to a temperature below 10 Kelvin. Produced by a team of researchers at the Power Resources Development Company. At standard pressure, the chemical element



helium exists in a liquid form only at the extremely low temperature of -270 °C.

- Produced and patented by an Iranian knowledge-based company, Nahid light tube with disinfection lamp is another homegrown production. The lamp is a disinfection method that uses short-wavelength ultraviolet (UV-C) light to kill or inactivate microorganisms by destroying nucleic acids and disrupting their DNA, leaving them unable

to perform vital cellular functions. It can be used in working places and hospital to disinfect the environment for those who are in an indoor space.

- The BiPAP oxygen concentrator that deliver up five-liter per minute is produced by an Iranian knowledge-based company which used 290 watt electricity.

Some medical problems can make it hard for you to breathe. In these cases, you might

benefit from bilevel positive airway pressure. It is commonly known as “BiPap” or “BPap.” It is a type of ventilator—a device that helps with breathing.

- Digital radiography machine is produced for the first time in Iran and except for three pieces, all the machine is made in Iran. The knowledge-based company that produced it, can produced 150 machines per year, which is 30 percent lower price in comparison to foreign one.

- Tabletop flash autoclave is equipped with touch screen, programmable logic controller (PLC) system and automatic temperature monitoring.

An autoclave is a pressure chamber used to carry out industrial processes requiring elevated temperature and pressure different from ambient air pressure.

- The biocompatibility and bioactivity of carbonated nano hydroxyapatite made the material as an item with various range of usage in medicine, pharmaceutical industry, dentistry and cosmetics. The material is made by a knowledge-based company in Iran.

- The active ingredient of Sitagliptin, a medication used to treat diabetes mellitus type 2, was imported to Iran. However an Iranian knowledge-based company provide the active ingredient of the medicine for seven pharmaceutical companies. Sitagliptin is taken by mouth and is also available within a single pill as metformin/sitagliptin.

Space technology companies, startups to gather at Tehran exhibit

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Iranian knowledge-based companies and startups active in the field of space technology will gather during a space products exhibition, which will be held from July 7 to 9 in Tehran.

Organized by the Iran National Innovation Fund and the Iranian Space Research Center, a series of meetings on IT and innovation will be also held on the sidelines of the event.

Cooperation between investment organizations like the Iran National Innovation Fund and the Iranian Space Agency (ISA)

can boost cooperation of the private sector in the field of space technology, ISA Director Morteza Barari wrote on his Instagram account.

The event provides an opportunity for business development of remote sensing and telecommunication satellites technology and to assess challenges and methods to connect students, venture capitals and space technology companies, he said.

Iran, as a country which has made several achievements in space technology in recent decades, is not an exception. Now,

the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) promotes space-based businesses as one of the main factors for the development of the country.

In March 2019, the head of the Iranian Space Research Center Hossein Samimi announced that the center is working on five key projects, which are considered as the main achievements of Iran’s space technology.

According to an agreement signed in February 2019 between the Iranian Space Research Center and the Ministry of Agriculture the remote sensing satellites are

planned to be used in different sections of the agricultural industry.

The center already provided a map of the cultivated area, which provides more than 95 percent of the national rice market in five provinces.

According to Morgan Stanley, it is estimated that the global space industry could generate revenue of \$1.1 trillion or more in 2040, up from \$350 billion, currently. Yet, the most significant short- and medium-term opportunities may come from satellite broadband Internet access.

Azerbaijan, Iran launch new infrastructure project with online technology

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Azerbaijan and Iran have launched a new transportation-related infrastructure project known as “e-TIR,” which envisages the full electronic transit operations at the Astara border crossing between the two Caspian region neighbors, Caspian News reported on Friday.

“The advantages of this online project are competitive and mechanized exchange of goods, accelerated transportation, reduction of violations and the elimination of administrative bureaucracy,” head of Iran’s Customs Administration Mehdi Mirashrafi said.

He added that the same project will be implemented between Iran, Afghanistan, India, Russia and Georgia in the near future.

Seventy-six countries are members of the TIR Convention, which was established in 1959 and provides for an internationally recognized procedure to facilitate cross-border transportation of goods. The convention is administered by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

In 2003, the “e-TIR Project” was launched, aimed at

providing an exchange platform for all actors (customs authorities, holders, guarantee chains) involved in the TIR system, known as the e-TIR international system. The effort leverages digital technology, promoting computerization of customs controls that cross international roads. It also deals with customs regulation issues, using modern electronic methods.

The e-TIR system allows two countries to access information at any time, and view cargo information before delivery, helping to eliminate the risk of deception and accelerate customs formalities, as well as reduces costs.

In October 2018 and January 2019, Azerbaijan and Iran signed documents concerning basic principles for the use of an e-government-type system for the international transportation of goods. The basic principles paved the way for the creation of legislation that will lead to the e-TIR Pilot project, set a time frame for its launch, and conducting training for customs officers on the use of the electronic system.

Iran has already implemented e-TIR Pilot projects with Turkey and Pakistan.



Head of Iran’s Customs Administration, Mehdi Mirashrafi, (L) and chairman of Azerbaijan State Customs Committee, Safar Mehdiyev, cut the ribbon at the inaugural ceremony of e-TIR project on June 18, 2019 / (Mehdi Hoseynnejad

Iranian academic, first author of research on new way to deliver drugs through the skin

Seyyed Meysam Hashemnejad, a former MIT postdoc, is the first author of the study according to which, novel materials made with FDA-approved components could deliver large payloads of active ingredients.

MIT chemical engineers have devised a new way to create very tiny droplets of one liquid suspended within another liquid, known as nanoemulsions. Such emulsions are similar to the mixture that forms when you shake an oil-and-vinegar salad dressing, but with much smaller droplets. Their tiny size allows them to remain stable for relatively long periods of time.

The researchers also found a way to easily convert the liquid nanoemulsions to a gel when they reach body temperature (37 degrees Celsius), which could be useful for developing materials that can deliver medication when rubbed on the skin or injected into the body.

Other authors include former postdoc Abu Zayed Badrud-doza, L’Oréal senior scientist Brady Zarket, and former MIT summer research intern Carlos Ricardo Castaneda.

“The pharmaceutical industry is hugely interested in nano-emulsions as a way of delivering small molecule therapeutics. That could be topically, through ingestion, or by spraying into the nose, because once you start getting into the size range of hundreds of nanometers you can permeate much more effectively into the skin,” says Patrick Doyle, the Robert T. Haslam Professor of Chemical Engineering and the senior author of the study.

In their new study, which appears in the June 21 issue of Nature Communications, the researchers created nanoemulsions that were stable for more than a year. To demonstrate the emulsions’ potential usefulness for delivering drugs, the researchers showed that they could incorporate ibuprofen into the droplets.

■ Energy reduction

One of the easiest ways to create an emulsion is to add energy — by shaking your salad dressing, for example, or using a homogenizer to break down fat globules in milk. The more energy that goes in, the smaller the droplets, and the more stable they are.

Nanoemulsions, which contain droplets with a diameter



200 nanometers or smaller, are desirable not only because they are more stable, but they also have a higher ratio of surface area to volume, which allows them to carry larger payloads of active ingredients such as drugs or sunscreens.

Over the past few years, Doyle’s lab has been working on lower-energy strategies for making nanoemulsions, which could make the process easier to adapt for large-scale industrial manufacturing.

Detergent-like chemicals called surfactants can speed up the formation of emulsions, but many of the surfactants that have previously been used for creating nanoemulsions are not FDA-approved for use in humans. Doyle and his students chose two surfactants that are uncharged, which makes them less likely to irritate the skin, and are already FDA-approved as food or cosmetic additives. They also added a small amount of polyethylene glycol (PEG), a bio-compatible polymer used for drug delivery that helps the solution to form even smaller droplets, down to about 50 nanometers in diameter.

“With this approach, you don’t have to put in much energy at all,” Doyle says. “In fact, a slow stirring bar almost spontaneously creates these super small emulsions.”

Active ingredients can be mixed into the oil phase before the emulsion is formed, so they end up loaded into the droplets of the emulsion.

Once they had developed a low-energy way to create nano-

emulsions, using nontoxic ingredients, the researchers added a step that would allow the emulsions to be easily converted to gels when they reach body temperature. They achieved this by incorporating heat-sensitive polymers called poloxamers, or Pluronic, which are already FDA-approved and used in some drugs and cosmetics.

Pluronic contains three “blocks” of polymers: The outer two regions are hydrophilic, while the middle region is slightly hydrophobic. At room temperature, these molecules dissolve in water but do not interact much with the droplets that form the emulsion. However, when heated, the hydrophobic regions attach to the droplets, forcing them to pack together more tightly and creating a jelly-like solid. This process happens within seconds of heating the emulsion to the necessary temperature.

MIT chemical engineers have devised a way to convert liquid nanoemulsions into solid gels. These gels (red) form almost instantaneously when drops of the liquid emulsion enter warm water.

■ Tunable properties

The researchers found that they could tune the properties of the gels, including the temperature at which the material becomes a gel, by changing the size of the emulsion droplets and the concentration and structure of the Pluronic that they added to the emulsion. They can also alter traits such as elasticity and yield stress, which is a measure of how much force is needed to spread the gel.

Doyle is now exploring ways to incorporate a variety of active pharmaceutical ingredients into this type of gel. Such products could be useful for delivering topical medications to help heal burns or other types of injuries, or could be injected to form a “drug depot” that would solidify inside the body and release drugs over an extended period of time. These droplets could also be made small enough that they could be used in nasal sprays for delivering inhalable drugs, Doyle says.

For cosmetic applications, this approach could be used to create moisturizers or other products that are more shelf-stable and feel smoother on the skin.

(Source: MIT News)

Three incubator centers for biotechnology to be established

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Incubator centers for biotechnology will be launched in the cities of Tabriz, Karaj and Isfahan in the near future, Mehr reported on Saturday.

The Agriculture Biotechnology Research Institute of Iran (ABRII) plans to develop innovation and incubator centers, the ABRII deputy director Pejman Azadi announced.

An incubator center has been already established at the ABRII North Branch in Rasht for animal biotechnology, he said.

“We plan to establish innovation centers in Karaj, Tabriz and Isfahan in the near future,” he explained.

The ABRII expanded regional research centers in Gilan, East Azerbaijan, Isfahan and Khorasan Razavi provinces, he said.



The institute aims to guarantee food safety and sustainable agricultural development by overcoming environmental challenges and coping with production costs and environmental pollutants, he said.

It also aims to boost both quality and quantity of products by implementing research projects, he added.

The technological infrastructure for carrying out feasibility studies, as well as transferring of experiences are provided at the ABRII, Azadi said.

He said that ABRII has signed four agreements with the private sector during the past Iranian calendar year (March 2018-March 2019).

“We plan to sign eight agreements in the current year and also plan to have 200 articles in Q1 journals, 40 commercialized products, 15 world patents, 47 technical knowledge licenses, 15 promotion guidelines, and 40 production lines until the [Iranian calendar] year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022),” he said.

■ Agriculture Biotechnology Research Institute of Iran

Established in 1999, ABRII is to solve the agricultural problems and to achieve food security and sustainable development in agriculture using biotechnology and nanotechnology. Experts have attempted to work on customer-based and problem-based research projects. Consequently, focusing on research projects in demand, research privatization, profiting from knowledge-based companies and the private sector, reducing unnecessary expenses, renewing research equipment and training experts, are of the most fundamental issues of consideration.

ABRII has research activities in six separate departments dealing with genetic engineering and biosafety, tissue culture and gene transformation, system biotechnology, microbial biotechnology, molecular physiology and nanotechnology.

Ford turns more than 650 million plastic bottles into carpet for its vehicles

Ford is recycling over one billion plastic bottles every year to develop elements of the car’s interior, reducing the amount of plastic ending up in a landfill.

The American car maker has revealed that their Romanian-built EcoSport SUVs’ carpets are made using 470 single-use bottles from recycled plastic bottles.

The combined weight is said to weigh an estimated 8,262 metric tons and, if they were laid end to end, would stretch more than twice around the world, they said.

According to the United Nations Environmental Agency, the world produces around 300 million tons of plastic each year, half of which is single-use items.

Of this total a mere 14 per cent is collected for recycling; only 9 per cent actually gets recycled and 12 per cent is incinerated, which releases highly poisonous fumes.

Reports have indicated that 91 per cent of the plastic manufactured since its invention in the 1950s is still in the environment today.

Plastic doesn’t break down over time and remains in the environment indefinitely.

The process for making Ford EcoSport carpets involves shredding bottles and their caps into tiny flakes and then heating them to 260C.

They are then formed into fibres about the width of a human hair, which are then spun into yarn by stitching multiple fibres together.

The yarn is then woven into carpets.

Since first using recycled plastic in the Mondeo model more than 20 years ago, Ford now recycles 1.2 billion bottles globally per year.

Ford Motor Company published its first Sustainability Report — the first company in the industry to do so. Since then, Ford has spent the last two decades ‘moving toward a more sustainable world’.

‘We are committed to having a positive impact on the planet and the communities where we live and operate,’ said Kim Pittel, the vice president.

‘By working with our partners and suppliers to find solutions that protect the planet and make people’s lives better, we can make an even bigger impact and reach our goals together.’

Earlier this year, Ford committed that all the company’s future nameplates would include an electrified option.

In April, the company unveiled an extensive range of 16 electrified models for Europe that are designed to help make cities cleaner and quieter by increasingly use of more environmentally friendly electric power.

Last month, they partnered with startup Agility Robotics to create a two-legged robot called ‘Digit’ that can ferry packages to your doorstep.

Ford’s robot is capable of lifting packages that weigh 40lbs, so it can deliver your pizza, Amazon package or groceries straight to your doorstep.

(Source: dailymail.co.uk)

70 imported metro cars to join transport fleet soon

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Mayor Pirouz Hanachi **d e s k** announced that some 70 new metro cars have been imported to the country which will soon join operational metro lines, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

Currently, lines 6 and 7 are under construction which will soon be operational, while the rest of the lines are almost complete, he said, adding, metro is responsible for 15 to 16 percent of the total public transportation in the country.



In order to reach the maximum capacity of the subway, the time between arrivals of trains at the stations should be reduced to two minutes, while currently there is a gap of 2 to even 15 minutes due to the lack of metro cars, he explained.

He noted that Tehran wagon manufacturing company also have produced some 3 trains which are going to be on service by the next three months.

He expressed hope to expand underground transportation system, saying, “We are seeking to design and construct three metro lines of 8, 9 and 10, but the main obstacle is the heavy subsidy we spend on the subway.”

The residents pay for only ten percent of the actual metro cost, taking into account the cost of the tunnels and infrastructure, he stated, adding, “Public transportation anywhere in the world is subsidized, but it is less than what our country pays.”

Hanachi said in January that while currently some 1,350 railway cars are running in the capital’s subway system, it is still facing lack of 2,000 cars.

Tehran subway system consists of five operational lines, stretching to 170 kilometers, which is delivering over 730 million rides each year; two lines of 6 and 7 are under construction. The lines link south to north, east to west and are gradually covering more neighborhoods. By completing the two aforementioned lines 70 kilometers will be added to the current railways.

Pollutionwatch: how farming causes harm to rural air quality

Concern grow over ammonia particles from fertilizer and bioaerosol from intensive farms.

We think of the countryside as being a place of fresh air. Each weekend thousands of us leave our cities to hike or cycle in rural areas or simply to enjoy time in nature. Increasing attention is being given, however, to air pollution from farming. Ammonia from fertilizer and slurry mixes with air pollution from cities, traffic and industry to add to the particle pollution that plagues many parts of the world. It is estimated that halving ammonia from farming could avoid about 52,000 premature deaths from air pollution across Europe each year and 3,000 in the UK.

Increasing attention is also being paid to bioaerosol from intensive farming. In animal houses these are tiny particles and dust from the animals themselves, their food, bedding and waste. They can also include fungi, bacteria and pollen. A recent review by Imperial College and Public Health England found evidence of respiratory problems in farm workers and raised concerns about exposure for people living close to intensive livestock farms, including some evidence of increased asthma in children. Bioaerosol concerns mean that composting facilities need to be at least 250 meters from UK homes and schools, but farms can be nearer and only requiring assessment if they are closer than 100 meters.

(Source: The Guardian)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Rush for Hong Kong rail shares

(September 28, 2000)
BBC News correspondent Damian Grammaticas reported on the enthusiasm in Hong Kong for the privatisation of the MTR (Mass Transit Railway). In the morning sun the **queues** formed early. Outside some banks hundreds of people **waited patiently**, lining the pavements, **snaking round entire blocks**. They stood for up to three hours in the heat. All were **eager** to get **a slice of** Hong Kong’s first **privatized utility** - its underground Mass Transit Railway system. **In the event**, many **went home empty-handed**. Two million application forms were issued for shares when the MTR is launched on the stock market next week. Supplies ran out within an hour. In many places people were told to try again tomorrow. Previous **flotations** by Internet-related firms **generated huge demand** from amateur investors wanting to put their money into Hong Kong’s stock market. This time **police officers were deployed** at banks and underground stations in case of trouble with the expected crowds. Shares in the MTR promise lower returns than those of the new economy firms, but many people are now attracted by the idea of a more traditional and less **risky** company in which to invest their savings.

■ **Words**
queues: lines of people waiting for something are queues
waited patiently: if you wait calmly and quietly you wait patiently
snaking round entire blocks: this expression describes how the queues were very long and twisty, like a snake
eager: if you are keen and enthusiastic you are eager
a slice of: a piece or a part of
privatized utility: a company providing a public service which is owned by private investors is a privatized utility
in the event: what actually happened was....
went home empty-handed: were unsuccessful in their attempt to buy shares

flotations: when the owners of a company sell shares in it to raise money it is called a flotation
generated huge demand: made many people interested
police officers were deployed: police officers were sent to particular places
risky: something that is risky could be dangerous

(Source: BBC)

2 billion tons of soil erodes annually in Iran: expert

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Iran loses **d e s k** 2 billion tons of soil per year as a result of land use changes, rainfed agriculture, and overgrazing. Hossein Akhani, environmental and botanical expert has announced.

Soil erosion is the displacement of the upper layer of soil, one form of soil degradation, which is caused by the dynamic activity of erosive agents, including, water, ice, snow, wind, plants, animals, and humans. In accordance with these agents, erosion is sometimes divided into water erosion, glacial erosion, snow erosion, wind erosion, zoogenic erosion, and anthropogenic erosion.

Soil erosion may be a slow process that continues relatively unnoticed, or it may occur at an alarming rate causing a serious loss of topsoil. The loss of soil from farmland may be reflected in reduced crop production potential, lower surface water quality, and damaged drainage networks.

“Sometimes, to support agriculture, land use changes permits are issued, while being unaware of its dire consequences on the soil,” he lamented, YJC reported on Saturday.

In a video message released in advance of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, marked on June 17, UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that the world loses 24 billion tons of fertile land every year, and that the degradation in land quality is responsible for a reduction in the national domestic product of up to eight percent every year.



“Iran is responsible for the loss of 10 percent of the world’s total soil erosion per year due to unsustainable agriculture, overgrazing, destruction of natural reservoirs (interconnected sources of water supply such as rivers crossing the mountains),” he said, regretting, humans with uncontrolled interference, such as damping numerous wells have led to the collapse of these connections and prevented water from reaching some regions of the country.

He went on to explain that when water does not reach a wetland, the aquifers are not fed, the vegetation disappears and as a result the soil is exposed to erosion.

Insisting on human interference with the environment, he said, “We explored mining operation in all parts of the country and built roads encroaching natural habitats, and used excessive pesticides resulting in contamination of the soil, regardless of the irreparable damages imposing on the environment.”

“When we turn a land to a farming one for a short-term profit, the valuable soil erodes and causes huge loss which is not comprisable with the agricultural cultivation profit.”

He further highlighted that through sustainable development damages caused

Iran, Malaysia discuss enhanced co-op in job creation, insurance

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The **d e s k** cooperatives, labor and social welfare minister of Iran, Mohammad Shariatmadari, and the human resources minister of Malaysia, M. Kula Segaran s/o V. Murugeson, discussed enhanced cooperation in the fields of employment, job generation and insurance.

The two officials met on the sidelines of the 108th Session of the International Labor Conference held in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 10-21, according to a report published on the Iranian ministry’s portal.

Shariatmadari announced readiness for implementing a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in 2017, and said that a new MOU is also drafted which is awaiting Malaysia’s response.

“After years of cooperation with Malaysia, we know that economic opportunities for cooperation between the two countries are much greater than what already exists,” he noted, adding, so, we are interested in expanding ties in various fields of job creation, health and safety at work.”

“Moreover, we have helpful experiences in the field of workplace safety and health, entrepreneurship, employment, and vocational training, which can be exchanged,” he said, noting, “We can also cooperate on the exchange of workforce.”

“Given that Iran has a big working-age population who are well-trained and skilled, we are ready to dispatch them to Malaysia,” he highlighted.

Pointing out that specifying the fields of cooperation provides an opportunity to work together in practice, he added, “We are ready to host a Malaysian delegation of workforce in our country, as well.”

He further voiced willingness to enhance cooperation and exchange experience in the field of social insurance, health and retirement.



Murugeson, for his part, expressed satisfaction over bilateral cooperation, saying that one of the areas for cooperation can be social security, as all those working for the private sector must be covered by social security insurance.

He went on to say that currently taxi and bus drivers are covered by social security in Malaysia, adding, “We also tend to cover housewives in the near future.”

Inviting the Iranian official to Malaysia, he concluded that his country is interested in exchanging workforce with Iran.

This year the 108th International Labor Conference brought 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.

Mental health screening scheme to be launched at schools

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A **d e s k** scheme to determine the prevalence and incidence of psychiatric disorders in students will be implemented at schools across the country by the next school year (starting on September 23), director for education department at the Ministry of Education has said.

Since last year, all students on seventh to ninth grades have undergone the mental health screening, so, we decided to conduct the tests on students on all grades, ISNA quoted Masoud Shokouhi as saying on Saturday.

“The scheme will be launched by the beginning of the next school year,” he added.

For the current school year, screening of mental health was carried out in February and the results were presented to consultants for in-school or individual counseling, he said.

There are several types of screening that baseline testing is done by teachers, who record their observations on the system, he explained, adding, in the next step, specialist interventions will take place whether by the school counselor or counseling services outside the schools.

“For example, a student may need to receive counseling, health care or welfare services and we link them to relevant organizations,” he noted.

“Of course, we do not give up on the students and, for several months after the diagnosis, we will monitor their mental condition at school.”

Referring to the tests, he explained that screening is symptom-based, as teachers are informed of a series of symptoms, and in case of witnessing each of them on the students, they are supposed to take initial steps or refer to the school counselors.

“When the teacher recognizes anxiety

by rain fed harvest can be compensated. “Natural resource management, coordination, and training of related organization must be carried out by the governments,” he noted, regretting that the government’s policies are increasingly in conflict with nature.

“Unfortunately, we witnessed the closure of nature schools, so being against nature is the main reason behind environmental degradation,” he concluded.

Hooshang Jazi, head of soil protection unit of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization said in February that natural resources and soil conservation have been neglected in Iran since recent years, however, some 7 trillion rials (about \$166 million) from the National Development Fund has been earmarked in this regard, which is only one third of the needed funding for the implementation of watershed management projects.

Unfortunately, 250 million cubic meters of soil annually enter the country’s dams, due to improper watershed management and neglected soil conservation, he added.

This is while, Iran lately has a soil conservation law which was finally approved after 14 years of effort put in by the Department of Environment.

As per the law, any trade or export of soil is prohibited, and industries contributing to soil contamination will be shut down, mining activities are also subject to compliance with environmental regulations.



in the students, the school counseling team will enter for precise diagnosis,” he concluded.

According to WHO, 10-20 percent of children and adolescents experience mental disorders worldwide, half of all mental illnesses begin by the age of 14 and three-quarters by mid-20s.

Mental health screening in schools is a very important, yet sensitive, agenda that is in its very early stages. Careful planning and implementation of mental health screening in schools offers a number of benefits including enhancing outreach and help to youth in need, and mobilizing school and community efforts to promote student mental health while reducing barriers to their learning.

When implemented with appropriate family, school, and community involvement, mental health screening in schools has the potential to be a cornerstone of a transformed mental health system. Screening, as part of a coordinated and comprehensive school mental health program, complements the mission of schools, identifies youth in need, links them to effective services, and contributes to positive educational outcomes valued by families, schools, and communities.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Recent rainfalls not to fully address prolonged droughts: expert

Despite above normal rainfalls the country has received, it cannot be claimed that the long-term droughts are set right, director for flood control and aquifer at Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization has said.

That’s why water management policies must be still drawn up with regard to water scarcity, ISNA news agency quoted Abolqasem Hosseinpour as saying on Saturday.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“dextro-, dextero-, dextr-”

■ **Meaning:** right

■ **For example:** A good handyman is skillful, *dexterous* and proficient in whatever it is he is doing.

PHRASAL VERB

Nod off

■ **Meaning:** to begin to sleep, usually when you do not intend to and are sitting somewhere

■ **For example:** I missed the movie because I kept nodding off.

IDIOM

Crest of a wave

■ **Explanation:** If you are on the crest of a wave, you are very successful in what you are doing

■ **For example:** Our company is going from success to success. We’re on the crest of a wave right now.

بارش‌های اخیر خشکسالی کشور را جبران نمی‌کند

مدیرکل دفتر کنترل سیلاب و آبخوان‌داری سازمان جنگل‌ها، مراتع و آبخیزداری گفت: پس از بارش‌های اخیر در کشور، نمی‌توان ادعا کرد که خشکسالی‌های بلند مدت ما جبران شده است.

ابوالقاسم حسین‌پور در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا، اظهار کرد: سیاست‌های آبی ما همچنان باید منطبق بر کمبود منابع آبی باشد.

Yemeni forces captured a Saudi base in Jizan

➔ had launched a string of airstrikes against unmanned aerial vehicles and military targets at Jizan Airport, using a squadron of domestically-manufactured Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drones.

Saree further noted that the attacks led to the suspension of flights at the airport.

"We have sophisticated military hardware that US-built and other air defense systems deployed in Saudi Arabia cannot intercept. Our ballistic missiles, rockets and drone can hit any target all across Saudi Arabia. Our strikes will not be limited to Asir, Najran and Jizan. The Saudi enemy must know that we will expand the scope of deterrence in case the military aggression continues," the top Yemeni military official pointed out.

On June 15, Houthis said in a statement that they had launched drone strikes against Jizan Airport as well as Abha International Airport in Saudi Arabia's southwestern province of Asir.

The statement added that the control rooms in Jizan Airport and the fueling station at Abha airport were the main target of the attacks.

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

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

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



Istanbul set for 'historic' rerun of mayoral vote

TEHRAN — Residents of Istanbul will be back at the polling stations on Sunday in a rerun of the mayoral election, which was last held about three months ago.

The rerun comes weeks after Ekrem Imamoglu, the candidate of main opposition Republican People's Party's (CHP), won the contest in Turkey's commercial hub by a slim margin over Binali Yildirim of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party).

The result of the March 31 polls was a big blow to the AK Party, which in the same local polls also lost control of the country's capital, Ankara, and Izmir, the third largest city.

The AK Party, led by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, successfully lobbied for a rerun of the Istanbul mayoral vote, after Imamoglu secured the seat with a difference of just 13,729 votes.

Imamoglu spent only 18 days in office when Turkey's election board ordered a rerun in the country's largest city, citing "situations which affected the result and honesty" of the polls. The decision came after the AK Party, which ran Istanbul for the past two decades, lodged an "extraordinary objection" against the result.

A country with very few swing voters, residents in Tur-



key have deep-rooted loyalty to their respective political choices.

Kamat, a 39-year-old AK Party supporter, said he was "glad" a new vote would be held.

"CHP cheated ... so another election that isn't rigged will be better," Kamat, a private security worker who requested

his last name not to be used, told Al Jazeera.

■ Economic woes

With Turkey facing its first recession in a decade, the Istanbul mayoral candidates have mostly focused on unemployment, poverty and the cost of living.

According to the most recent data released by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2017, at 970 billion Turkish liras (\$166.6bn), Istanbul accounts for just over 31 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), meaning the city has an economy greater than countries such as Finland, Egypt, Portugal and Greece.

Even so, the distribution of GDP per capita has been decreasing for the past six years, squeezing many Istanbul residents.

Social media users took advantage of the live debate on Sunday to ask if the candidates would declare their worth if elected.

The AK Party's Yildirim replied there is no such "tradition". "But for me, there is no problem; we are ready to be accountable," he said.

In the purpose of "honesty", CHP's Imamoglu said it would be a "pleasure" for him to do so, Al Jazeera reported.

Exxon uses 'security' as excuse to halt disputed Iraq deal

American energy giant ExxonMobil has put on hold a \$53 billion deal with Iraq over "security concerns" stemming from escalating tensions between the United States and Iran, an excuse that observers say the firm has made up to avoid discussing differences of opinion with Baghdad over the contract.

Iraqi government officials told Reuters on Friday that ExxonMobil deal to boost oil production in the country's southern fields is now indefinitely on hold.

A combination of contractual wrangling and security concerns over rising tensions between Iraq's biggest neighbor Iran and the United States -- an issue that is widely blamed on Washington's own warmonger-

ing policies in the Middle East region -- has conspired to hold back the deal, according to the officials speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

They said the negotiations have been stymied by terms of the contract that Baghdad objects to and that the main sticking point was the means by which Exxon proposed to recoup its development costs for the oil produced in the oil fields of West Qurna and Rumaila in Iraq's southern province of Basra.

Iraq has opposed the portion Exxon wants from the oil output in the two fields, with one of Baghdad's negotiators saying the deal encroaches on state ownership of production and that the government would

not sign anything until the current terms proposed by Exxon were revised.

"We told them that we totally reject any production-sharing mechanism as it contradicts government energy policy," said an official who is part of the negotiating team, adding it was too early to say what kind of contract Iraq would favor.

The American oil and gas corporation giant has so far declined to comment on the terms of the contract or the negotiations.

The deal has also been hurt by two different evacuations of Exxon employees from the Arab country.

Hundreds of U.S. embassy employees were evacuated last month following un-

specified security threats after attacks on four oil tankers off the Emirati port city of Fujairah, for which the U.S. and its allies in the region blamed Iran.

The Iraqi government also criticized the giant ExxonMobil in May for evacuating its staff working on the West Qurna oil site in southern Iraq under the pretext of protecting them from what Exxon officials called a lack of safety.

"Exxon pulled its staff from Iraq in response to regional unrest. The question is how they will run a \$53bn project with constant regional instability," said an Iraqi oil official who oversees foreign companies' operations in the south.

U.S. to begin roundup of undocumented migrants on Sunday

TEHRAN - U.S. immigration authorities plan to launch on Sunday a sweeping effort to deport recently arrived undocumented families, the Washington Post reported on Friday, citing three unnamed U.S. officials.

The operation is expected to target up to 2,000 families facing deportation orders in as many as 10 U.S. cities, including Houston, Chicago, Miami and Los Angeles, according to the newspaper.

A spokesman for the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) declined to comment, saying: "Due to law-enforcement sensitivities and the safety and security of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel, the agency will not offer specific details related to enforcement operations before the conclusion of those actions."

In a call with reporters earlier this week, Mark Morgan, the acting director of ICE, told reporters the agency would target for deportation families that have received a removal order from a U.S. immigration court.

Morgan said ICE wanted to deport undocumented families who had recently arrived in the United States to discourage more Central Americans from arriving.

Trump had tweeted on Tuesday, before the formal kickoff of his 2020 re-election campaign, that ICE would begin removing "the millions" of undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the country's top Democrat, responded, saying, "The president's new threat of a mass deportation dragnet is an act of utter malice and bigotry, designed solely to inject fear in our communities."

According to Al Jazeera, rights groups slammed the announced crackdown, sharing information about what immigrants should do if they are approached by ICE.

Erika Andiola, the chief advocacy officer for immigrants' rights group, RAICES, tweeted an emotional video she recorded just after she said her mother and brother were taken by US authorities in 2013.

"I still have constant nightmares about this," she said in the tweet. "Imagine having the most precious person in your life taken from you by force."

The number of migrants and asylum seekers apprehended crossing the US-Mexico border surged in May to the highest level since 2006, many of them families fleeing violence and poverty in Central America.

The Department of Homeland Security did not imme-



diately respond to a request for comment.

Separately, the governor of Texas said the state was deploying 1,000 National Guard troops to the border after he said more than 45,000 people were apprehended after crossing the border between official ports of entry in the past three weeks.

Pompeo to seek stronger strategic ties with India despite trade tensions

TEHRAN - U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will seek to further strengthen strategic ties with India during a visit next week despite increasing frictions over trade, data flows and arms from Russia, officials said.

Pompeo arrives in New Delhi on Tuesday for talks that are aimed at laying the ground for a meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi later in the week at a G20 meeting in Japan.

India is embroiled in disputes with the United States over tariffs, Indian price

caps on imported medical devices, most from the United States, and Indian rules on e-commerce that impose conditions on the operations of major U.S. companies such as Amazon and Walmart.

According to Reuters, another issue that has alarmed India is the possibility of U.S. restrictions on work visas for Indian professionals in retaliation for India's insistence on local data storage by big foreign firms, even though the State Department said on Thursday it had no such plan.

"U.S.-India trade ties, at least between

our capitals, are certainly worsening. We both have leaders who look at trade as a zero-sum game," said Richard Rossow, a U.S.-India expert at Washington's the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The Indian government led by Modi, who was re-elected last month with a big majority, says it has been trying to negotiate solutions to the disputes with the United States but that, as a developing country, it has to protect the interests of its people.

Trump has repeatedly criticized India

for its high tariffs and last month raised the stakes with the withdrawal of a decades-old trade privilege.

Indian and U.S. officials said trade would be addressed during Pompeo's visit but emphasized the broader political and security relationship.

"There will be certain issues between us that will be on the table at all points of time," an Indian government official said. "But it should not detract from the overall direction of the relationship, which is positive."

He also named judges Shirin Fahmy, Shaaban al-Shami and Ahmed Sabry, as well as Attorney General Nabil Sadek and Abbas Kamel, the head of the intelligence service.

Egyptian authorities have yet to comment on the claims by Morsi's son.

Why Leader has given different responses to different U.S. presidents?

➔ • Second; the importance of having an "independent policy" and continuing our strategy of "active resistance".

This is Iran's firm strategy; as the top priority of the government and Iranian nation is in doing things that protect Iranians' national interest and guard the humanitarian causes. Therefore, Iran will decide for itself and don't give bribes to anybody; the best policy toward intruders is to take on a firm stand and not to yield in to their oppression.

Israeli troops attack Palestinian protesters at Gaza border, 70 injured

At least 70 Palestinians have been wounded by Israeli troops during protests near the border fence separating the besieged Gaza Strip from the Tel Aviv-occupied territories.

The Gazan Health Ministry said that Israeli forces inflicted different types of injuries on 70 people taking part in the rallies — called the "Great March of Return" — in eastern Gaza Strip on Friday.

Ashraf al-Qedra, the spokesman for the ministry, said that paramedics were also among the wounded.

The rallies have been held every week since March 30 last year. The Palestinians demand the right to return for those driven out of their homeland by Israeli aggression.

Israeli troops have killed at least 305 Palestinians since the beginning of the rallies and wounded more than 17,000 others, according to the Gazan Health Ministry.

In March, a United Nations (UN) fact-finding mission found that Israeli forces committed rights violations during their crackdown against the Palestinian protesters in Gaza that may amount to war crimes.

Gaza has been under Israeli siege since June 2007, which has caused a decline in living standards.

Israel has also launched three major wars against the enclave since 2008, killing thousands of Gazans and shattering the impoverished territory's already poor infrastructure, Press TV reported.

Jordanians hold protest against Trump's plan on Israeli-Palestinian conflict

TEHRAN - Thousands of Jordanians have taken to the streets in protest against U.S. President Donald Trump's upcoming controversial plan on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The protesters rallied in the capital Amman and other cities after Friday prayers, chanting slogans in support of the Palestinian cause and in condemnation of the plan — which Trump has called the "deal of the century."

The demonstrators also denounced a U.S.-led conference, which is slated to be held in Bahrain on June 25 and 26, during which the first part of Trump's so-called "peace plan" will be unveiled.

They also stressed that the Jordanian people would prevent the implementation of such a deal, which is widely reported to be highly biased in favor of the Israeli regime.

The U.S. will lead the Bahrain conference to purportedly encourage investment in the occupied West Bank, and the blockaded Gaza Strip.

All Palestinian factions have boycotted the event, slamming Washington for what they view as an attempt to offer financial rewards for Palestinians to accept the Israeli occupation.

The Palestinians have already rejected Trump's Middle East initiative as "the slap of the century."

The Washington Post said in April that the plan is likely to "stop short of ensuring a separate, fully sovereign Palestinian state."

The Palestinians are planning to hold a "popular uprising" later this month in conjunction with the Manama conference.

U.S. troops 'saved' Daesh leaders form Taliban siege

TEHRAN - U.S. troops in Afghanistan have rushed to help members of the Daesh terrorist group following a Taliban operation to purge the terrorists from the country's east, according to Taliban militants.

The Taliban militant group said in a statement on Friday that U.S. soldiers "saved" Daesh members as well as their local leaders by helicopters from a siege they had been trapped in the eastern Afghan province of Kunar.

"The U.S. troops saved them from the siege by helicopters," the statement said, adding that the Taliban had been launching an anti-Daesh operation for one week in Kunar and had surrounded the terrorist outfit's important individuals.

A large number of the Daesh terrorists were rescued by choppers while fleeing a battlefield with Taliban last year in the northern province of Jawzjan.

The Economic Times estimated in a recent report that around 10,000 members of the Takfiri terrorist group were present in Afghanistan and the number was growing on Washington's watch.

In recent years, Daesh has established a foothold in eastern and northern Afghanistan. The terrorist group has mostly been populating Nangarhar, from where it has carried out high-profile brutal attacks at major population centers across the country.

Last February, three months after the group's defeat was announced in Iraq and Syria, the Associated Press reported that the U.S. military was pulling its forces from a base in Iraq and shifting them to Afghanistan.

The report flew in the face of U.S. President Donald Trump's campaign promises to end Washington's Afghanistan intervention.

The U.S. and its allies invaded Afghanistan and toppled a ruling Taliban regime some 17 years ago. That ongoing war has failed to bring stability to the country despite the presence of thousands of foreign forces.

Today, around 14,000 U.S. troops remain in Afghanistan, half of them assigned to what Washington insists are counter-terrorism missions.

According to an official U.S. report last year, the central government in Kabul is currently controlling a little more than 50 percent of the country, down from 72 percent in 2015, with the rest remaining in Taliban's control.

Morsi 'killed' by Egyptian government, son says

TEHRAN - A son of the late former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi has accused incumbent President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and a number of other officials of "killing" his father.

Morsi, Egypt's first democratically elect-

ed president who was arrested after being overthrown in a military coup led by el-Sisi in 2013, died on Monday after collapsing inside his soundproof glass cage while on trial in a Cairo courtroom on espionage charges.

In a Twitter post, Morsi's son, Abdullah,

named a number of officials whom he called "partners" of el-Sisi "in killing the martyr president".

He particularly accused incumbent and former interior ministers Mahmoud Tawfiq and Magdy Abdel Ghaffar, respectively.

Juventus land defender De Ligt from Ajax - Sky Italy

Netherlands teenage center back Matthijs de Ligt has agreed a deal to join Italian champions Juventus from Ajax Amsterdam, Sky Italy reported on Saturday.

According to the report, Juventus will pay 62 million pounds for the Ajax captain, 19, who was one of the key players in the Dutch side's thrilling run to the Champions League semi-finals.

He will become new Juventus head coach Maurizio Sarri's first signing after the Italian was appointed as Massimiliano Allegri's successor last week.

De Ligt said earlier this month that he was asked about a move to Juventus by Cristiano Ronaldo at the end of the Nations League final after Portugal beat the Netherlands 1-0.

"I didn't understand him at first. I was a little shocked, so I laughed. But I didn't say anything," De Ligt had told the Netherlands' NOS television.

"So soon after the game you are not at all concerned with it. You are disappointed that you have lost and that is the only thing you are thinking about."

Spanish media reports had said the highly-rated player was expected to join Barcelona and link up with Ajax's Frenkie de Jong, 22, who is set to move to Spain next month.

De Ligt broke into the Ajax first team aged 17 in 2016, becoming a regular starter the following season and soon became the most coveted defender in Europe thanks to his strength, anticipation and ability on the ball.

He played 90 minutes in 17 of 18 matches and scored three times in Ajax's Champions League campaign, which culminated in an agonizing semi-final defeat to Tottenham Hotspur on away goals.

(Source: Mirror)

Qatar World Cup chief unconcerned by Platini corruption questioning

Qatar's 2022 World Cup organizing committee chief Hassan Al Thawadi insisted on Friday that the Gulf nation has nothing to worry about in relation to a French corruption investigation.

Former European football president Michel Platini was questioned by French anti-corruption investigators for several hours on Wednesday in relation to the 2010 award of World Cup hosting rights to gas-rich Qatar.

"From what I understood he was not arrested, he was asked for questioning and there's a very big difference between the two," Al Thawadi told reporters in Brazil, where Qatar are taking part in the Copa America as guests.

"For me there's no story there, I cannot comment because there's an investigation ongoing, but I can say that we were not contacted by the authorities.

"For us, we have always held ourselves to a high standard, we've been investigated by the Garcia Investigation, it exonerated us."

A two-year long FIFA investigation led by American lawyer Michael Garcia cleared Qatar of buying the vote that saw them surprisingly awarded the right to host the 2022 World Cup.

It was sparked by accusations that bribes had been paid in the bidding process for the hosting rights of the 2018 -- won by Russia -- and 2022 World Cup tournaments.

Both Russia and Qatar were cleared by the Garcia report.

But France's Office of the Financial Crimes Prosecutor (PNF) opened a preliminary investigation in 2016 into allegations of corruption, conspiracy and influence peddling surrounding those two votes.

The French investigation centres on alleged French intervention linked to Platini and former French president Nicolas Sarkozy.

According to France Football magazine, a "secret meeting" took place on November 23, 2010, at the Elysee Palace in Paris between Sarkozy, Qatar's then-Prince (now Emir) Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and Platini, who at that time was both UEFA president and vice-president of FIFA.

Just over a week later, FIFA voted to award Qatar hosting rights for the 2022 tournament.

"We are moving on to deliver a historic World Cup," added Al-Thawadi.

(Source: AFP)

Real Madrid plan to have a women's team next season

LaLiga Iberdrola could have a new entrant for next season with Real Madrid planning to have a women's team for the 2019/20 campaign.

Madrid have reached an agreement with CD Tacon, who this season achieved promotion to LaLiga Iberdrola, to buy their place in the division.

OKDiario first reported the news, which MARCA have since confirmed, and the purchase is expected to happen for less than half a million euros in the next week.

Madrid have been evaluating the idea of a women's team for a number of years now and had planned on starting from scratch, but Tacon's rise and the good relationship between the clubs has proven too good an opportunity to turn down.

Atletico Madrid, Barcelona, Real Sociedad, Athletic Club, Espanyol, Valencia, Sevilla, Real Betis and Levante are all clubs with women's teams already in the top flight.

(Source: Marca)

Ospina leaves Copa America camp

Napoli goalkeeper David Ospina has temporarily left the Colombia squad in the Copa America due to a family illness.

The shot-stopper had already missed the last few weeks of the Serie A season so he could return home and the situation has not improved.

The Colombian Federation released a statement confirming Ospina has temporarily left the training camp in Brazil due to a family issue.

They remain confident he will return for the rest of the tournament, as Colombia have already qualified for the Round of 16.

(Source: Football Italia)

Why Champions League winner Pique bought a fifth-tier Spanish team

Surrounded by mountains and 4,000ft above sea level sits the 530-seater Estadi Prada de Moles.

It is here, in the tiny Andorran village of Encamp, that Barcelona defender Gerard Pique dreams of hearing the Champions League anthem.

He has heard it before, of course, having won the competition four times as a player. But now he wants to experience it as a club owner.

In December, soon after transforming tennis' Davis Cup, the Pique-owned Kosmos group bought FC Andorra, then in Spanish football's fifth tier.

Pique has big ambitions for Spain's version of Salford City - the English non-league team owned by six former Manchester United players.

With one promotion secured already, Pique, manager Gabri and first-team player Federico Bessone talk BBC Sport through a remarkable five months.

■ 'A risky venture'

FC Andorra, who were founded in 1942, have played in the Spanish league system since 1948.

When Kosmos took charge of the club, they were struggling with debt, one point off the relegation places and 17 points behind the leaders of the Primera Catalana.

"No-one thought FC Andorra could be a very interesting prospect, but we analysed it and thought it had great potential," says Kosmos director Ferran Vilaseca.



Pique, 32, heard of the club through "friends of friends" from Andorra and thought "it could be an interesting opportunity".

"The main difference with other clubs in Spain is here there's a whole country backing up the team," says the Spain centre-back.

"We don't want to be just an investor, we want to be involved in the team, to make it better and place the team in higher divisions."

The World Cup winner's first move was to appoint former Barcelona players Gabri and Albert Jorquera as manager and assistant manager respectively.

Gabri spent 13 years at the Nou Camp, winning the Champions League in 2006. The 40-year-old had been in charge of Barca's



youth teams and managed Swiss top-flight side FC Sion before moving to Andorra.

"Friends and family were surprised and questioned me because it was a risky venture," he says.

"They asked if I was sure because it involved a change of country and I had to leave my family.

"Leaving the professional world to go down so many levels, you have little to gain and a lot to lose. But Gerard convinced me - his attitude especially."

■ A Barca makeover

Gabri acknowledges taking charge of a semi-professional team in the Spanish fifth tier was "very different to what I was used to".

People power fuels Pacquiao for Thurman battle

After a boxing career that has spanned nearly a quarter of a century and 70 professional contests, it is little surprise that Manny Pacquiao has his training regime honed to perfection.

On July 20, the 40-year-old Filipino icon will climb into the ring for the 71st time when he faces Keith Thurman at Las Vegas' MGM Grand, aiming to capture the undefeated American's World Boxing Association super world welterweight crown.

To prepare himself for a contest that the younger, hard-hitting Thurman has vowed to ensure will be Pacquiao's last, the veteran superstar will rely on a formula that has served him so well over the years.

Pacquiao wakes at around dawn each day in the multi-million-dollar mansion that has been his Los Angeles base for the past decade.

If sparring is scheduled for later in the day, Pacquiao will embark on a light morning workout, jogging to a park two miles from his home where he runs laps, shadow boxes and performs core work.

On non-sparring days, he heads to Griffith Park, for a longer, more gruelling run in the hills which frame the sprawling Californian metropolis.

Accompanying him are around two dozen training partners, security, friends and fans, a feature of Pacquiao's rise to the pinnacle of his sport.

At a recent morning workout, a crowd of around 100 people, many from Los Angeles' large Filipino community, gather to watch as the eight-division world champion grimaces his way through a series of sit-ups and crunches, occasionally pausing to check his phone.



When it is over, Pacquiao heads back to a home that is soon a hive of activity. To the casual observer the household has a vague air of organised chaos.

At most hours of the day in his luxurious 4,200 square foot, five-bedroom residence -- decorated with portraits of his family and large framed photographs of his signature victories -- dozens of loosely affiliated members of "Team Pacquiao" are milling around.

The unrelenting hum would be anathema for more reclusive fighters, who prefer to conduct their training camps in seclusion, away from prying eyes.

■ 'I want people around'

Pacquiao, though, says simply that he is a people person. The ever-present throng energises him.

"I want to have people around so that I'm motivated,"

he tells AFP after a breakfast of white rice, broth and grilled meat prepared by his Filipino chefs.

"My feeling is that I don't want anybody to see me being lazy. I want to impress them every day. I love it, as long as it's not distracting me or affecting my training."

Some of his closest confidantes, however, have mixed feelings about the cast of extras who have hitched their wagons to Pacquiao's star.

"A lot of it is support, a lot of it is they want to be on TV or something," says trainer Freddie Roach. "But it works for him. He knows how to get in shape and he does it very, very well."

Roach, however, admits to worrying that bankrolling the entourage may ultimately drain Pacquiao's fortune, estimated at around \$200 million.

"I bet Manny doesn't even know the names of at least 50 percent of the people in his house right now as we speak," Roach told AFP in an interview.

"Manny's a nice guy. He likes to help people. I always say that's why he might be broke when he's through. Because he gives it all away. He's just too generous."

That generosity knows few boundaries, whether it is buying land and building homes for more than 1,000 poverty-stricken families in the Philippines, or paying to fly his entourage around the world on chartered commercial jetliners.

For now, though, the money keeps rolling in.

Pacquiao will reportedly receive \$20 million for the Thurman fight, and banked \$10 million from his January defeat of Adrien Broner, paydays that will keep the free-spending show firmly on the road.

(Source: AFP)

Egypt grind out win to launch Africa Cup of Nations



Mohamed Salah's Egypt started their bid for a record-extending eighth Africa Cup of Nations trophy on Friday with a 1-0 win over Zimbabwe in Cairo in the opening game of a tournament expanded to 24 teams and played in June and July for the first time.

Liverpool star Salah, on a redemption mission with Egypt after injury derailed a miserable World Cup campaign last year, looked sharp although the hosts needed a 41st-minute goal by Mahmoud 'Trezeguet' Hassan to get off to a winning start in Group A.

Man of the match Mahmoud Alaa said after the victory: "I congratulate all the Egyptian people on the first win."

The defender added: "We should be better in the upcoming matches. Our aim in this competition is to win the title."

In keeping with April's spectacular tournament draw under the gaze of the Sphinx, a striking 30-minute opening ceremony preceded kick-off in Cairo, where a backdrop of pyramids and statues from Egyptian mythology mixed with elegant dancers set the stage for a fireworks display to illuminate the ground.

The arrival of the Egyptian players for the warm-up induced a deafening roar from the

capacity 75,000-crowd, who predictably reserved the loudest reception for Salah as his name was read out among the starting line-ups.

With the temperature having dipped to a more palatable 27 Celsius (81 Fahrenheit) by the start Egypt -- the tournament favourites and 2017 runners-up -- immediately looked threatening, with Salah orchestrating much of the attack as he swung in a pair of teasing crosses, the second forcing Edmore Sibanda to tip over a looping Marwan Mohsen header.

Salah was again involved 10 minutes later, intricately exchanging passes on the edge of the Zimbabwe box to carve out a chance for Abdallah Elsaid, whose shot was palmed away by Sibanda before Trezeguet lashed over the rebound.

As Zimbabwe struggled to develop any sort of rhythm with outstanding midfielder Khama Billiat contained, Salah again had a boisterous, largely red-clad crowd on their feet when he wriggled past his marker only to shoot over from a difficult angle.

A blocked attempt by Zimbabwe captain Knowledge Musona represented the southern Africans' lone genuine attempt in the first half.

(Source: AFP)

Sanchez back on form thanks to 'emotional bond' with Chile



Chile coach Reinaldo Rueda says he never had any doubts "natural born goalscorer" Alexis Sanchez would return to form after the striker fired his side to a 2-1 win over Ecuador in the Copa America on Friday.

Sanchez, 30, arrived at the Copa America with his reputation in tatters after a miserable season with Manchester United in which he only scored two goals in all competitions as his side finished sixth in the Premier League.

The forward's struggles at United have been compounded by a run of injuries, including an ankle infection in May, and fans have been questioning the wisdom of shelling out a huge salary to the Chilean.

In Brazil, however, Sanchez has been able to lean on the support of his international team mates, with whom he won the last two editions of the Copa America.

"It's not easy to explain, but Alexis has come here and shown a lot of commitment and perhaps in Manchester he does not have the emotional bond he has with his team mates here, that affection," Rueda told a news conference.

"He's had bad fortune because Manchester United have had problems for a while, so he does not have the structure he has

"My first impression was it's an amateur team which trained with quite difficult means with a difficult schedule," he says. "The players have jobs - they work during the day and train at night."

The squad, which included several Andorra internationals, has been given a Catalan makeover and now features graduates from Barcelona's famed La Masia academy, including Bessone, Marti Riverola, and Adria Vilanova - the son of late Barca boss Tito.

"Players like Riverola or Bessone were at some point in a team with me or players like [Barcelona forward] Leo Messi," Pique says.

Argentine defender Bessone, who has played for Swansea City and Leeds United, dropped a diversion from Catalan side Prat to join FC Andorra.

There he has been reunited with former Charlton team-mate Ruben Bover.

"I rang him and asked him what he was doing there because, with all due respect, this was the Primera Catalana," said Bessone.

"It was not easy to move. I decided to join because I liked everything they were telling me. And, amazingly, everything they have told me has come true."

Bessone remembers Pique from the Barcelona academy, and played alongside Messi in the C team.

"Before my first game, Pique came to Andorra to introduce himself and explained what was going on," said Bessone.

(Source: BBC)

here. He has also had injuries, he's lacked consistency, he has lacked continuity."

Chile's all-time top scorer helped book his side's place in the quarter-finals of the competition by scoring the winner on Friday, finding the net with a smart half-volley early in the second half, having also scored in their 4-0 win over Japan.

"We have done brilliant work with him, we have given him a lot of warmth, which is what he needs. He has a special connection with the team and the group is very fond of him," added Rueda.

"He can recover because he is a natural born goalscorer but he has been anxious after the injuries, he looks after himself well and luckily has been able to rediscover his form."

Sanchez later said he had picked up an ankle injury in the first half but played on because he gives "everything for the national team".

"I have always had the enthusiasm to play but in England I've been given few opportunities lately," Sanchez said.

"But I'm relaxed, because representing your country is the most beautiful thing there is."

(Source: Reuters)

Walter Zenga linked with bizarre Persepolis move

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Italian coach Walter Zenga has bizarrely been linked with a switch to Persepolis according to Iranian local media.

The 59-year-old coach has been out of a job since being sacked by Serie B club Venezia in March.

Zenga has previously coached Emirati football clubs Al Ain, Al Nasr, Al Jazira and Al Shaab.

He also worked as head coach at Italian Serie A teams Catania and Sampdoria.

During his playing career, Zenga was part of the Italian squad that finished fourth at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, United States and was starting goalkeeper for the Azzurri team that finished third in the 1990 FIFA World Cup tournament held in Italy, keeping a World Cup record unbeaten streak.

A three-time winner of the IFFHS World's Best Goalkeeper Award, Zenga is regarded by pundits as one of the best goalkeepers of all time, and in 2013 was voted the eighth best goalkeeper of the past quarter-century by IFFHS. In 2000, he also placed 20th in the World Keeper of the Century Elections by the same organization.

Persepolis are looking for a replacement for Branko Ivankovic, who left the Iranian giants to lead Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia.

Ivankovic led Persepolis to the Iranian domestic treble last season. Under the Croat, the Reds experienced their first ever AFC Champions league final as well.

Padideh coach yahya Golmohammadi is also a candidate to take charge of the team.

The new season of Iran league will kick off on Aug. 1 and all teams have appointed their coaches and prepare for the new season, but Persepolis have yet to appoint their coach.



Iran fail to book a place at 2020 Beach Handball Championships



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran failed to book a place at the 2020 IHF Men's Beach Handball Championships after losing to Qatar on Saturday. Team Melli lost to the four-time champions 2-0 in the Asian Beach Handball Championship 2019 underway in Weihai, China.

Iran started the campaign on high note, beating Japan 2-0. The Persians also beat Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan but lost to Oman in the event's quarter-finals.

Iran will face Vietnam on Monday for a third-place playoff.

Twelve teams were distributed into two groups.

Qatar, Vietnam, Chinese Taipei, Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines were in Group A and Iran, Oman, Thailand, Pakistan, Japan and Saudi Arabia were drawn in Group B.

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.

Iran Professional League 2019-20 to kick off on July 30



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran Professional League (IPL) 2019-20 season will kick off on July 30.

The Iran Professional League is a professional football league competition for clubs at the highest level of the Iranian football league system.

Persepolis are the most-decorated football team with 12 titles, followed by Esteghlal with eight titles.

It was founded in 1970 as the Takht Jamshid Cup, but the current format

was adopted in 2001. Contested by 16 teams, it is ranked by the Asian Football Confederation as the 2nd best league in Asia and the best league in Western Asia.

The Persian Gulf Pro League is the top tier of an extensive pyramid-like structure, above the Azadegan League (or 1st Division), the 2nd division, the 3rd Division and the lower local leagues. Since the league's creation in 2001, seven different teams have become league champions.

Iran ease past Australia in Volleyball Nations League

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran overpowered Australia in the second match of week four of the 2019 Volleyball Nations League on Saturday.

Team Melli beat Australia in straight sets (25-19, 25-14) in Ardabil's Rezazadeh Hall.

Amir Ghafour scored 16 pints for the Iranian team. Team Melli will play France on Sunday.

Iran extended their winning run at the men's 2019 FIVB Volleyball Nations League to 10 matches as Igor Kolakovic's team have already defeated Italy, Germany, China, Argentina, Japan, Canada, Poland, Russia and Portugal.

Iran sit top of the table with 30 points, followed by



Brazil with 25 points and one game in hands.

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

This is the first edition of the World League or the Nations League to have the Final Round hosted in North America.

The 16 teams compete in a round-robin format with every core team hosting a pool at least once. The teams are divided into four pools of four teams at each week and compete five weeks long, for 120 matches. The top five teams after the preliminary round join the hosts of the final round to compete in the final round.

Iran cruise to third at AFC U-20 Futsal Championship

Host nation Iran ended their 2019 AFC U-20 Futsal Championship campaign on a high note when they defeated Indonesia 9-1 at the Pour Sharifi Stadium on Saturday.

Iran were looking to impress their fans with a third-place finish after their 8-4 loss to Japan in the semi-finals, but they had to do it without Sahand Rezapour, who was serving a one-match ban.

The match was intense from the first whistle of the blow, with Indonesia playing a little more aggressively as Muhammad Rizki Xavier picked up the first yellow card of the game within the first minute.

Iran, the 2017 champions, kept their cool and gradually dominated possession.

Indonesia paid the price for their aggression in the third minute when Iran were awarded a free-kick 10 meters out, and Salar Aghapour found the back of the net with his effort for his sixth goal of the tournament.

The host nation applied heavy pressure with man-to-man marking,

and the Southeast Asians succumbed a minute later when Ari Ramdani's pass forward was blocked by the edge of Sajjad Sarbaz's boot, and Ali Akrami sent the loose ball home to make it 2-0.

The Southeast Asians looked dangerous with their set-pieces, but a failed attempt in the sixth minute saw Iran's Aghapour surging down the court on a counter-attack and he made no mistake at the end of the run to beat goalkeeper Muhammad Wildan.

Eleven minutes in, Iran showed how quickly they could move on a counter-attack, with Hashem Sajjadian and Sarbaz the dynamic duo upfront, and Wildan had no chance as Sarbaz took the finishing touch.

Aghapour, who has excelled throughout the tournament, etched two assists to his name when his passes into the box saw Reza Ghanbarisaeidabad and Erfan Ijhosseinzadeh scoring in the 16th and 17th minutes respectively.

Trailing by six goals, Indonesia opted for power play with Muhammad

Syaifullah coming on but couldn't find inroads into the box in the remaining minutes of the first half. Indonesia continued with their five-man attacking play well into the second half, playing patiently around the Iranian defense.

However, it was a defensive error on their part in the 25th minute that proved costly, when captain Ramadhan Zidane brought down Mahdi Dehghannezhad in the box, which Aghapour then converted from the spot to complete his hat-trick.

Iran dominated whenever Syaifullah was off the court as the power player, and despite their hefty lead, they weren't done as Belal Esmaili Kooraneh got into goal scoring action in the 29th minute, courtesy of Dehghannezhad's assist.

Indonesia came extremely close to denying the Iranians a clean sheet in the 34th minute when a series of passes led to Firman Adriansyah in front of the box, but custodian Ebrahimi was in position to body block the close range effort.

Adriansyah wasn't to be denied two minutes later, however, as he scored



Indonesia's consolation goal, but was given his marching orders just moments later after picking up his second yellow for a harsh tackle on Ghanbarisaeidabad.

Despite playing with a man down, Sayan Karmadi's Indonesia showed commendable fighting spirit and deployed power play once again, but it backfired when Dehghannezhad fired a long-range effort to end proceedings.

(Source: the-afc)

France volleyball captain Toniutti says Iran is a safe country

Tasnim — France national team volleyball captain Benjamin Toniutti says Iran is a safe country.

Toniutti is in Ardabil, Iran to represent his country at the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League.

Roosters started the week 4 with a 3-0 win over Australia on Friday.

France will face Portugal and Iran on Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

"I have good knowledge of Iran volleyball team because we have played them several times in the past five years. Iran are one of the strongest teams in the world. I have good knowledge of Iranian players who play in the European leagues," the France setter told in an interview with Tasnim news agency.

"There is a wonderful atmosphere and the people tried to take picture with me. I also know it will be a difficult for the teams playing Iran in the hall, because Iran are highly supported at home," Toniutti added.

"We entered Iran without any problem and felt safe and secure. We've been very well-received here and I don't care about what the media say about the country because we are here to play volleyball," the French player stated.

"Many teams have participated in this edition without their main players but Iran play with their main team. I think they have a chance to win a medal in the final," Toniutti concluded.



Mario Budimir leaves Iran's Persepolis

IRNA — Croat forward Mario Budimir parted ways with Iranian football club Persepolis.

The 32-year-old joined Persepolis in January on an 18-month contract.

Budimir has canceled his contract with the Iranian football team.

The forward scored an important goal against Pars Jonoubi in the last match of the Iran Professional League.

Persepolis Croatian coach Branko Ivankovic had already canceled his contract with Persepolis to join Saudi Arabian football team Al Ahli.

Mehdi Tartar reaches agreement with Naft Masjed Soleyman

Tasnim — Former Pars Jonoubi coach Mehdi Tartar has reached an agreement with Iranian top-flight football club Naft Masjed Soleyman.

Tartar will replace Firooz Karimi, who rescued the team from relegation in the final weeks of the Iran Professional League (IPL).

Tartar parted company with Pars Jonoubi in early June. Under leadership of the former Persepolis midfielder, Pars Jonoubi finished in 12th place in IPL table.

Tartar, 46, started his coaching career in Rah Ahan in 2009 and has also coached Persepolis (assistant), Damash, Gos-tarash and Saba.

Rabo targeting 'magical' AFC Cup success

Becamex Binh Duong defender Ali Rabo has admitted that it would be magical for the Vietnamese side to win the 2019 AFC Cup ahead of the second leg of the ASEAN Zonal semi-final against Indonesia's PSM Makassar on Wednesday.

Binh Duong travel to Indonesia with a slim advantage after Nguyen Tien Linh's header with 10 minutes to play in the first leg secured a 1-0 victory for the 10-man Vietnamese side.

The win made it five victories in a row for Binh Duong and, unbeaten on the road so far in the competition, should they avoid defeat at Pakansari Stadium they will secure a place in the ASEAN Zonal final.

"After winning five games in a row we are now full of confidence and the aim is to maintain our momentum in the competition," said the Burkina Faso native.

"We have the advantage of a goal to defend and we learned a lot about our opponents in the first match, so our coach will decide the best tactics in order to get the result we need.

"We have remained unbeaten away from home because – wherever we play – there is a solidarity amongst the players that helps us a lot through difficult periods in a match."

Semi-finalists in 2009, Binh Duong are appearing in the AFC Cup for the first time since 2010 and they began their campaign in Indonesia with a scoreless draw against Persija Jakarta.

Nguyen Thanh Son's team then bounced back from defeat to Ceres Negros by posting four successive wins to qualify for the knockout rounds. However, with the first leg against Makassar still goalless early in the second half, Nguyen Trung Tin was dismissed for a second bookable offence.

Binh Duong dug deep, though, to not only claim a fine victory but also keep a potentially significant clean sheet, with Makassar – unbeaten prior to the game in Vietnam – unable to register a shot on target across the 90 minutes.

"Of course, we were very happy with the result after being reduced to 10 men and then scoring a valuable goal towards the end of the game," added Rabo.

"Our defensive performance was remarkable and each person on the team gave 100 percent to get that result.

"If we could go on and win the AFC Cup, it would be magical for everyone, but at the moment we just need to focus on the next match and see what happens after that.

(Source: the-afc)

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The most precious person is he who becomes
the measure of recognizing the precious.

Imam Ali (AS)

DEFC to review Kamran Shirdel's films

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) plans to celebrate the 80th birthday of documentarian Kamran Shirdel by screening a number of his films on Monday.

"The Mirrors", "Tehran Is the Capital of Iran", "Women's Quarter", "Women's Prison" and "Boom-e Simin" are among the films.



Iranian documentarian Kamran Shirdel in an undated photo.

"The Night It Rained", "Paykan", "Dubai" and "The First Loneliness" will also go on screen.

The screenings will be followed by review sessions, which are scheduled to be attended by critic Khosro Dehqan, the center announced on Saturday.

Shirdel, who is also a photographer and translator, studied architecture and film direction in Rome. He started his career in filmmaking in 1965.

His 1968 film, "The Night It Rained", has been awarded in several Iranian and international events.

Czech honors Iranian translator Reza Mirchi with Gratias Agit Award

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Prague-based Iranian translator Reza Mirchi has been decorated with Czech's Gratias Agit Award.



Iranian scholar Reza Mirchi (R) is presented with the Gratias Agit Award by Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Tomas Petricek in Prague on June 14, 2019.

Mirchi, famous for translating a number of books by Czech authors Ivan Klima and Václav Havel, received the award from Minister of Foreign Affairs Tomas Petricek at his office on June 14, the Persian service of MNA announced on Saturday.

Gratias Agit has been awarded by the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the promotion of the good name of the Czech Republic abroad ever since 1997 in appreciation of prominent personalities and organizations developing activities in nongovernmental fields.

Mirchi said that his friends and publishers in Iran have given him great help in receiving the award.

When 007 met the Prince: Bond film set gets royal visit

LONDON (Reuters) — James Bond received a royal visit on Thursday when Britain's Prince Charles toured the set of the new 007 movie filming at Pinewood Studios outside London.

Charles, 70, met actor Daniel Craig, who plays the fictional British secret agent for the fifth time in the "Bond 25" production, plus Ralph Fiennes and Naomie Harris, who portray secret service head "M" and secretary Moneypenny respectively.

During the visit celebrating the franchise's contribution to Britain's film industry, Craig and Fiennes showed the heir to the British throne inside M's office and he watched a scene being filmed on monitors. Craig also showed the royal two of Bond's famed Aston Martin cars.

"Bald Pigeon Fancier" director views theater as basic necessity for children

A R T **TEHRAN** — Azadeh Ansari, the director of the acclaimed play "Bald Pigeon Fancier", has said that children need theater as much as food, health and clothing are necessary for them.

"Sociologists believe that a society without theater is not a happy one. Watching plays can help children grow more social and more intelligent. Watching theater is necessary for children. Those children who watch plays have more skills compared to their friends, their imaginations grow faster and their knowledge will be increased," she added.

Ansari is currently staging "Bald Pigeon Fancier" based on a short story by writer Samad Behranghi at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA). Nasrin Khanjari has adapted the short story for the stage.

She said that the play demonstrates the importance of happiness and added, "Happiness is a great asset and needs to be looked after constantly."

"The play is good for children aged 4 to 10. However, many adults have also liked to sit and watch it," he stated.

The director said that she has always liked legends and stories filled with secrets and mysteries, "Because they carry many useful hints and give practical lessons for life."

Ansari asked the governmental organizations to support theatrical figures and invest in this art to help children flourish.

Farzin Mohaddes, Minush Rahimian and Mehrnush Shariati are the main members of the troupe.



Members of director Azadeh Ansari's troupe perform "Bald Pigeon Fancier" at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in Tehran. (IIDCYA/Yunes Panahi)

Iranian movies line up for Kerala festival



A scene from "All That's Missing" by Zeinab Tabrizi.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Five movies by Iranian filmmakers are competing in the 12th International Documentary and Short Film Festival of Kerala (IDSFFK), which opened on Friday in Thiruvananthapuram, India.

"Double" directed by Ronak Jafari is contending for an award in the International Fiction section.

"No One Believes Me but the Police Are Chasing a Wrong Man" by Ata Mojabi, "The Drip" by Marjan Hashemi, and "The Woman behind the Window" by Kurosh Shirali have been selected

to compete in the category.

"All That's Missing" by Zeinab Tabrizi is competing in the International Non-Fiction section.

The documentary is about Mahnaz and Jamileh, both of whom are diagnosed with breast cancer. After a long battle with the disease, Mahnaz passes away, while Jamileh fully recovers. Jamileh begins to attend charities and other breast cancer awareness efforts, while Mahnaz narrates the movie along with Jamileh's struggles.

The festival will come to an end on June 26 by announcing winners.

Tochal Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival announces winners



A participant works on a sculpture during the 2nd edition of the Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival in the Tochal ski resort in Tehran on June 21, 2019. (Honaronline/Gata Ziatabari)

A R T **TEHRAN** — The winners of the 2nd Tochal Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival were announced during a ceremony in Tehran's Tochal ski resort on Friday.

Over 70 artists and university students were competing in the festival, which was held in the resort on Thursday and Friday.

In the official section of the festival, Iman Aqai won first prize, while Ahmad Qazi and Mohsen Dehqanzadeh received second and third prizes respectively.

The festival was organized in collaboration with the Culture Ministry's Visual Arts Office.

Ehsan Garmsiri, Sara Abdoli and Seyyed Hesameddin Javadzadeh took first to third places respectively in the student section of the festival.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini.

Addressing the organizers of the festival, Hosseini said that the ministry appreciates the efforts they made to hold the event.

The festival was organized in collaboration with the Culture Ministry's Visual Arts Office.

Václav Havel's "Vanek" to go on stage in Tehran

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Bahar Mahmudzadeh will stage "Vanek" based on Czech playwright Václav Havel's Vanek plays at Tehran's Sepand Hall on June 30.

The play is derived from Havel's best-known works, and the character Vanek, who first appeared in the play "Audience" in 1975, soon became a symbol for Czechoslovak dissidents during the Communist era.

Vanek is an opposition playwright who is forced to work in a brewery because his writing has been banned by the Czechoslovak Communist regime.

Havel also used the character in the plays "Unveiling" (1975), about a couple who desperately want Vanek to absolve them for their collaborative relationship with the Communist regime, and "Protest" (1978)



A poster for "Vanek" by Bahar Mahmudzadeh.

in which Vanek tries to convince an old colleague to sign a protest letter.

As a symbolic character, a number of Czech writers used Vanek in their plays. Havel himself wrote a short modern sequel to "Unveiling" entitled "Dozens of Cousins" in 2010.

Havel was the ninth and last president of Czechoslovakia (1989-1992) and the first president of the Czech Republic (1993-2003). He wrote more than 20 plays and numerous non-fiction works, which have been translated internationally.

Bahareh Rahnama, Ali Oji, Danial Kheirikhah and Mohammad Zavvar are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until July 22.

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei turns to opera with "Turandot"

ROME (Reuters) — Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, known for his politically charged contemporary works, will try his hand at opera by directing "Turandot", which is set in his homeland.

The Rome Opera said on Friday Ai will direct Giacomo Puccini's work and design the sets and costumes. It will open in March at the mid-point of the 2019-2020 season and be the first theatrical work for the 61-year-old artist.

Turandot, set in China, is the story of Prince Calaf, who falls in love with the cold-hearted Princess Turandot. But in order to win her hand, he first must solve three riddles. He does but she still refuses.

"Turandot", which debuted in Milan in 1926, contains one of music's most famous arias - "Nessun Dorma," made globally famous when the late Luciano Pavarotti sang it at the 1990 World Cup.

Ai, who was detained for nearly three months in his homeland in 2011 and is known for his criticism of Communist-run China's stifling of free expression, hinted that his "Turandot" will not pull any punches.



Chinese artist Ai Weiwei attends a news conference for his exhibition "Everything is art. Everything is politics" displayed at Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Dusseldorf, Germany, May 16, 2019. (Reuters/Ralph Orlowski)

"This 'Turandot' will be from my point of view," Ai, who has been based in Berlin since 2015, said in a statement released through the opera house.

"It will be an opera immersed in the contemporary world, the present cultural and political struggles represented through Puccini's story." Ai, who quietly visited the Rome theater last month to review the space, is no stranger to controversy in countries beside his native China.

Jumpin' Jack Flash Jagger back on stage after heart surgery

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Mick Jagger swaggered back to the stage on Friday in his first concert after undergoing heart surgery in April as the Rolling Stones kicked off a delayed North American tour.

The veteran British band opened its No Filter tour in Chicago at the city's 61,500 seat Soldier Field stadium, after delaying the 17-date U.S. and Canada tour to allow for Jagger's medical treatment.

Opening to a sold-out crowd, the band kicked off with its classic hit "Street Fighting Man" as the Stones frontman, dressed in skinny black jeans and a black and white jacket, strutted across the stage, singing and pumping his fist.

Jagger, 75, underwent heart valve replacement surgery in New York in early April, and in May reassured fans that he was back in shape by posting video on Twitter of him dancing in a studio.

"He (Jagger) went through it very easily," Stones guitarist Keith Richards told the Toronto Sun in an interview ahead of the Chicago concert. "He's in great shape — rocking. As I say, it seemed to be no



Singer Mick Jagger performs during the kick-off show of the Rolling Stones' "No Filter" tour at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois, U.S. June 21, 2019. (Reuters/Daniel Acker)

problem at all really."

The 1960s band, whose current members Jagger, Richards, Ronnie Wood and Charlie Watts are now all in their 70s, has played more than 40 tours, making the quartet some of the most enduring and successful rock musicians of all time.

The Rolling Stones kicked off the No Filter tour in Europe in September 2017, playing the last show there in July 2018.